

years is Erv Witucki, who has been a member of the sponsoring organization, the Munger Volunteer Firemen Corps, for the entire 41 years.

Not only has Erv been a member of the sponsoring organization since the festival's inception, he has also served as the festival's chairman for 20 years, from 1960 to 1981, and its co-chairman or honorary chairman for the remaining 21 years. He nurtured the festival's growth from a small, two day local event, to one which attracted over 30,000 people each year as a major regional 4 day event.

I can personally remember going to this event as a small child, and thinking how grand it was. As I grew, so did this festival, so that the image I had of this wonderful event as a child only grew with me. This is because of the hard work of Erv Witucki during those formative years. The impact this festival has had on other young people has been phenomenal because it isn't just for a 4-day celebration of the importance of the production of a key commodity, potatoes, to this town, but an opportunity to raise funds that have an impact on youth throughout the year. Recreation projects such as softball programs, tennis courts, playground equipment and picnic areas, a pavilion and volleyball courts, and an annual Halloween party for children are all the direct result of this festival.

Erv has given to his community. He and his wife Marie have been blessed with 4 children and now 11 grandchildren. He has served as Merritt Township treasurer for 28 years, and has been extremely active with St. Norbert Church in Munger.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Munger are very grateful to Erv Witucki and the others who have volunteered their time and effort to make their community a better place. I urge you and all of our colleagues in joining me in offering thanks to Erv Witucki.

#### THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 29, 1995

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington report for Wednesday, November 22, 1995, into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

#### THE BUDGET BATTLE

As the federal government shut down on November 14, many Hoosiers found themselves angry about the dispute that precipitated the shutdown, unsure about how long it would last, and concerned about how it might affect them.

The shutdown occurred because Congress has not completed action on all of the measures to provide funding for the government during the current fiscal year, which began on October 1. A short-term funding measure, called a continuing resolution (CR), was passed in September and gave Congress until November 14 to enact spending bills. But by that date only three of the thirteen appropriations bills had been signed into law.

Congress and the President have not been able to agree to extend the CR. The congressional leadership attached a number of provisions to the second continuing resolution, including an increase in Medicare premiums. President Clinton objected to these provisions, and vetoed the measure. With my sup-

port, Congress then passed a continuing resolution that would keep the government open until December 5 and called for balancing the budget in seven years. However, President Clinton also vetoed this measure.

On November 14, some 800,000 of the federal government's two million civilian employees were furloughed. Many federal government offices were closed, including national parks and museums. New applications for federal benefits, such as Social Security, could not be processed, though payment of Social Security and Medicare benefits continued. The Agriculture and Energy Departments remained open because their funding and been approved. In addition, employees vital to the safety and health of the public, such as air traffic controllers and guards in federal prisons, were kept on duty, as were those on active duty in the military.

A short-term shutdown of the federal government produces plenty of frustration, inconvenience and confusion, but probably little enduring harm. Congress has typically ensured that federal workers receive pay for the time they spend on furlough. However, a longer shutdown could create major problems for many people. Companies with federal contracts, individuals receiving veterans' benefits, and federal employees could see their payments delayed.

In addition, shutting down the government is expensive. Pay for furloughed federal employees is estimated to cost about \$150 million per day. The shutdown process itself—preparing plans, notifying employees, securing property and so forth—also carries a price.

But perhaps the greatest cost of the shutdown is that it simply reinforces the cynicism and bitterness so many Americans feel about the federal government, particularly elected officials. They see the shutdown as the result of the partisan bickering and political posturing, and they place blame on leaders of both parties for gridlock.

Complicating the situation further is disagreement on raising the federal debt limit. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin has taken a number of steps to ensure that the federal government remains below the debt limit, since at that point the government could no longer borrow money to meet its obligations. A default by the federal government could have serious, long-term implications for the American economy, though no one really knows how the markets would react. The big unknown is that much of the debt is held in places abroad where the understanding of American politics is meager. In any event, my view is that we should do everything we can to avoid default. There is no good reason to push the nation to the edge of financial catastrophe.

I agree with those who find the current standoff unnecessary and counterproductive. Both sides are engaging in political theater at the expense of substance. Congress has had several months to complete work on the appropriations bills. Voters expect us to work together to get the government's business done, and we should do so.

The current standoff is essentially not about short-term funding, but about competing views on how to balance the budget. The congressional leadership is trying to use the spending and debt limit legislation, where they have a lot of leverage, to force the President to sign the reconciliation bill—the bigger fight where they have little leverage. This is the most difficult struggle over budget priorities I have seen since I have been in Congress. It is a high-stakes dispute over what the role and the priorities of the federal government should be over the next several years.

The short-term solution to the shutdown of the government may appear manageable, but

it is extremely difficult to see the solution to the long-term division between the President and the congressional leadership. The real fight comes when Congress passes the reconciliation bill and the President vetoes it. What is at stake there is the future of Medicare, Medicaid, the welfare system, rules governing the environment, and federal efforts in education, employment training and technology.

We must take several steps to get beyond the current impasse. I believe that sensible compromises are within reach. First, in my view, Congress should enact a "clean" continuing resolution and debt limit increase, without extraneous policy provisions. Second, we ought to continue negotiations in an effort to enact the rest of the appropriations bills for the current fiscal year. Third, we must to the extent possible seek agreement on policy issues contained in the reconciliation bill.

I suspect in the end we will not be able to resolve all of these major policy differences in 1995. The way out will be to keep the government operating largely under present policies on these unresolved matters and then have a public debate on the budget between now and the 1996 elections. Both sides would then have an opportunity to clarify exactly what they are for. I think this approach would make the voters much more comfortable.

The question with respect to the shutdown is: do we want a battle or a bill? I believe that Hoosiers want the government to get the people's business done. They are tired of this game of political chicken and are not going to view either party in this debate favorably. Both the President and Congress must seek reasonable solutions, not political points.

#### DEPENDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FEDERAL LIFE INSURANCE PROTECTION ACT

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 29, 1995

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Dependents With Disabilities Federal Life Insurance Protection Act of 1995. The bill would permit a Federal retiree over the age of 65 to continue additional optional life insurance coverage when the beneficiary is a person with a disability. In this case, the disability would have to be one which could be expected to last permanently and would prevent an individual from fully providing for himself/herself. The retiree would also be responsible for the total premium, limiting the cost to the Government.

Currently, Federal workers can continue the additional optional life insurance coverage, irrespective of age. However, when these individuals reach age 65 and are retired, the insurance is reduced and then subsequently stopped. There have been cases in which Federal workers have continued working beyond the normal retirement age in an effort to continue this coverage for their dependents with severe disabilities.

Without a provision for a dependent with a disability, upon the retiree's death, the dependent would become a public responsibility, with potential budgetary implications at the national, State, and local levels. This provision would be consistent with the thrust of the 1990 Americans With Disabilities Act [ADA]. The act