

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE BUDGET

HON. MAX SANDLIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 27, 1999

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, a battle over the budget has engulfed Congress. I am saddened by the extent to which the Republican leadership has allowed partisan politics to pollute this distinguished body and shift the budget debate from substance to sound-bites.

With only seven of thirteen spending bills signed into law, the budget for fiscal year 2000 is far from complete. Moreover, Congress has been forced to fund the government through temporary stop-gap spending measures in order to avoid a shutdown of national parks, monuments, agencies, and the federal government. Yet rather than sit down and negotiate with the administration and the Democrats in the House and Senate, Republicans have chosen to take the path of confrontation rather than compromise.

The cause is misplaced priorities, and the effect is a bad budget. Republicans made a choice to fund their own priorities, while completely ignoring the priorities of the American people, Democratic members, and the administration. In the process of drafting spending bills for fiscal year 2000, they shut out the minority and proceeded to go their own way. Now they point fingers when their irresponsible bills are vetoed because they fail to sufficiently fund the priorities of the American people: Programs essential to education, defense, and senior citizens.

Left out of their spending proposals are key Democratic initiatives such as funding for 100,000 new teachers and smaller classes, funding for the COPS program which provides grants to local communities for hiring more police officers, and funding for a Medicare prescription drug benefit. These programs have been completely left out of the Republican budget. Yet when Democrats fight for funding for these key initiatives, we are falsely accused of proposing more spending. The truth is, we do not want more spending. Rather, we advocate different spending. Instead of giving priority to a member pay raise and member earmarked projects, let's fund the initiatives that count. Sadly, Republicans have ignored our pleas and instead chosen to resort to name-calling and groundless accusations.

One of our primary initiatives must be to protect Social Security. I propose taking it completely off-budget. Social Security funds must be used only for Social Security. However, the Congressional Budget Office, the Republican-appointed budget score-keepers, confirm that the Republicans are already on their way to spending at least \$25 billion of the Social Security trust fund.

Adding insult to injury, Republicans have tried to cover up their irresponsible spending and penchant for dipping into Social Security through numerous gimmicks and accounting tricks designed to fool the American people into believing their false claims of good fiscal policy. These gimmicks range from declaring the 2000 census, something which happens every ten years as required by the Constitution, as emergency spending. This spending dips directly into Social Security. In addition to emergency designations, Republicans have also proposed adopting a thirteen-month fiscal year, tried to withhold payment of tax credits to the working poor and "forward-fund" certain programs, thereby attempting to count this year's spending in next year's budget. These gimmicks are dishonest and unacceptable to the American people.

When the administration sent its budget recommendation to Congress almost one year ago, Congress rejected it and promised the American people we would pass an even better budget that protected important programs without dipping into the Social Security trust fund. Rather than fulfill this promise to the people, Republicans have opted for a political showdown. The result is a completely unnecessary, wholly manufactured crisis over the budget.

Republicans have chosen rhetoric over responsibility and taken the partisan path towards a 1.4 percent across-the-board budget cut which will have costly ramifications on critical programs. Specifically, education for the disadvantaged would be cut by \$109 million, literacy programs would be cut by \$3.6 million, and Head Start would be unable to provide services to 6,700 children. Child immunization programs would be cut by approximately \$6.7 million, and vitally needed assistance to farmers would be slashed by \$124 million.

Agricultural income assistance would be cut by \$90 million, and crop and livestock loss payments would be cut by \$22 million. In addition, national security would suffer dearly as \$3.9 billion would be cut from the defense budget. Military pay and readiness would suffer the most. The men and women in the military who risk their lives for our safety and security would suffer a 2.8 percent cut in personnel.

While this battle rages on over the politics of the budget, the American people suffer. As Republicans focus the energy of the Congress on their budget end game, the Patients Bill of Rights, relief for farmers and veterans' benefits face a dismal future. While Republicans devise more gimmicks to cover their tracks, Congress neglects a long overdue increase in the minimum wage, making schools safer for our children, and passing much-deserved tax relief for families, small businesses, and farmers.

In a tragic example of irresponsible governance, the majority party has chosen to fund its

own priorities at the cost of Social Security and drastic budget cuts in education, law enforcement, agriculture, and national security. It's time for Republicans to sit down at the negotiating table and put an end to the budget bickering. It's time for responsible government. Let's choose principle over politics, and let's pass a budget that doesn't short-change the American people.

RECOGNITION OF REV. ALFRED WALKER, JR., AND NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 27, 1999

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Rev. Alfred Walker, Jr., the 12th pastor of the historic New Hope Baptist Church in Dallas, TX.

Reverend Walker has served New Hope Baptist Church with unwavering faith. His fine tradition of spiritual guidance and community service is an inspiration to us all.

New Hope Baptist Church is blessed to have called Reverend Walker its pastor. Likewise, the Reverend was fortunate to serve a church with such a rich history.

New Hope has the distinction of being the first African-American church within the city limits of Dallas entirely organized and owned by African-American people. In the 1870's, Sisters Rainey, Robinson, Drake, Williams, Starke, Taylor, and Brother Jerry Taylor held regular prayer meetings. On July 27, 1873, these spiritual leaders organized their prayer band into a church. Many direct descendants of these pioneers continue to worship at New Hope.

In addition to its religious programs, the church has been a strong force in the community. New Hope sponsored one of the earliest African-American newspapers, and it has offered etiquette and public speaking classes to interested citizens. The church constructed the historic building at 919 Bogel Street, that became the center for cultural, political, and educational activities. Also, the first free public schools for African-Americans in Dallas were organized at New Hope Baptist Church.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the grateful congregation of New Hope Baptist Church, I commend Rev. Alfred Walker, Jr., for his dedication to the church and the community. I also commend Dallas' oldest African-American Christian Witness, New Hope Baptist Church, for 126 years of continuous community service.

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