

give notice that I will seek recognition as a question of the privileges of the House to offer a resolution in the following form. The resolution is at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will read the resolution for the gentleman from Mississippi.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. —

Whereas clause 1 of rule IX of the Rules of the House of Representatives states that "Questions of privilege shall be, first, those affecting the rights of the House collectively";

Whereas article 1, section 9, clause 7 of the Constitution states that: "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by law;

Whereas today, December 21, 1995, marks the 81st day that this Congress has been delinquent in fulfilling its statutory responsibility of enacting a budget into law; and

Whereas by failing to enact a budget into law this body has failed to fulfill one of its most basic constitutionally mandated duties, that of appropriating the necessary funds to allow the Government to operate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Committee on Rules is authorized and directed to forthwith report a resolution providing for the consideration of H.R. 2530 (a bill to provide for deficit reduction and achieve a balanced budget by fiscal year 2002).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair advises the gentleman from Mississippi that under rule IX, a resolution offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House has immediate precedence only at a time or a place designated by the Speaker in the legislative schedule within 2 legislative days, its being properly noticed. That designation will be announced at a later time. In the meantime, the form of the resolution proffered by the gentleman from Mississippi will appear in the RECORD at this point.

The Chair is not at this point making a determination as to whether the resolution constitutes a question of privilege. The determination will be made at the time designated for consideration of the resolution.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, would the Chair be kind enough to give me some indication of how much warning that I would receive as a Member as to when this would be brought before the House?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will give adequate notice, as has always been the case.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Could the chair give a better definition of "adequate notice"?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Not at this time.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. I thank the Chair.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 119

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name

removed as cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 119.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the majority leader about the schedule.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY].

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, first of all let me express my appreciation for the patience of the Members over these days leading up to the holidays. I know that it has been difficult for Members and their families, but today I am more hopeful that the end is in sight.

I am pleased to announce that today there were very productive discussions between senior White House officials and Members of the House and Senate leadership. I am also pleased to announce that starting tomorrow morning budget negotiations will begin between the congressional leadership and the President on balancing the budget.

It is our hope that these negotiations will be successful and expeditious. We believe that these negotiations, if conducted seriously, could be completed very quickly, perhaps in only a few days. It is our intention to bring to the floor as quickly as possible any agreement that balances the budget in 7 years using CBO numbers. At the same time, I do not want to keep Members in town unnecessarily. I will be announcing tomorrow a more definitive schedule for the next several days, but my expectation is to have the House in recess pending word of an agreement.

Depending on how the negotiations go tomorrow morning, the recess could be only for a day or two or it could last until Wednesday. I will recommend that the Members make plane reservations for sometime after 3 tomorrow afternoon, but understand that, if negotiations are moving quickly, we may stay to complete a balanced budget. I am sorry I cannot be more specific at this time.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I would like to advise our Members that we have had the last vote of the evening, but we will have important work in the morning. I will be, in a moment, asking unanimous consent for a 9 a.m. time to commence work in the morning. But if that is granted, we would be dealing with House Resolution 299, a proposal for House royalty changes, possibly the ICC conference report. If we can work out all the details related to it, it may be possible tomorrow that we may be able to take up legislation that would affect D.C. government funding and AFDC.

So we still have important work for us to do tomorrow. We hope to be able

to conclude it expeditiously and get Members on their way. Again, let me remind Members, we would be in under those conditions, under recess. We would continue to work, and, as soon as something of import were available, we would give Members ample notice and then bring them back as quickly as possible to reconvene the House and complete that work.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, the other day the gentleman assured us that we would have a 24-hour notice on any return during the recess, the one we had prior. Is that still the standard that we could all be able to live with so that we could come from wherever we may be with family?

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's point. Mr. Speaker, I should say that I believe, in fact, I assured 12 hours.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, 12 hours did the gentleman say?

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, that was the position I took before. I do understand the problems of travel. I can assure that there would be definitely a 12-hour notice before we would convene business. I will try to be as considerate as I possibly can to make sure Members from the most remote locations have an opportunity to get back.

I understand how difficult it is. I would like to be, I would like to guarantee a 24-hour. I am just not sure that I could make such a guarantee and make it stick. But I think I can say with total confidence Members would have a 12-hour notice.

Mr. FAZIO of California. The problem, of course, is going to be that Members are going to be perhaps at greater than normal distance. Their staff is unlikely to be at post here. It may be more difficult for Members to get reservations during the holiday season. All of these things complicate the ability to do a short-time turnaround, and therefore I think, more than last week, we probably will need at least 24 hours for Members to be able to be here for what could be among the most important votes of this session.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman's point is well taken. Let me just say that I will address the issue with all the generosity and advance notice that I am able to give.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, if I could ask the gentleman about the schedule that he has outlined for tomorrow. I have been told that the State of California, that I represent, has a billion and a quarter dollars in Medicaid payments that are needed for us to be able to make our commitments to all the providers and to the people who are beneficiaries of the MediCal Program in our State.

I noticed and I think there is tremendous relief on this side of the aisle that we will be dealing with the AFDC issue that just yesterday we were told was not an issue. Is there any possibility that we could deal with the Medicaid problem in terms of meeting the requirements? At least several of our

States, I think, are up against a cash flow crisis.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, let me say I share the gentleman's optimism with respect to D.C. funding and AFDC funding. It is only fair for me to say that it is not clear that we will be able to deal with those two issues. We are working with a good many people and, assuming we get the appropriate agreements, we are hopeful to deal with those two issues. As far as the other issue the gentleman raised, I can only say I will take it under consideration at this time.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Could the gentleman tell me, is there any possibility that the telecommunications conference report would be completed? I know that many were hoping that that issue could be dealt with before the first of the new year?

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I could just say to the gentleman that it is unlikely that the issue will be available to be brought to the floor prior to the 27th or 28th of this month.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY].

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, if I could inquire of the majority leader, when does he intend to be going to the Committee on Rules to obtain a rule for whatever action would be contemplated taken with D.C., AFDC, Medicaid, or, I understand now that the gentleman has several other significant problems which he was not aware of last night.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I can only say to the gentleman from Wisconsin it is my hope that it will be unnecessary to go to the Committee on Rules with respect to these issues. We are hoping to do them by unanimous consent. I must say in all seriousness it is very difficult for me to see how we could do them unless we do them that way.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I do not think that it is appropriate for this House to deal with considerations such as that under unanimous consent because it would preclude our opportunity to discuss in any meaningful way whatsoever the issues that are before us. It would also preclude us from trying to amend it in any way to deal with other legitimate concerns and needs. I would urge the gentleman, if he wants this considered on the square, to do it the way it ought to be done, which is to go to the Committee on Rules.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, let me remind the gentleman, I understand the gentleman from Wisconsin makes a point, and that is to be taken seriously. Obviously we understand the need for Members to speak. We would hope in the interest of being expeditious in these matters that the debate time would not be lengthy. But certainly there would be an opportunity for Members to express their points of view.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would continue to yield, will the gentleman assure us that there will be an opportunity for us—let me put it this way. If there are certain specific programs which are to receive the favored attention of the House, I would like to know how we might also get into play several other crucial programs that also ought to be brought to the attention of the House. We cannot do that under unanimous consent unless we have an initial request which makes it possible to do so. That is why I think it would be preferable to go to the Committee on Rules if the gentleman is looking for cooperation from those who have other legitimate concerns.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, if I may respond at this point, I would say that we have had serious discussions that have lasted most of the day on the two issues I have mentioned. We feel confident we have an opportunity to act.

We think it is a very narrow and a very necessary effort to be made. The opportunity to do so is very limited. We want to exercise that, and we will pursue it the best we can. But I must say to the gentleman that I would be constrained to believe that, if we could in fact achieve what we have hoped to achieve in the two areas before mentioned, we would have achieved all that is possible at this time.

□ 1745

Mr. OBEY. If the gentleman would continue to yield, I want to make it clear to the gentleman that, if he expects to put us in a box tomorrow in which we are asked to provide for the opening of the Government only for a few narrow categories, we expect to have the right to try to expand that opportunity to open the Government, and if he expects us to cooperate on any unanimous-consent agreement, I think then he needs to understand right now that we need some cooperation in that respect.

Mr. ARMEY. If the gentleman from California would continue to yield, I would only say to the gentleman from Wisconsin we are responding to concerns that were raised to us by Members from the gentleman's side of the aisle, we are trying to do so behalf of their genuine concern, and if the gentleman from Wisconsin objects to our efforts, I regret that. I will continue to work with those people with whom I have been working, making every effort I can to respond to the needs we have been discussing, and I hope that it is possible for us to conclude these efforts we have been making satisfactorily.

Mr. OBEY. If the gentleman would continue to yield, I think a number of Members would be very disturbed if they are asked to provide an opportunity to only open the District of Columbia Government without also having an opportunity to try to open up the Government for all taxpayers.

Mr. ARMEY. If the gentleman would continue to yield, I would just say that

the body is always, of course, prepared to deal with disturbed Members.

Mr. FAZIO of California. If I could ask the gentleman to give us a little more finite response about tomorrow's schedule, my understanding is the only issue that is absolutely certain to be before us is the royalty rule change; is that correct? The others are all hopeful, but not necessarily definite, items; is that correct?

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield?

Mr. FAZIO of California. I am happy to.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I have grown to be accustomed to attaching probabilities. Absolute certainty, I think, is a good characterization of probability for House Resolution 299, extremely high probability for ICC conference report. I am very optimistic, and until a few minutes ago I was optimistic about the other two matters as well.

Mr. FAZIO of California. May I ask how long the gentleman expects us to be here? I have heard from 9 to 3. Is it possible that the bulk of that time would be taken up with the debate on the rule change? That is, I understood, a 3-hour debate potential.

Mr. ARMEY. If the gentleman would yield, I do not think it will be that long. The Committee on Rules, I am just told, has not in fact met yet, but I do not believe it will be that much time. We are sensitive to having had a year's experience, if the gentleman would continue to yield, and we are sensitive to the nature of schedules of our airlines, and it is our hope and we believe that we can be maximumly responsible for the needs of the maximum number of Members if we can have a target for 3 o'clock because of just the rigors of the airline schedules.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Finally, let me wrap up with this one, Mr. Leader.

Is it the gentleman's position that the only thing that would call us back would be an issue related to a continuing resolution or a balanced-budget proposal? There would be no other legislation that would be considered during this proposed recess period; is that correct?

Mr. ARMEY. If the gentleman would yield, the recess period authority I think takes us until Wednesday evening, Wednesday. Certainly within that framework the only thing that would interrupt the recess would be the balanced budget, and, if I might, obviously we would have to come to terms with the end of that recess authority on Wednesday, but it would be a useful thing, I think in the interests of all our Members on Monday or Tuesday, Tuesday at least, to check their whip phone. We will try, if there is any information to share, we will try to get it over the whip phones for our colleagues.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed with an amendment a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 132. Joint resolution affirming that budget negotiations shall be based on the most recent technical and economic assumptions of the Congressional Budget Office and shall achieve a balanced budget by fiscal year 2002 based on those assumptions.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2539) "An Act to abolish the Interstate Commerce Commission, to amend subtitle VI of title 49, United States Code, to reform economic regulation of transportation, and for other purposes."

The message also announced that the Senate had passed a concurrent resolution of the following titles, in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 37. Concurrent resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make technical changes in the enrollment of the bill (H.R. 2539) entitled "An Act to abolish the Interstate Commerce Commission, to amend subtitle IV of title 49, United States Code, to reform economic regulation of transportation, and for other purposes".

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAMP). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. DICKEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. DICKEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. POSHARD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. POSHARD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

BALANCE THE BUDGET BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. DUNCAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, this past Friday night, "Nightline" had a special program entitled "Mr. Longley Goes to Washington."

This program was about our colleague, the gentleman from Maine [Mr. LONGLEY], and the very strong commitment by him and the other House Republican freshmen to balance our budget.

Mr. LONGLEY said at one point that if we do not get our fiscal house in order, "we are going to have a crash that will make the Great Depression look like a party at the beach."

I thought his was a very strong but very appropriate and accurate way of describing the situation we are in now.

There is hardly anyone today, on either side who disagrees with the goal of balancing our budget.

We simply cannot go on like we have without causing very serious economic problems.

Yet some people just pay lip service to this goal. They say, yes, we need to balance the budget, but—

And it is this "but" that has gotten us \$5 trillion into debt—so deeply into debt that many people think we will never get out without greatly inflating our money.

I take the floor at this time, Mr. Speaker, because I am sure there are many people who think—well it would be good to balance the budget, but it really does not make that much difference to them.

Let me try to explain why this does make a difference, and a very big difference to everyone, even those making minimum wage, and those receiving food stamps or other Federal benefits, and students, and everyone else.

First, as Mr. LONGLEY said, we could very easily have a major economic crash in a few years if we do not straighten this mess out.

That may be hard to believe when the stock market is at record highs, but the stock market was at record highs just before the Great Depression of the 1930's.

Second, times are good now for some, but they could and should be good for everyone.

People making \$5 or \$6 an hour could and should be making two or three times what they are if we did not have a national debt of \$5 trillion holding us back economically.

Third, anyone who is receiving any type of Federal check should be insisting that we balance this budget.

If we don't, it won't be long at all before we will no longer be able to meet our obligations to veterans, Social Security recipients, Federal retirees, and others.

Fourth, buried in the fine print of our last budget, and something that was picked up and written about by

former Senator Paul Tsongas, is the fact that young people of today will have to pay average lifetime tax rates of an incredible 82 percent if we don't get things under control.

If we keep going like we have been, we will absolutely destroy the standard of living of our children and grandchildren. They won't be able to buy a tenth of what we do now.

Fifth, no one—young or old, should be misled into believing that balancing the budget in 7 years requires anything radical or extreme.

All we seem to hear about are cuts—cuts—cuts. But the Washington Post columnist James K. Glasman called the Republican budget the "No Cut Budget."

All we are trying to do is to slow spending increases down to about 3 percent each year, about where inflation has been for the last 10 to 12 years.

Federal spending right now is almost three times what the first Reagan budget was—an almost 300 percent increase in 15 years.

Almost no private businesses are spending three times what they were 15 years ago. Very few employees in the private sector are receiving salaries three times higher than they were 15 years ago.

And that brings us one more very important point, Mr. Speaker. The middle class is being wiped out, and the gap between the rich and the poor is growing rapidly.

Why? Because of big government, that's why. Our Federal Government has become too big, and very few have received the benefits from this, at the expense of the very many.

Federal bureaucrats have benefited, because they pay and retirement benefits have gone way up.

Federal contractors have benefited, because they have been allowed to reap exorbitant profits, because even with exorbitant profits, they can still do things more cheaply and efficiently than our Federal bureaucracy can.

Extremely big business has benefited because they get most of the big Federal contracts, most of the favorable regulatory rulings, and favorable tax breaks.

Federal rules and regulations have a much greater impact and a much more harmful effect on small business than on large ones. In fact, big government has forced many small business out of existence or into merging with other larger companies.

Thus, the big get bigger, and the small go by the wayside. This is not a conspiracy, but simply an inevitable consequence of big government.

The only really fair system, Mr. Speaker, the only system where an average person without great capital or great political influence really has a chance, is a true free enterprise, free market system.

What we have today is a free enterprise system that has been greatly and unfairly distorted by a big government that favors big, well-connected companies.