

passed and been signed into law on October 1.

By just this week, I believe we now have seven that have been signed into law. We still have six, and they are fairly big ones, that have not been signed into law. Some of them have not even been taken up by the other body.

I yield to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN], a member of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. DURBIN. I would like to report to my colleague from West Virginia that I just left the conference committee on the District of Columbia. The gentleman would not believe what is going on there.

The Republicans have failed to enact the District of Columbia appropriations bill which was due October 1. We are now almost 3 months into this fiscal year. The District of Columbia Government, their local funds as well as Federal funds, are all appropriated funds, so this government is literally running without authority.

In providing police protection, they are trying to keep the streets safe for us to drive on, they are trying to keep the community as safe as they can for the tourists who are visiting Washington, and some of my colleagues who have just joined me on the floor here from the State of Georgia as well as from the State of Wisconsin blame President Clinton for this. They said the President is responsible, and yet the fact is we have not sent the appropriation bill to the President, almost 3 months into this fiscal year.

#### A REPUBLICAN VIEW OF THE BUDGET PROCESS

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I want to take up where the gentleman from West Virginia just left off. That is, when we talk about in the short term why is the Government in this partial shutdown mode, as it has been called, the gentleman is mechanically correct when he explains how our systems work, that a number of agencies are funded through a total of 13 separate appropriations bills, and of those 13 appropriations bills, 7 have been passed by Congress and signed by the President.

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Once that occurs, there is no longer a need for a continuing resolution to be passed to keep these agencies open, which is to say the agencies function whether there is or whether there is not a continuing resolution.

However, the gentleman did not mention the fact that with respect to the other six appropriations bills, three of them were passed by the Congress and were just recently vetoed by the President of the United States. The appropriations bill for the Veterans' Administration and independent agencies, for the Department of the Interior and for

the Departments of Commerce, State, and Justice, those are contained in three bills that the President vetoed. If the President of the United States had signed the appropriations bills for those agencies, they would be open right now regardless of the impasse over a continuing resolution.

Now, it is important to say that the Democratic side has continually said why does the Congress not do its job and pass appropriations bills, but when we do pass appropriations bills, the President vetoes them.

The gentleman is suggesting that is up to the President of the United States to sign appropriations bills as part of his duties. I do not think they are going to suggest that.

I would like to make the further point, Mr. Speaker, that the President vetoed these bills, these three bills because he felt the amount of spending or other policies within them does not fit his long-term view of where the Government should be going. The President has that prerogative under the Constitution to veto appropriations bills, or any other bills, for that matter. There is a specific procedure in the Constitution for that.

The point I am making is there is no difference, no difference at all, between the President tying long-term policy to his vetoing three appropriations bills which would have reopened those agencies today and the Congress tying the continuing resolution for the rest of the agencies or these agencies, too, without an appropriations bill to Congress' view of a long-term policy for the Government. Both sides are now doing the same thing.

The brings me to the central point of where why I took the floor right now, which is to talk about that long-range policy. Both sides, both the President and the Congress, have said we want to reach a balanced budget, and I hope that goes without saying. The national debt right now is almost \$5 trillion that our children and grandchildren will have to pay back someday.

Further, the interest we have to pay on this borrowed money, and we pay interest on money we borrow like any individual would or any business would, the interest we pay is over \$200 billion a year. That is more than 10 percent of our current budget.

When I talk about the effect, when I hear talk about the effect of spending on programs, imagine how much we could spend on important programs or allowing tax reductions if we had the use of \$200 billion plus a year that taxpayers already send to Washington and, from an economic point of view, we throw out the window because interest buys you nothing. But we have to pay it in order to borrow more, just like anyone else would.

When the Government went through this partial shutdown a month ago, the Government was reopened under an agreement between the President and the Congress that said, among other things, that by the end of the year the parties would reach a balanced budget

in 7 years, using the Congressional Budget Office economic projections, although the Congressional Budget Office was expected to, and I believe has, consulted with other agencies and other individuals, and protect certain spending programs. The Congress passed a budget that the Congress believes meets all of those requirements.

Now, I do not agree with every single item and every single choice in that budget. But the Congress as a whole, the majority, believes that it meets the requirements of our agreement of a month ago.

As everyone knows, the President vetoed that budget, vetoed it on the basis it did not adequately protect his spending priorities. Again, that is the President's prerogative.

What the Congress is saying now is, Mr. President, if you believe that the budget we passed does not comply with your priority of spending, show us what your priority of spending is under the terms of an agreement; in other words, put out a budget proposal which is balanced in 7 years and which uses Congressional Budget Office economic projections, and then show us how you would protect your priorities. There is nothing in that that says how the President of the United States has to set spending levels. There is nothing in there that says he has to cut spending for programs or anything else, only that the President of the United States abide by the agreement he made a month ago.

Today the Vice President of the United States said the President refuses to comply with the agreement he made a month ago, and that is why we are at this impasse right now.

#### THE BUDGET IMPASSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COBLE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, the American public must be very perplexed. In addition, of course, we know that they are very angry and, very frankly, a number of us that sit in this body are very angry.

We began this session with the election of a new leadership. Speaker GINGRICH announced a new order, an order committed to revolutionary change. We have had, to some degree, a revolution. It is not, as so many revolutions are, not a pretty thing to watch.

The Contract With America, which was the plan of this so-called revolution, talked about, in two of its first three items, responsibility, personal responsibility, and fiscal responsibility. Personal responsibility was urged on all Americans to do that which would make their lives better and, consequently, the lives of their families and their communities and their State and Nation better and more productive, more successful.