

House Approves 7-Week Funding

Vote Signals Cease-Fire With Clinton

By Eric Pianin and Dan Morgan
Washington Post Staff Writers

The House yesterday approved a measure blessed by the White House to keep the government running through March 15, marking a sharp de-escalation in tensions between Republican leaders and President Clinton that provoked two previous partial shutdowns.

The short-term spending legislation, which will be considered by the Senate today, would substantially squeeze spending and could open the door for agencies for the first time to order unpaid layoffs of federal workers. The measure also terminates 10 minor programs, but it would provide \$2 million to repair the flood-damaged C&O Canal.

In one of a number of signs of rapprochement between Republicans and Democrats, the measure also included \$12 billion for foreign aid for the rest of the fiscal year that had been stalled for months by a partisan dispute over abortion. The foreign aid bill was one of six unfinished 1996 appropriations bills.

On a roll call vote, the House approved the measure, 371 to 42.

With their quest for a seven-year balanced budget deal a shambles and polls showing the public highly critical of their role in the government stalemate, GOP leaders pressed to keep the government operating while also seeking administration support for a "down payment" on deficit reduction and tax relief. White House and Republican aides will meet today to discuss a GOP proposal to approve as much as \$100 billion of deficit reduction and a scaled-back family tax credit and other provisions in lieu of a major balanced budget deal.

"This bill fulfills our commitment to keep the government open, while allowing us to make further savings

and enact several good government measures," said House Appropriations Committee Chairman Bob Livingston (R-La.), chief author of the temporary spending measure. "It clearly moves us closer to keeping our promise to balance the budget in seven years."

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White House spokesman Michael McCurry told reporters: "We're satisfied that a lot of give-and-take has produced an agreement the president can live with."

Republican leaders and the White House faced a midnight Friday deadline for extending spending authority for nine Cabinet departments and dozens of other agencies that have been operating without a full-year appropriations bill since the start of the fiscal year Oct. 1. Twice before, disputes between Republicans and the White House over the negotiations on a seven-year balanced budget plan triggered partial government shutdowns.

As a sign of their more conciliatory approach, GOP leaders spent yesterday in consultation with Democrats and the White House removing or modifying provisions from the short-term spending measures that might have drawn a veto.

The biggest breakthrough came when both sides finessed antiabortion language that House Republicans had attached last year to the foreign aid appropriations bill. The antiabortion language would have blocked funding of international family planning programs. Under the compromise, the ban would apply until July and thereafter funds would be disbursed, but at 65 percent of last year's level. With that dispute

resolved, funding for foreign aid programs was authorized through the remainder of the year.

Republicans and Democrats placated the Christian Coalition and other antiabortion groups by adding other language that would bar the use of federal funds for genetic research using human embryos.

Human embryo research involves studies of the earliest weeks of development of the growing organism, beginning with the fertilization of an egg. Currently the government is not sponsoring such research and the White House did not object to the inclusion of the language.

Rep. David R. Obey (Wis.) said, "People on both sides of the aisle have worked cooperatively and intensively." While the White House has signed off on the legislation, Obey said, "They do not agree with every item in the bill."

Under the short-term spending measure, dubbed the Balanced Budget Down Payment Act by Republicans:

- The departments of Commerce, Justice, State, Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development and NASA as well as other independent agencies would be funded through March 15 at 1995 levels, with the exception of some operations that have already been funded for the full year. The departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Interior would be funded at the lower of the House- or Senate-passed versions of the spending bills or last year's funding levels, but in no case less than 75 percent.
- Programs targeted by Republicans for termination, including AmeriCorps, the Advanced Technology Program, Cops on the Beat and Drug Court, would be funded at only 75 percent of last year's levels.
- Travel by Cabinet members—except for the secretaries of state and defense, CIA director and U.N. ambassador—would be limited. Republicans have criticized the travel of Energy Secretary Hazel R. O'Leary and Commerce Secretary Ron Brown.
- The maximum Pell Grant scholarship award would be increased by \$100 to \$2,440.
- Congress would be instructed to sell a surplus House office building.
- The government would sell 7 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, to raise \$100

million.

After threatening to terminate as many as 20 programs, Republicans settled on 10 obscure programs, valued at \$60 million, including funding for Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native Cultural Arts, Dropout Prevention projects and various education grants.

Republican leaders were opposed to including any protection for federal employees from unpaid furloughs or layoffs, as was done in the previous interim spending measures. Under pressure from the White House and Democrats, Republicans finally agreed to language allowing some unpaid furloughs, but limited to one day per pay period for workers affected.



BY RAY LUSTIG—THE WASHINGTON POST

White House Chief of Staff Leon E. Panetta speaks with reporters at Capitol.

While working to keep the government going, Republicans and Democrats yesterday also pondered a proposal by House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) for using new debt ceiling legislation as the vehicle for a compromise package of spending and tax cuts.

White House Chief of Staff Leon E. Panetta said that the president was interested but that the adminis-

tration doesn't want to "get bogged down in lengthy negotiations" or use the debt ceiling bill as "a legislative Christmas tree."

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