

Our resolution does two things: It reasserts Congress constitutional authority in regard to the purse strings of this Nation, and it also asks the Comptroller General of the United States to report back to the Congress within 7 days on how our tax dollars are being used.

Four men in this Congress and one in the White House do not a republic make. Our bipartisan resolution speaks on behalf of the vast majority of American taxpayers who have clearly said to us that they do not want their money put at risk to ensure a foreign nation nor its creditors.

We were told NAFTA would not result in a great sucking sound. Well, it has not only resulted in a sucking sound of jobs, but now also our taxpayer dollars. To the unilateral actions of the administration in concert with four men here in the Congress, the American people have been denied their just voice on such a consequential matter.

Our Government is not a monarchy. It is not a parliament. We are not here to approve what the Executive does. This legislative branch has equal powers in the law.

Let me read you two sections of the U.S. Constitution which pertain to the powers of Congress in this regard; under article I, section 9, the Constitution states, "No money shall be drawn from the Treasury but in consequence of appropriations made by law." And under article I, section 8, the Constitution states, "Congress has the power," and I underline Congress, "to pay the debts and provide for the general welfare of the United States, to borrow money on the credit of the United States, to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and to coin money, regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coin."

As is evident in this reading, the administration's recent decision to extend United States taxpayer funds to the Mexican Government and its Wall Street creditors without a vote of Congress is a direct violation of the spirit and letter of our United States Constitution. Where in the Constitution does it say that the executive branch has the sole power to create new money and use that money to fund a multibillion-dollar back door foreign aid program for Mexico without the approval of this Congress? Where in the Constitution does it give the executive power to make U.S. taxpayers liable for the mistakes and machinations of a foreign government and its rich U.S. speculators from the United States who went south in search of quick profits?

Today vote for House Resolution 57. Reassert Congress' proper duty and obligation.

□ 1015

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET DOA, DEVOID OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURTON of Indiana). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from California [Mr. HORN] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, when Democrats controlled this Chamber and Republicans were in the White House, the budgets submitted by Republican Presidents were always considered DOA, dead on arrival.

Well, we Republicans who are now in the majority will not follow that tradition. We will take a good, hard look at what the President proposes, and where we find common ground, we will work with him. But it is clear that the President's budget is not nearly as aggressive as it should be in reducing the size and the power of the Federal Government.

The few cuts that are there are half-hearted, and spending is still going up too rapidly. In fact, this budget calls for a \$50 billion increase in spending from the current budget.

So much for leadership. The Wall Street Journal reported that the budget "makes little further progress in reducing the deficit." So much for leadership.

The paper reports that the President's game plan is to let Republicans make the hard decisions. This is not Presidential leadership; it is Presidential abdication.

You know, come to think of it, maybe the President's budget is DOA. But that is not dead on arrival, that is devoid of accountability.

THE \$50,000 TAX DEDUCTIBLE DINNERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I come to the well to speak about something that troubles me a lot. I spent 3 years of my life, and I must say they were miserable years, studying the Tax Code when I was in law school. And the one thing that was very clear in our Tax Code was you did not get a charitable deduction for political donations. If you gave to charity, fine, you got a charitable deduction. But if you gave to politics, you did not get one.

I think most of us as Americans think that that is the way it should be. But we are in interesting times, very interesting times. We have a new Speaker who has found ways to stretch these things, and tonight we have a very interesting occasion going on, showing how these bright lines are being blurred more and more.

If you saw the Chicago Tribune today, they are mentioning the Speak-

er's dinner tonight, which will cost \$50,000 a plate—\$50,000 a plate. But unlike a normal political contribution, \$19,800 will be tax deductible.

Now, what is this dinner about and how do you get the tax deduction? Well, you get the tax deduction because they are saying it goes to a non-profit organization. But that organization happens to be the Speaker's television network called National Empowerment Television. And what is it? It does not even pretend to have balance. It does not even pretend to present both sides. It presents NEWT's views 24 hours a day. I do not think NEWT's views qualifies as news all the time, and I do not think that is what the Tax Code was meant to back.

So you see, now really an indirect taxpayer subsidy is going to this television thing that is absolutely nothing but broadcasts of whatever they want to put on. That looks terribly political, and I think is terribly political.

At the very same time you see them taking on public television, which is a different kind of direct subsidy which does attempt to be balanced and does let everybody on.

Now, is it not interesting? While you hear they don't want taxpayer subsidies of that, they are perfectly willing to craft these dinners that only let in people from a certain strata of society. Believe me, to pay \$50,000 for a dinner you have got to come from a lot wealthier background than I do in my district. You get a House for \$50,000. Nobody would ever think of paying \$50,000 for a dinner.

Also think about if you are an average tipper like I am and you did a 20-percent tip. A tip on that \$50,000 dinner would equal what the average minimum wage earner earns in a year. Just think, one tip on one dinner, one night, equals what a minimum wage earner makes for a year.

I mean, what is going on here? This is one of the things that many of us on this side are very troubled about. I was pleased to see that Time magazine is also getting troubled about it. Time magazine has an excellent article this week called "Newt, Inc." I hope everybody reads it, because it lays out many of the interesting ways the Speaker has been able to spread his tentacles out to control all these different ways of access to public information, shut off those who are not with him, find novel ways for people to be able to deduct it, and really march forward.

That does not look like the democracy I knew. The democracy I knew was one where everybody had an equal weighted voice and everybody's vote counted equally. I just do not see why we should be doing taxpayer subsidies of this type of occasion, and I do not see how in the world you can ever pretend that everybody's voice is going to be weighted equally, if you cannot get access to the TV stations that the taxpayers indirectly subsidize, nor can you buy the ticket to the dinner which

the taxpayers are indirectly subsidizing.

So I think we have to pose some very serious questions to the Internal Revenue Service, and we have to look at all these different stretchings of the law. There is absolutely no question what the spirit of the law is. I think that we should not be stretching the spirit, but instead we should be upholding the spirit of the law in this body.

INCREASE THE MINIMUM WAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. GENE GREEN] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the minimum wage was increased 4 years ago. However, the purchasing power of that same \$4.25 has declined 40 percent due to inflation. A recent study shows that in 1968 the minimum wage had a purchasing power in 1995 dollars of \$6.49. There are arguments on both sides of this issue but allowing working Americans to work for a living wage is the best method to reform welfare.

If a worker puts in 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, their gross wage is just over \$8,800. For an average family in the 29th Congressional District of Texas which I represent they will be over \$3,500 below the poverty line. Add the maximum earned income tax credit and that family will be \$400 under the poverty line and eligible for welfare under many programs.

However, this same family, with a minimum wage increase to \$5.15 and their maximum earned income tax credit, will now be above the poverty level and will no longer have to be on welfare. If the Members on the other side wish to save on welfare, and wish people to work, increase the minimum wage so full-time workers will not be eligible for welfare.

The myth that the minimum wage is only paid to teenagers does not fit with the fact that over half of the minimum wage earners are 26 or older. Congress must act and allow working Americans to earn a living wage.

My Republican colleagues talk about "me-too-ism" from the White House on Republican proposals. My Republican colleagues should develop me-too-ism on reducing welfare by paying an increase in the minimum wage—me-too-ism is bipartisanship working. Let us see it work for working Americans.

GIVE WORKING AMERICANS A BREAK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] is recognized during morning business for 2 minutes.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, let me see if I get this straight: First the Republicans said we cannot raise the minimum wage because it would cost jobs. Well, that argument did not fly. We know that from the studies that have been done recently between New Jersey and Pennsylvania and New York, where those establishments along the border that did raise the minimum wage actually found increased employment. That argument did not fly.

So next the Speaker said we cannot raise the minimum wage because of the crisis in Mexico, as if 58 cents an hour should be our benchmark. That our wages in this country should be tagged to those in Mexico. That did not fly.

So now the Senate majority leader says that the only way we can raise the minimum wage is if we cut taxes on the wealthy investors first. The Republicans say that the only way we can help people who earn \$9,000 a year is by cutting taxes on those who make \$9,000 a day.

Mr. Speaker, give me a break. If the Republicans want to help their wealthy friends, fine. But we are not going to let you do it on the backs of working families in this country. It is time we give working Americans a break, not just the wealthiest in our society.

I urge my colleagues to support the minimum wage, which is a just, living wage, which will move people to work, off welfare, and give them the wherewithal and the sustenance and a living wage to care for their families and to move up into the middle class, where they can hopefully enjoy a better future for themselves and their family.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning business, pursuant to clause 12, rule I, the House will stand in recess until 11 a.m.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 26 minutes a.m.) the House stood in recess until 11 a.m.

□ 1100

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 11 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Dr. Ronald Christian, Office of the Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Washington, DC, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, in this moment of stillness, before the work of this day begins, we first acknowledge our daily dependency upon Your grace and Your care.

We seek guidance when we could so easily be led of the course of justice for all,

We ask for wisdom when our decisions could so quickly be driven by selfish desires,

We plead for mercy when our petty jealousies have caused a wedge to be driven between ourselves and others,

And, we pray for courage when, with feeble heart, we might easily give in to goals that are less than the best for our neighbors.

Oh God, in these words and for these moments, let us all be reminded again of Your presence with us and our responsibility to You,

And may our words and actions this day serve more Your majestic will and purpose, than our fleeting wants and wishes. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. GUTIERREZ] lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance?

Mr. GUTIERREZ led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

REPUBLICAN CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, our Contract With America states the following:

On the first day of Congress, a Republican House will: Force Congress to live under the same laws as everyone else; cut committee staffs by one-third; and cut the congressional budget.

We did all this on the first day.

It goes on to state that in the first 100 days, we will vote on the following items:

A balanced budget amendment—we have done this; unfunded mandates legislation—we have done this; line-item veto—we have done this.

Yet to be accomplished:

A new crime bill to stop violent criminals; welfare reform to encourage work, not dependence; family reinforcement to crack down on deadbeat dads and protect our children; tax cuts for families to lift Government's burden from middle-income Americans; national security restoration to protect our freedoms; Senior Citizens' Equity Act to allow our seniors to work without Government penalty; Government regulatory reform; commonsense legal reform to end frivolous lawsuits;