

DO NOTHING CONGRESS NOT TACKLING ANY OF THE ISSUES IMPORTANT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, our Nation faces many pressing issues; yet the House Republican leadership prefers to send Congress home for breaks rather than working to solve any problems.

Back in 1948 President Truman dubbed that Congress the "Do Nothing Congress" because it only met 108 days the entire year. The Republican Congress of 2006 is set to break that record, scheduled to meet for only 97 days this year, 11 fewer than the first "Do Nothing Congress."

Now, the budget continues to spiral out of control after finally being balanced by President Clinton back in the late 1990s; yet House Republicans approved a budget last night that makes the deficit worse and offers no plan to bring the budget back into balance.

Gas prices continue to hover at or above \$3 a gallon; yet House Republicans continue to do the bidding of the big oil execs rather than providing any real relief to the American consumer.

House Republicans, Mr. Speaker, are presiding over the most "Do Nothing Congress" in our Nation's history. They simply cannot govern and it is time for a change.

THE NATION'S CONSENSUS: SECURE OUR BORDERS

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, the topic of this week, the topic of discussion with our constituents, with those who are calling us is illegal immigration and their concern over Mexico's choosing and wanting to sue the United States for defending our borders.

Mr. Speaker, America has reached a consensus and our constituents have reached a consensus on this issue. What they are telling us is secure our borders. Show us a secured border. Show us a plan of action. Allow us to know that we can have our faith restored in your ability to secure this Nation.

We hear from them. They are letting us know that they expect us to uphold our oath to defend and protect this Nation. Mr. Speaker, we are listening. In this body we have been listening. Last fall we took action.

We encourage all to join us in securing the border of this great Nation.

THE REPUBLICAN BUDGET

(Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, at 1 o'clock this morning, the

Republicans in the House of Representatives passed a budget that is fiscally irresponsible; increases the national debt; cuts veterans' health care; cuts student loans; and at the same time, President Bush passed a \$70 billion tax cut bill for the wealthiest of America.

What is just as bad is that the debt limit for our Nation has been increased five times since 2001 under President Bush and the Republicans. This is more than any Presidents that preceded him.

Is this the kind of America that you want? American people, please speak out. Please speak up. We can do better. This is the best Nation in the world. We must change the way we do business in Congress.

One hundred percent of Democrats voted against that budget at 1 o'clock this morning. It is bad for America. It is bad for our families, and we can do better.

THE EFFECTS OF ENERGY COSTS ON OUR AGRICULTURE ECONOMY

(Miss McMORRIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Miss McMORRIS. Mr. Speaker, agriculture is a billion dollar industry in Eastern Washington. And for those of us from Eastern Washington, as well as all across America, we must be promoting policies and projects that are going to help our farmers and ranchers.

Over the past several months, I have heard from our farmers about high energy costs that are hurting their ability to do business. At a time when their profit margins are slim, unexpected increases in energy costs are having a devastating effect.

I recently received a letter from a third generation farmer who prides himself on being a good steward of the land. He has never seen circumstances as severe and depressed. He mentions that the reason we are losing good family farms is because our agriculture economy is unable to absorb the energy costs for fuel and fertilizer. His costs alone are up 66 percent, and fertilizer costs are up 46 percent.

We have the energy resources available here in the United States to solve this problem. We need to be taking steps right now to better meet our energy needs because America needs American energy. It includes increasing supply, conservation, and alternative fuels.

Growing up on a family farm, I learned firsthand about these challenges, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to address this situation.

THE TAX BILL

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, the President signed another tax bill that will add to the Federal deficit. And the

House budget resolution that passed last night, with 100 percent of the Democrats voting against it, contains a provision to raise the debt ceiling for the fifth time on President Bush's watch.

This President and this Congress have squandered the fiscal discipline of the Clinton years of the 1990s and created a legacy of deficits and debt that will erode the standard of living of our children and our grandchildren. This is a record-setting administration, but they are setting the wrong kinds of records.

We have seen the Federal budget deficit set a record in dollar terms. We have seen the national debt rise to a record level. And we have seen our trade deficit and our indebtedness to the rest of the world rise to a record level.

America can do better.

FLOYD COUNTY SCHOOLS

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Floyd County school system on receiving an "outperformer" rating in the Standard and Poor's 2006 School Evaluation report. Floyd County was one of only 20 school districts in the State of Georgia to receive this distinction.

This award recognizes the great work Floyd County schools are doing to educate our children. I know everyone in the community was excited, but not surprised, by this honor, as Floyd County consistently displays exceptional levels of student achievement.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the dedicated Floyd County educators whose hard work earned this award. Floyd County superintendent Kelly Henson, members of the Floyd County School Board, principals, teachers, parents at every school in the system deserve our gratitude for a job well done. I know Floyd County will continue its long tradition as a leader in educational achievement for the State of Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in congratulating the Floyd County school system and in thanking its educators for their dedication to developing the minds of our community's rising leaders.

OLDER AMERICANS

(Mr. HINOJOSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, May is Older Americans Month. Let us celebrate Older Americans Month by passing a budget that will promote their dignity and health.

The once-per-decade White House Conference on Aging put reauthorization of the Older Americans Act at the top of its list of national priorities. I am proud that we are working in a bipartisan manner to pass a consensus

bill to reauthorize this essential law that has built the foundation for our aging network.

However, we must couple reauthorization with real resources. We know that every dollar spent providing a meal or supporting seniors so that they can remain at home and in their communities not only improves their quality of life, but saves entitlement spending on long-term care. That is the genius of the Older Americans Act. Yet we know that the Older Americans Act's purchasing power per individual has dropped by 50 percent since 1980.

It is incumbent upon all of us to step up and invest in these programs. It is one sure way to help control the cost of our growing entitlement programs. It is the right thing to do.

□ 1030

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5386, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2007

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 818 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 818

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5386) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived except as follows: page 73, lines 3 through 8; section 425; and title V. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of House Concurrent Resolution 376, and until a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2007 has been adopted by the Congress, the provisions of House Concurrent Resolution 376 and its accompanying report shall have force and effect in the House for all purposes of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 as though adopted by the Congress.

(b) Nothing in this section may be construed to engage rule XXVII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my friend the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution provides for an open rule on H.R. 5386, the Interior Appropriations Act for 2007. It provides for 1 hour of general debate, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Interior Subcommittee on Appropriations.

The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill, except for certain legislative provisions which are specified under the text of the rule.

For purposes of the amendment, the rule provides for priority recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I am pleased to stand and introduce this rule as well as the underlying legislation. I appreciate the hard work and the hard choices that have been done by the subcommittee members, specifically Chairman TAYLOR and Ranking Member DICKS, as well as the full committee under the leadership of Chairman LEWIS and many others who have played an essential role in putting this budget together, which actually comes in at \$145 million less than last year's enacted levels.

This important measure provides funding for the entire Department of Interior, except for the Bureau of Reclamation, for the U.S. Forest Service within the Department of Agriculture, for the Indian Health Service within the Health and Human Services Department, the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as other programs.

At the same time, this measure provides for a moderate increase over the President's proposed budget for the Forest Service, for the National Park Service, EPA, Environmental programs and management.

This budget provides for \$5.9 billion to programs for Native Americans, including three new health centers in underfunded and depressed areas. It provides for a fully-funded National Fire Plan, eliminating duplications, which will result in the stopping of wildfires from getting out of control and becoming more expensive and damaging to both people, as well as wildlife and the environment.

There is land acquisition, which has been reduced to \$60 million for in-holding, which is significant and important to do, but it is significant that it does not add inventory to our public land policies that are above and beyond what we can already afford.

There is one particular note of significance to me I wish to address, that this bill provides \$228 million for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program at the Department of Interior. This figure is \$30 million above what the President requested, and I appreciate the efforts of Chairman TAYLOR, ranking member DICKS and the entire committee in providing the restoration of funds. However, it is still below the \$332 million that was provided for in last year's budget, and significantly below the authorized level of \$350 million, which would be there today.

If one were to draw a line from Montana through New Mexico on the map, everything west of that line has 57 percent ownership by the Federal Government. Everything east of the line is 4 percent ownership by the Federal Government.

When the western States, which I live in one, entered this country under their enabling acts, there were legal commitments that were made, that in the 1950s the Federal Government unilaterally changed and since that time have been repeatedly changing. In fact, there are several amendments that have been threatened to be only the floor today which would increase that change in commitment.

No one who does not live in that area understands the significance of Federal ownership of that particular land. Chairman TAYLOR though, having a significant amount of Forest Service land in his district, is one of those that is empathetic to this situation, and we are appreciative of all his efforts in this particular area. I wish the administration were the same. In dealing at one time with an administrative official, he asked me why I was so concerned about all this Federal land; it was simply useless land and no one lived there anyway.

It has to be realized that half of the West is essentially tied up in Federal lands and is controlled by it. Payment in lieu of taxes is not charity, it is simply rent on land that is due to compensate for economic problems created by the Federal Government, created by Federal Government actions, and in contradiction to the deals that were made when these States originally came into the Union.

The Department of Interior took the concept of payment in lieu of taxes from the BLM as an effort, in their words, "to ensure appropriate emphasis," and that it would be a benefit accrued to both Congress, the Department, BLM and to the counties of the West as well.

Since that time, that has not been the case. In fact, in each of the last 2 years, the administration and the OMB have actually cut this particular program, only to have it restored by Congress, which once again I thank Chairman TAYLOR, his committee and his staff for their efforts in that area.

In like contrast though, it is unusual that even though the overall funding for the Interior Department has been