MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the motion to adjourn offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

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The motion to adjourn was re-adopted.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members. The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 24, nays 379, not voting 31, as follows:

[Roll No. 605]

YEA—24

Baldwin (WI) 31, as follows:

California (Mr. OBEY) each will control 1304

H.J. Res. 82

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Public Law 106–62 is further amended by striking “November 18, 1999” in section 106(c) and inserting in lieu thereof “November 23, 1999.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LA Tourette). Pursuant to House Resolution 385, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This continuing resolution extends the current CR for 5 days, until November 23, 2000, specifically for the purpose of allowing the Senate to have time to consider the measures that we will send them today.

Mr. Speaker, in the interest of allowing our Members to get home to their families and preparing for the Thanksgiving period, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 20 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I would very much like to see Members get home for Thanksgiving, but I think my public duty is to help Members understand what they are going to be voting on before they go home, because otherwise when they do go home, their experience with the news media and angry constituents is not going to be a very pleasant one; and I am afraid there are a lot of nasty surprises in this bill, some of which I will be discussing over the next 12 to 15 hours.

Let me say, first of all, that this bill has been a battleground about national priorities and national direction. It has
been the arena for battles between the President and his allies on one side and his political opponents on the other. By and large, I think it is safe to say that the President has won victory after victory. We are going to be stuck having to extend the government, I am afraid, several times through CRs like this one because of some of the decisions made in the bill that is coming next, and people need to understand how they interrelate.

I think you can say, for instance, that in the area of international leadership, the President and those of us who agree with him have won a great victory in funding the Wye peace process agreement. We have won a very important battle in making sure that debts that would never be repaid are going to be wiped out so that Latin America and Africa can, in fact, come good markets for our products as well as stable neighbors in an ever more complicated world.

We have won the fight to, at least for now, take the U.S. off the list of U.N. deadbeats. On the environmental front, the President has beaten down virtually every antienvironmental rider that was tossed his way. In the fight against street crime, the President won 50,000 new cops.

On the education front, it is important to understand some of the major achievements that we have made. We have seen a lot of people denigrate the President’s effort to provide for 100,000 new teachers. I want to put that effort in context. What Democrats have been fighting for on education in this package is a four-pronged research-based attack on educational incompetence and poor performance. The research shows, for instance, that children do much better when they have small class sizes. That is why the President fought so hard for and won the battle for 100,000 new teachers. That research also shows that, especially at the high school level, students perform better, they exhibit less antisocial adolescent behavior, and there is far less violence in high schools that are smaller.

And so we have an initiative that will provide for smaller high schools, or at least to help local school districts build smaller learning centers within their high schools. The research also shows that students do best when their teachers are well-trained. It sounds obvious, but some people seem to have missed it. So we have an initiative in this bill that will add additional funding for partnership grants between university schools of education and local school districts so that those schools of education are producing the kinds of teachers that the districts actually need. And also in the process, we are trying to raise the standards for those teachers so that they are actually getting a degree in the subject that they are going to wind up teaching, also I guess a shocking idea in some quarters.

And lastly, research also shows that if you want to reform schools, you need to do it from bottom to top and around the clock. That is why this bill adds additional money to the OBEY-PORTER bipartisan comprehensive school reform package.

All of those are very good things. I say that there is no doubt on the major issues that have divided us last 3 months, the President has run the table. He has won on issue after issue.

But I think there are some things that are just as important as winning and losing, and I want to talk about some of them as we discuss this continuing resolution. We are being asked to continue the government a few more days so it gives us time to pass the next bill that is coming at us. I think we need to understand that reform has to be comprehensive, systemic; and that is why this bill adds additional money to the OBEY-PORTER bipartisan comprehensive school reform package.

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There are many things in that package that disturb me. The protracted battle to persuade the majority to allow the United States to pay its back taxes to the United Nations has resulted in a compromise that may still prevent release of all of the funds that are needed to return the U.S. to a position of good standing in the U.N. I think that is regrettable.

The Republican majority was also steadfast in its refusal to provide the Justice Department with the $14 million that they need to pursue tobacco litigation. This money is needed for efforts to recover the hundreds of billions of tax dollars paid through the Medicare trust fund, the Public Health Service, the veterans and military medical systems, and the Social Security disability fund in dealing with tobacco-related illnesses. The tobacco companies that lied repeatedly to the American people about the health effects of smoking should pay a substantial portion of those costs. The Republican majority is clearly trying to protect them from having to repay the taxpayers.

I believe funds will be found by the administration to initiate litigation; but as everybody knows, legal outcomes are often dictated by the relative size of legal war chests. That is one of the things, for instance, that I understand the White House and I take into account when they discussed whether or not to put on that famous “60 Minutes” special which went after the tobacco companies for not telling the truth. I would say that while the appropriation requested by the Justice Department to augment their ability to pursue that issue is small, the long-term fiscal impact on the Federal Government could be enormous; and we have failed to recognize that in the bill that is coming out of conference.

The Republican majority also repeatedly refused to include language that both the White House and I asked them to include to ensure that 100 percent of the money paid from the Medicare and Social Security trust funds is returned to those trust funds if it is recovered in litigation. This was repeatedly raised during negotiations. It is the fair thing to do with those funds. I find it hard to construct an argument that they should be used for a different purpose, but the Republican leadership flatly rejected that concept in both the Senate and the House.

I think the reason (and this was even said in conference,) they did not want to approve this language is because it would provide incentives to proceed with the lawsuit. Well, we ought to proceed with that lawsuit.

I think nothing more clearly underscores or undercuts the hollowness of the claim of the majority that they have suffered a recent conversion and are now strong supporters of Social Security. Nothing is more clearly underscoring of the hollowness of that claim than their current concern over the solvency of those trust funds. It is a concern that suddenly emerged around here after Labor Day when polling data demonstrated to them how badly they had been damaged by their attempts to pass a huge tax bill that cut the rich, using all of the resources needed to strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

Another issue at the center of negotiations was whether to include a small across-the-board cut. This cut was not necessary to reach the offset targets to make sure the bill was paid for; more than enough money was available from other sources. It is simply an attempt by the majority to create a symbol that could be used to pretend that in the midst of this orgy of gimmickry in spending, that they are continuing to be fiscally responsible.

If my colleagues take a look at the dollars being provided across the board by the majority, it is apparent to me that the Republican leadership is willing to spend almost any amount to get out of town, just so long as we can obscure how much that really is through accounting gimmicks. I think that is a big mistake.

The problem with an across-the-board cut is that people say, “My God, any agency head ought to be able to administer a half a percent cut across the board.” Of course they could. They could easily find waste if they are left to their own devices. But that is not the way this across-the-board cut is designed. Their across-the-board cut completely abandons the core responsibility of Congress to determine spending priorities. There are programs that could afford a 1 or 2 or even 10 percent cut. But, instead, the President requires much more limited authority be given to the President, and that means that this Congress ignores the fact that there are some programs that require a
Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, in this bill, for instance, they have decided now that they are going to declare Head Start to be an emergency. It has only been on the books since 1965. I guess we just found out that it is an emergency to deal with these kids. What they are really saying is they have a political emergency that requires them to hide the real cost of this bill from their taxpayers. That is the real emergency designation that is going on here.

Then they move about $4.2 billion in outlays into different years. That saves no money. It simply hides money. They have miscellaneous spending, accounting gimmicks all told of $45 billion on the outlays side, and $43 billion on the budget authority side. If my colleagues want to go home and explain to their constituents that kind of hide-and-seek accounting, that is not my flavor of ice cream.

Let me make one other comment, Mr. Speaker. One of the reasons that I have been so unhappy with this bill, as I said earlier, is that it stands over 1 foot high. I defy anyone to tell me and I have a ruler to prove it, I defy any of my Republican colleagues, I defy any of my Republican colleagues to tell me what is in these authorization bills that they are asking us to swallow. How much are we going to hear? How much are the reporters in the gallery going to dig out after we have left that we do not know about? I am afraid, a lot. But I have to say that what bothers me more than anything is that these accounting gimmicks may appear to be funny, but in fact, they are not funny at all. I would not laugh too long, because what we are witnessing here is something that is immensely corrosive of democracy and this institution’s role in democracy.

Mr. Speaker, the real job that the Congress has each year is to pass a budget. If we cannot be honest with the American people about what we are doing in that budget, I think they have a right to question whether we are being honest with them on anything that we say to them. And the fact is that the list of accounting shell games that are in this bill, not for policy reasons, but for political reasons, I think brings discredit on the entire institution. That is disgrace I guess we are determined to live under a fiction that requires us to pretend that we are spending billions of dollars less than we are actually spending.

Frankly, a lot of this spending is perfectly justifiable. I think that the Republican educational priorities are good. I support them as well as our own. But I do not like the fact that we are hiding what we are doing in the process. I will have more to say about that. But not along the lines.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers except myself.
to close, so I will continue to reserve my time.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) for yielding me this time.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON).

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, the budget process obviously allows us to say what is important to the American people. It is a process where we say some are winners and some are losers. It is a process for the Nation to declare what the priorities are. Obviously we cannot win everything we want so it has to be a compromise, but I can say, Mr. Speaker, the people in North Carolina, where there has been a disaster, never was an emergency declared because it was not politically the right thing. Maybe those who indeed would have said that would have come from Social Security, we are trying to get the kind of help they need out of, not all of just the basic relief, for our farmers which is in doubt.

Now, I want to vote for this bill because there are good things in it. I know there are winners and losers but I can say, Mr. Speaker, that as we go forward I think it says something about the American people when we ignore that over 72,000 people were affected in the region, farmers lost a tremendous amount of their crops. Many of them are going bankrupt and yet there is not the kind of relief that even responds in a very basic way to their needs, not all the relief because we knew an emergency was not declared.

We were willing to fight for that next year, but this year is that $1 billion that was there for marketing. So I would urge, Mr. Speaker, that we look at that to try to make sure that this budget process, as we vote on it, indeed is speaking to the basic need. Some will be winners, some will be losers, but the American Nation should not lose the principle of responding to those who are most desperately in need, while we go forward with such an enormous amount of resources. Eighty-one million dollars is a pittance; it is what is symbolic of what we stand for that we should make sure that as we consider this bill that at least the American farmers know that they were part of the consideration in this budget process.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate and thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), the distinguished ranking member, for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, as we approach yet another CR, with all of the terrible problems that the ranking member has described, I think it fair to say that none has been more harmed by the procedures of the House this year than the people I represent.

Shall I paraphrase Elizabeth Barrett Browning? How shall I dislike it? Let me count the ways.

What is this bill? The Commerce, Justice, State, Foreign Ops, Interior, Labor, HHS, DC bill, plus? All of our appropriations that remain have been packed on to the tiny D.C. appropriation. Five hundred thousand people are being used to take 300 million, or bills for 300 million, across the finish line, and the Nation’s capital be damned; we just have to wait to spend our own money, understand, because almost all of the money in the D.C. appropriation is money raised in the District of Columbia.

Obviously I have to be for it, What kind of position does that put me in? The disgrace as affects the Nation’s capital is outflanked only by what the procedures of the House this year have done for democracy itself and how we have displayed ourselves before the people of the United States. We have become, in and of ourselves, a threat to democracy. We have made democratic procedures a living joke on C-SPAN.

We are going to have before us a bill brimming with controversy. There is the international family planning gag rule that is certain to take the lives of countless of the poorest women in the world, with no chance to debate it up and down. There is the dairy controversy we have heard so much about today.

In a democracy, we vote our differences up and down. In a democracy we even vote our compromises up and down. This House has become an embarrassment to itself. However, I am very glad the Nation has been able to see it because maybe when we go home there will be a backlash that will keep us from ever doing this again.

The delay, with another CR, has needlessly harmed the people of the District of Columbia right at a time when we have gotten a new reform mayor and a reform city council. This has not made an ounce of difference to this body. The reputation of the House has been permanently damaged as an institution. We can reclaim it only by returning to regular order and democratic procedures.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remainder of the time.

Mr. Speaker, as I understand it section 1001 of the omnibus bill effectively waives the pay-as-you-go rules for all of the authorizing legislation included in the omnibus package. It also effectively, as I understand it, waives the pay-as-you-go rules for the outyear effects of other legislation passed this legislation.

I would like to ask the leadership of this House why these rules are being
waved and how much spending is not being counted as a result of that? We have CBO scoring on the omnibus package. Can anyone tell us the amount of spending covered by these budget waivers?

I would also ask why Members’ pay was exempted from this across-the-board cut when it was included in the previous across-the-board cut that was made?

I think those are but some of the questions that Members ought to be asking before they vote on the budget that is coming at us later this afternoon.

I would also say, Mr. Speaker, I regret the time that we have taken but I think every hour that we spend gives Members an additional opportunity to understand what is in these bills, and I think in the end that serves the interest of every Member and the taxpayers that they are trying to represent.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remaining time.

Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to all of the discussion and the debate from the Members on the other side of the aisle, and if any of that debate related to this CR that is presently before us I would have a lengthy response, but none of that debate relates to this CR. So at this point I would just like to make this suggestion, let us pass the CR and then get on to the appropriations bill that has been the subject of debate using this as a vehicle.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LaTourette). All time for debate has expired.

The joint resolution is considered as having been read for amendment. Pursuant to House Resolution 385, the question is ordered to the Amendments Committee.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LaTourette). The question was taken; and the Yeas and Nays were ordered to be asked for and recorded.

Mr. Speaker moves to recommit the joint resolution to a Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LaTourette). The motion to recommit is agreed to, and the joint resolution is ordered to the Amendments Committee.

The motion to recommit is refused.

The question was taken; and the Yeas and Nays were ordered to be asked for and recorded.
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

HOUSE

November 18, 1999

Mr. OBEY. Yes, I did, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to reconsider the vote by which the House voted to reject the motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LaTOURETTE). Did the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Young) to lay on the table the motion to reconsider?

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move, I move to lay on the table the motion to reconsider.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the joint resolution addressed in section 2 is as follows:

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move, I demand a recorded vote.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the joint resolution addressed in section 2. The House shall be considered as read.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. So the motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The vacancy and unexcused absence have adopted a concurrent resolution containing the provisions of the joint resolution addressed in section 2 of H.R. 3194, making appropriations for the District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 2000.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call immediate consideration.

The Speaker. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Mr. COYNE changed his vote from "no" to "aye". So the joint resolution was passed.

Mr. FROST, Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a co-sponsor of H.R. 329.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LaTOURETTE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3194, CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT AND DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

Mr. LINDER, Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call House Resolution 386 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk reads the resolution, as follows:

H. Res. 386

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to continue the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 3194) making appropriations for the government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

Sec. 2. Upon adoption of the conference report addressed in this first section of this resolution, the House shall be considered to have adopted a concurrent resolution consisting of the text printed in section 3.

Sec. 3. The text of the concurrent resolution addressed in section 2 is as follows: