



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 156

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 25, 2010

No. 80

House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. YARMUTH).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 25, 2010.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN A. YARMUTH to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

CONGRESS NEEDS TO CONTROL FEDERAL SPENDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, recently, Speaker PELOSI sent a letter to her committee chairmen asking all of them to chip away at Federal budgetary spending. In addition, Majority Leader HOYER recently wrote an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal urging for shared sacrifice to address the budget crisis this country is facing. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, their rhetoric does not match up to reality.

Budget Chairman JOHN SPRATT even said, "If you can't budget, you can't

govern." Let me repeat that. This is what the Chairman of the Budget Committee said: "If you can't budget, you can't govern." I could not agree more.

It is becoming increasingly clear, Mr. Speaker, however, that House Democrats cannot budget. American families and small businesses are making tough choices in this economic climate. But Democrats continue to spend and to spend.

The Federal Government is spending more per household than ever before and running up a \$1.5 trillion deficit in 2010, the largest deficit since the end of World War II.

Now, how much is \$1 trillion? If you started at day one, at 1 A.D., and spent \$1 million every day, you still would not have spent \$1 trillion.

Despite deficits and debts as far as the eye can see, Democrat leaders do not plan to even pass a budget resolution. Since 1974, when the modern budget process was created, the House has never failed to pass a budget resolution. Speaker PELOSI and Leader HOYER can send all the letters and publish all the op-eds they want, but it does not change the fact there is no significant or legitimate plan to rein in Federal spending or reduce the deficit by them.

The Federal Government now spends over \$31,000 per household, the highest ever. Recent budget deficits have reached unprecedented levels, accounting for 11 percent of the GDP. By comparison, the historical budget deficits, a yearly debt deficit, is only 2.9 percent of the GDP in the past.

Publicly held debt is expected to climb to \$15 trillion by 2020, and when combined with rising interest rates in a post-recovery economic environment, the interest payments on government debt also will skyrocket. CBO projects that the government's annual spending on net interest will more than triple between 2010 and 2020 from \$207 billion to \$723 billion; just the interest. These

deficits are appalling and all more shocking since CBO based these calculations on the complete expiration of the Bush tax cuts, that the alternative minimum tax will never be patched, and that future appropriations would be indexed to inflation. This is something Congress never will do.

Since Democrats have taken over Congress in January 2007, the national debt has increased 42.4 percent. While the Democrat leadership talks a good game about addressing spending, we have yet to see any real action by them.

The first step is to pass a budget to provide us with a blueprint, a simple road map for deficit reduction. The Balanced Budget Act of 1985 set the target date for a budget for April 15, the same day as Tax Day for most Americans. Unfortunately, the April 15 deadline for enacting a budget resolution has long since passed, and we still have no sign of a budget resolution. The Senate has not passed a budget, and the House has not even begun the simple process.

Without a budget, there are no controls in place to rein in spending. It's a sign that Congress lacks the leadership and the willingness to set a framework to limit spending or control entitlement growth. Not passing a budget resolution sends a message to the American taxpayers that Congress is really not serious about addressing the fiscal crisis here, and is unable to meet the challenges of uncontrolled spending and runaway deficits.

This entire situation, obviously, is getting out of control. When someone goes for debt counseling, the first step is to cut up the credit cards and live within your means. Congress needs to rein in Federal spending and to start living within its means. The answers are not higher taxes on out-of-work Americans, such as a Value Added Tax. That's why I've joined with my colleagues to send a letter to the National

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H3747

Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform to not increase taxes through a VAT tax as a means of balancing the budget.

High taxes aren't the solution, less spending is. We must reduce the spending of this Federal Government if we are to exercise fiscal responsibility.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Democrat leadership continues to talk a good game, but has not yet shown a willingness to act in any significant measure to get our fiscal house in order.

LET'S GET OUR FACTS STRAIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I was going to talk about energy, but listening to my friend from Florida, I am compelled to respond.

First of all, the Democratic Party is called the Democratic Party, not the Democrat Party. We are democratic, and we give the same respect to our Republican fellows. I would hope that we would show more respect on the floor in properly referring to the Democratic Party by its proper name.

But maybe much more important, let's get our facts straight. When President Clinton left office in 2000, he left this country with a surplus, with three back-to-back budget surpluses, and surpluses as far as the eye could see, under Democratic economic management, a booming economy that created more jobs than any other administration in history, and economic and budget surpluses that actually had created some concern on Wall Street that we were going to fully pay down the national debt over the next 10 or 12 years and put in jeopardy the treasury market and the bond market. There were actually stories wringing their hands about that.

In 8 brief years, the Bush administration and their allies in this Congress took care of that. They took record surpluses and turned them into record deficits. Three things alone added \$6 trillion to the national debt: unpaid wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; an unpaid new entitlement program, the Medicare part D drug prescription benefit; and, of course, the unpaid Bush tax cuts that we were told by Republican friends on that side of the aisle would lead to unprecedented prosperity, enormous economic activity. It would unleash innovation, creativity and job creation in America.

You know what? It led to the most anemic job growth, barely positive, in any Presidency. As a matter of fact, this year alone, the economic policies of this Democratic President will create more jobs than were created in the entirety of the 8 years of the Bush administration and their allies here in the Congress.

They led to unprecedented debt accumulation in the United States. They took a record surplus and turned it

into a record deficit. That's their record.

The idea that they have clean hands, and they can come back to us, the American public, and tell us how we ought to manage our fiscal house, when they're the ones that put the fiscal house in disorder, they're the ones who ran this economy into a ditch, the worst economic meltdown in 80 years, the worst economic meltdown on Wall Street, the worst job performance in generations, an economy that was absolutely in a tailspin and close to the precipice of depression. That's their record. And to come to the floor and lecture us on how we ought to manage the fiscal house is a bit much.

The idea that somehow it's unprecedented that we haven't adopted a budget resolution—really? Because in the 12 years the Republicans were in charge of this Congress, for 4 of them they failed to pass a budget resolution, and somehow the Republic did not come to an end.

So lecturing us about whether or not we're going to have a budget resolution this year, let's get at what's really important: Are we going to get our arms around this economy?

Well, on our record, in 15 brief months, this economy is now growing again. Jobs are being created again. I've sat and listened to my friends on the other side frequently say, Where are the jobs? Well, we've actually created a lot of jobs now in the private sector, and we're going to create a lot more, it's estimated, in the balance of the year, a lot more than they did in the 8 years in which they were in charge.

We inherited a mess, a fiscal mess and an economic mess, and we've had the untidy task of having to clean it up. But we're doing it, and we're showing results. And what we don't need is lectures on the floor about how to do it the way they did it in the 8 years in which they were in charge.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 40 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Florida) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

"The sufferings of the present, Lord, are nothing compared to the glory to be revealed for us."

So as children of promise, we live with undying hope.

Empowered by Your Spirit, we work in this world as the free children of revelation, knowing we can change and we can change the world around us.

As their Representatives in government, help Members to undertake the sufferings of Your people and the birth pangs of new creation; that in and through Your redeeming love and purified wisdom, a new order of prosperity and peace may be established for the whole created world, both now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 4173. An act to provide for financial regulatory reform, to protect consumers and investors, to enhance Federal understanding of insurance issues, to regulate the over-the-counter derivatives markets, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 707. An act to enhance the Federal Telework Program.

S. 2868. An act to provide increased access to the General Services Administration's Schedules Program by the American Red Cross and State and local governments.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 4173) "An Act to provide for financial regulatory reform, to protect consumers and investors, to enhance Federal understanding of insurance issues, to regulate the over-the-counter derivatives markets, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House of Representatives on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and that on May 25, 2010, appoints: Mr. DODD, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. REED, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CORKER, and Mr. GREGG, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate, and from the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry appoints: Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr.