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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. COBLE].

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 29, 1996.

I hereby designate the Honorable HOWARD COBLE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of May 12, 1995, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority and minority leader limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] for 5 minutes.

NO MORE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, no more Government shutdowns. That seems like a silly warning in the middle of the summer, when the end of the fiscal year still is 2 months ahead of us. The fiscal year, as everyone knows, for the Congress of the United States, for the Government of the United States, ends on September 30. If indeed there be no budget enacted by that date, then the next day the Government has to shut down, unless one of two things could occur: One, a full budget would be

passed in the last hours so that a new budget would be in place on the first day of the new fiscal year, October 1; or the Congress, in its wisdom, along with an agreement from the White House to issue a temporary funding stream to allow the negotiators more time to bring about a full budget, would enter into a continuing resolution, a temporary funding mechanism, from October 1, to, let us say, November 1, giving another month to the negotiators to bring about what we all hope would be the case, a full budget for the next fiscal year.

But what has happened quite often, especially in the last year, and dating way back to 1985, in my own experience in the Congress, the Congress has failed to bring about a budget by September 30, and has had to indulge in these temporary funding measures. At the end of each one of those, when there is a breakdown in negotiations, then there occurs the threat of a Government shutdown or an actual shutdown.

Let me give you the most egregious example of what occurred when, in one previous session, the Congress failed to bring about a budget by September 30.

Our youngsters, the members of the Armed Forces in that era, 1991, were gathering in the deserts of the Middle East under Desert Shield, the deployment of our troops in preparation for Desert Storm.

In December 1990, they were all gathered, 300,000 or 400,000 strong, our young men and women, our fellow citizens, our Armed Forces, and in the middle of their preparation to do battle with the forces of Saddam Hussein, there was a Government shutdown.

Now, is that not a sad thing to contemplate, to have the Armed Forces ready to do battle, and their Government, our country, shuts down its Government?

This did not deter them, this event back home, from continuing to gear up for the eventual battle. But the point

is, how can we as a people and Congress continue to sustain the threat of a Government shutdown, for any purpose? Not only does it look awful, and it is awful, but then there are payless paydays for people who work for the Federal Government, there is the threat of Social Security checks and veterans benefits and other matters on which fellow citizens rely which would come to a sleekening halt, or special measures would have to take place to do them.

Anyway, we have to end Government shutdowns. Now, I have proposed, since 1988 I believe, almost every year, and I have gone before the relevant committees to discuss this issue, and I came up with a proposal. My fear is that it will not pass because it makes common sense, but I am going to keep trying.

Here is the way this works: If on September 30, the end of the fiscal year, there is no new budget in place, then on October 1, the next day, automatically under my proposal there would be reenacted and will come into play last year's budget automatically, until a new budget can be enacted.

That means that there will never be a Government shutdown as long as we operate in the Congress of the United States. Because even if they enter into a continuing resolution, the temporary funding mechanism, at the end of that period, if they still have not produced a budget, where today we would have the threat of a Government shutdown, we would have an instant replay of the then current temporary funding measure, thus Government would go on until the budget is put into its final face.

That is what I have proposed. Now, there are some questions. Does this rob the appropriators, the people whose job it is to produce the appropriations bills, to have them signed by the President? We think not.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to end Government shutdowns.

□ 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.



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