

deserves the basic human right of being able to get appropriate medical care and an English-speaking doctor to review the results.

LEGISLATIVE LIMBO

(Mr. FOLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, we just had an exchange on the floor where the minority whip asked some questions about what the schedule was. I was trying to get clarification as well because I understand we are here on a daily CR at the behest of the President, who suggested we stay here on a 24-hour basis to get our work done. Now in the last 12 hours, I understand Mr. DASCHLE and Mr. GEPHARDT met with Mr. Podesta from the White House and suggested that we have a 14-day CR that has been taken up by the Senate and passed and the Senate has left town.

Now, we did not negotiate that. We did not request it. We did not ask for it. We are here working, and we will continue to work. But I would like somebody to come to the floor today and make the point whether in fact Mr. GEPHARDT and others negotiated a 14-day CR with Mr. LOTT, the majority leader on the Senate side, so we can figure out are we working this weekend, are we going to do the people's work, or are we taking a 14-day break to campaign on behalf of the minority.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

GOVERNOR BUSH MISSES MARK ON COUNTRY PROSPERITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, in a few days a great fiscal debate will be decided by the people of this country. Before they make that decision, we need to focus on some of the statements of the Governor of Texas as he tells us about his fiscal plan.

Mr. Speaker, we are told by the Governor of Texas that every American who pays taxes deserves tax relief and will get tax relief under his plan. The facts are clearly otherwise and the Governor of Texas knows better. He knows that under his plan some 15 million Americans who pay FICA tax and have it taken from their wages every day are going to get not a penny of tax

relief while at the same time the Governor of Texas will provide nearly half his total tax relief package to those who already are in the best-off 1 percent of American families. Not one penny for those taxpayers who work in nursing homes, who clean our buildings and who wash our cars; yet hundreds of billions of dollars for the wealthiest 1 percent.

We are told, also, by the Governor of Texas, and I think he does this for political reasons, that policy here in Washington is not in any way responsible for our current prosperity. Now, I can understand why his consultants, his political consultants, would tell him to try to argue to the American people that the last 8 years of the Clinton-Gore administration is just a coincidence with our 8 years of economic prosperity. But in doing so, he lays the foundation for very dangerous policies. You see, Mr. Speaker, if fiscal responsibility here in Washington did not lead to prosperity in the country, then we are free here in Washington to be as fiscally irresponsible as we like without eliminating or curtailing that prosperity.

The fact is that while the lion's share of the credit goes to the hard-working American people and their ingenuity and their dedication, they were working hard and they were showing ingenuity back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and this country was not prosperous because we did not have the fiscal responsibility brought to this town by the Clinton-Gore administration.

When the Governor of Texas tells us that what government does does not matter, then he lays the foundation for the fiscally irresponsible tax cuts that we cannot afford.

Finally, the Governor of Texas claims that he will provide over 10 years only \$223 billion of tax relief to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans. He reaches this through what can only be called false fiscal facts and fuzzy figures. He does this by ignoring his promise, often repeated, to repeal the estate tax. When he repeals the estate tax, which he has promised to do, then the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans will receive over \$700 billion every decade in tax relief. The effect then is to provide nearly half the tax relief to the wealthiest 1 percent and to provide them with more tax relief than the total the Governor of Texas would have us spend on health care, shoring up Medicare, providing a greater level of readiness for our military forces, and improving our educational system. More for 1 percent than for those four top national priorities.

Mr. Speaker, the choice before America is clear. On the one hand, we can improve our schools, strengthen our military, provide a prescription drug benefit under Medicare, safeguard Social Security, pay off the national debt, and provide for continued prosperity;

or on the other hand, we can opt for nearly \$700 billion, probably over \$700 billion just for the wealthiest 1 percent. I know that we have got to make a responsible decision. I hope when we do so, we recognize that choosing a President is not a popularity contest. It is, rather, choosing a plan by which the economy of this country will be managed over the next 4 years.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, beginning on April 12, for the 21 weeks that the House has been in session, I have read 22 letters from MI seniors who desperately need help with their high prescription drug costs.

In that time, I have been pushing consistently for prescription drug coverage under Medicare. Our time is nearly up, and we still have not passed this important legislation.

Looking back through the 22 letters that I have read on the House floor, I am reminded of why it is so important to modernize Medicare and provide prescription drug coverage for seniors. I would like to share excerpts from these letters to remind my colleagues why we must enact a Medicare prescription drug benefit.

From Mary Hudson of Fenton: "Last summer, I went to a doctor . . . and was given a prescription costing \$44—which I got filled. But the other was \$90—which I would not [fill]. Who can afford these prices and pay other bills too?"

From Ethel Corn of Marquette: "Here is our prescription bill for what we can afford—and you can see I don't get all of mine."

Jackie Billion of Lansing: "Quite often I have to decide whether I get some of my prescriptions or eat. I hope and pray that seniors will receive prescription coverage."

From Louise Jarnac of Cheboygan: "The last time I got my prescription it was \$99.99 . . . this time it was \$103.49. Most of the time I can't afford it and go without until I can get it again."

BUDGET BATTLE CONTINUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, it is 4:12 p.m., the House has finished its regular business for the day, the government does not yet have a budget for the fiscal year which began 1 month ago today, and no meetings are scheduled.

When the Republican leader who stood up on that side to represent the schedule to us on the minority earlier was asked, okay, where are we negotiating?, he said, well, he would try and get back to us with a room number on that. That was after they attempted to castigate this side, castigate the President and others for not negotiating in

good faith. They have not, and they, of course, control all the space around here, scheduled a room.

Why have they not scheduled a room? Because they have no intention of continuing negotiations. We are limping along day to day because the majority failed to get its work done. They did not have a budget for the fiscal year which began on October 1. We have gone through a series of continuing resolutions. I believe today was the 11th.

Now, there was one little ray of hope on Monday. They negotiated all weekend. Everybody designated their hitters to go into the room. And they came to an agreement. They toasted that agreement. They left the room. The White House negotiators went back to the White House and the President said good for you. He stood behind what they did. The Senate negotiators went back to the Senate and their leaders, both sides of the aisle, stood behind them and said good for you. The Democratic negotiators came back to our side of the aisle and we said, Didn't think you could get it done. Good for you. But then in the strangest turn of events, the Republicans, the Republican leadership, pulled the rug out from the people that they sent in as their designated hitters to negotiate.

Now they are saying, Well, the President wasn't in the room. Of course the President was not in the room. The President does not sit down for endless hours working on details on legislative bills. That is our job. And we got the job done. But then you, because of the phone calls from the National Association of Manufacturers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other very, very powerful special interest groups who are funding huge television campaigns right now on behalf of the majority and on behalf of the majority's candidate for President and against members of the minority said, No. No, you can't have that agreement. They stood up, saluted and said, okay.

It would have provided for additional workplace health and safety for American workers. Hundreds of thousands of workers who are injured every year would have benefited from that legislation and the financial and political masters of the majority on that side told them they could not do that. They were the only people to renege on the deal. Republicans in the Senate stood behind it, the President stood behind it, the Democrats in the House and in the Senate stood behind it; but no, the Republican leadership in the House killed the deal. And now they are pretending they want to work, but they have no discussions set. They do not even have a room scheduled.

This is really kind of a sad commentary at this ending of a Congress. I really think that we could do with a little bit of honesty around here. If they do not want to negotiate, if they

just want to stay in town to make some kind of a bizarre point, then they should just be honest about it. Do not pretend. Do not go off on this stuff about, Oh, the President's not in the room. You know that no President sits down to discuss legislative details. But when they sent a hitter there, someone to go as a designated person to negotiate, this President stood behind his person. You did not stand behind your negotiators. Guess what? The Speaker was not in the room. The gentleman who killed the bill, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the majority whip, was not in the room. The majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), was not in the room.

We could have that argument all day long. Oh, your leader wasn't in the room. Oh, your President wasn't in the room. That is not what is going on here. The real shots are being called not over there with the leadership but with their funders, the people who are funding their campaigns. They call the real shots and they jerked the rug out so we do not have a deal. And it is not going to happen before the election because they cannot risk offending those people before the election.

So let us just admit that. Let us have the majority admit to that instead of continuing this farce and these false accusations.

ON IDEA FULL FUNDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, as our conferees deliberate the appropriations for the Department of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education, I would like to take this opportunity to urge and insist upon the highest level of funding possible for special education State grants.

November 29 of this year celebrates the 25th anniversary of the enactment of IDEA. For almost a quarter of a century now, the Federal Government has assisted in the education of our children with disabilities and for almost that same quarter of a century, the Federal Government has failed to meet its obligations.

A Kansas school on average uses 20 percent of its budget for special education purposes. Schools in my area of Kansas cannot afford to put one-fifth of their entire budget into special education. This year Kansas schools will spend \$454 million in meeting the Federal special education mandate. Of this total, only \$38 million, about 8 percent, will come from the Federal Government despite our previous commitment 25 years ago of a 40 percent commitment.

In my previous service as a member of the Kansas Senate, we struggled each and every year to adequately fund

the education of students in our State. In actual dollars if special education were actually funded at that 40 percent, Kansas would receive \$181 million from the Federal Government. This means \$143 million in Kansas State and local education funds would be available for other educational needs.

These numbers make it clear that special education costs consume education budgets of State and local school districts. Schools are not maintained properly, teachers do not get hired, and classroom materials do not get purchased. Our schools are not asking for new Federal programs. They are asking for the Federal Government to pay its share of special education costs so that other funds can be freed up for maintaining buildings, hiring teachers and buying classroom materials.

Congress has made significant progress in recent years to increase Federal funding for special education. In my 4 years as a Member of Congress, we have increased IDEA State grants from \$3 billion to \$5 billion. That is a 67 percent increase in just 3 years.

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We still have a long way to go. For far too long, the Federal Government has mandated this program without paying its share. Today let us make the commitment to change all that and support full funding of IDEA.

GAO STUDY ON RUSSIAN TRANSITION TO MODERN ECONOMY IS DISPIRITING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, in June of 1998, the Committee on Banking and Financial Services held a series of hearings on financial instability around the world, including Russia, whose economy was soon to be devastated by the collapse of its domestic bond market and a devaluation of the ruble.

Afterward, I asked the General Accounting Office to conduct a study of the effectiveness of U.S. and other western assistance in facilitating Russia's transition from a failed Communist-style command economy to a modern market economy. The committee's ranking member, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE), joined me in that request.

The GAO has now completed its works and the findings are disturbing, indeed dispiriting. Between 1992 and September of 1998, the United States and the West, including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, provided some \$66 billion in assistance to Russia, not counting food aid, trade credits and debt rollovers. Of this, the