



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 157

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2011

No. 113

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. Ross of Florida).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 26, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DENNIS ROSS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, 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 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

STOP PLAYING GAMES WITH THE DEFICIT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, there is an air of unreality here on Capitol Hill. There are some people with no experience in government, little knowledge, and less regard about the outcomes who are pontificating, lecturing, and threatening. The disconnect between the rhetoric, the reality between governance and an ideological agenda is in large part why we

are in the conundrum we are in today with the debt ceiling, something that has routinely been increased year after year for decades.

It was on full display in the Republican-controlled House yesterday as we debated the Interior appropriation bill. Now remember, last week Republicans took to the floor with a so-called “cut, cap, and balance” proposal, which is their answer going forward with the economy. It would impose an 18 percent of GDP limit on the amount of spending that the Federal Government could employ in any one year. Now remember, that is not what we have done for years. Ronald Reagan never proposed a budget that was even as low as 21 percent of gross domestic product. So it’s a dramatic reduction, more than 14 percent less than anything Ronald Reagan ever proposed.

Well, yesterday in the debate my colleague from Kansas offered an amendment, an amendment that I personally found destructive and unbalanced that would have done terrible things, singling out for elimination the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, zeroing out important resources for construction for fish and wildlife, construction and acquisition of land. It would be a 30 percent reduction in water infrastructure. Overall, it would have been an 11 percent reduction. But at least it was honest.

This is where in fact some of my Republican colleagues want to go. In fact, it is less than what they would have imposed with their proposal the week before. As I argued against the amendment on the floor, I predicted that it would fail overwhelmingly, that many Republicans would vote against it because even though they are willing to make reckless proposals disconnected from reality if the only consequences are polls and politics, when it really comes down to basics, even they don’t want to impose it.

Remember what happened on the floor of the House when we were debating Republican and Democratic alternatives to the budget? The Republican Study Group offered up their proposal that went even further than my friend, PAUL RYAN’s. And when it was passing, we watched Republicans start to twist arms to get people to vote against it because, again, it was something they thought was great politics and theater; but if it came closer to reality, they understood that it would hurt them if the American public understood the real agenda.

Well, we are now at a very serious stage dealing with the debt ceiling. Actions matter. Too many are still acting like they’re on the campaign trail or at a Tea Party rally or on a Fox TV shout-fest. There have already been negative consequences from the reckless action of holding the debt ceiling hostage—American businesses are paying more; there are threats that we’re going to be paying more for interest in the international bond market.

It’s past time to stop this dangerous posturing. There is enough irresponsibility displayed already, we should avoid putting the rhetoric, in effect, into a budget.

Now is the time to stop playing games on the budget deficit. We’ve seen this movie before. The last time the Republicans took control in 1995 there was a debate on imposing a balanced budget amendment. It failed by one vote in the Senate, and it failed with the single Republican “no” vote, Mark Hatfield from Oregon. Senator Hatfield, in a profile in courage, stood up and made clear that he was all in favor of balancing the budget, but not with a gimmick long into the future. He was chair of the Appropriations Committee. He invited his colleagues to make the action by reducing the budget, not playing games with gimmicks. That’s what we should do today.

□ 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.

H5493