

## Clinton, Congress in Veto Showdown

Associated Press Online

October 27, 2000; Friday

Copyright 2000 Associated Press All Rights Reserved

**Section:** Washington - general news

**Length:** 6368 words

**Byline:** ALAN FRAM

**Dateline:** WASHINGTON

### **Body**

---

Republicans warn that if President Clinton delivers on his promise to veto a tax-cut package and a spending bill that revamps immigration laws it will hurt Democrats' prospects in the Nov. 7 elections.

Defiant GOP leaders hoped to push both measures through the Senate on Friday, a day after a divided House approved the spending bill by 206-198 and the tax legislation by 237-174.

Both votes fell short of the two-thirds majorities needed to reverse a presidential veto. Even so, the brewing confrontation seemed likely to draw public attention to this year's long-running budget fight, just as it was looking as if Congress might finally complete its business and adjourn quietly less than two weeks from Election Day.

Clinton's veto threat on a \$39.9 billion measure financing the departments of Commerce, Justice and State for 2001 focused on the GOP's failure to overhaul immigration laws as broadly as Clinton wants.

The president would grant amnesty to all aliens who arrived illegally before 1986, while Republicans would ease restrictions for some close relatives of permanent residents and let others with long-running disputes over their immigration status go to court.

"Hispanics who are here legally abhor aliens who are here illegally," House Majority Whip Tom DeLay, R-Texas, told a reporter. "You're going to see the (poll) numbers in California go just like this," he added, moving one hand up and the other down.

Most public opinion polls in California show Democrat Al Gore leading Republican George W. Bush by a tangible but shrinking margin in the presidential race.

Clinton said the GOP fell short.

"Current Republican proposals would not help most of the people who need relief and would perpetuate the current patchwork of contradictory and unfair immigration policies," he said in a letter to GOP leaders.

Besides seeking amnesty, Clinton wants permanent residency for political refugees from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti. He also would let some applicants for permanent residency avoid having to return home to await a final decision.

Clinton also complained that the bill ignored his plans to pay legal costs of the government's lawsuit against the cigarette industry and to expand hate crime protections to cover victims chosen for their sexual preference.

## Clinton, Congress in Veto Showdown

The tax bill would cut taxes by \$240 billion over the next 10 years for some small businesses, people saving for retirement and others, and gradually raise the \$5.15 hourly minimum wage by \$1 by January 2002. It also would erase \$30 billion in cuts planned for the next five years in Medicare reimbursements for health-maintenance organizations, hospitals and other health care providers.

Clinton said the tax package contained less than he wanted for bonds financing school construction, breaks for helping people afford health care and long-term care of relatives, and pension provisions. He also said HMOs would be treated too generously without being required to remain in Medicare, which some of them would like to leave.

"You chose to put forward a partisan legislative package that ignores our key concerns," he wrote.

In a brief interview, House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., said that if Clinton vetoed the tax measure, it probably would not be resurrected, spelling the end of popular provisions for the minimum wage, health care, and more generous pensions, individual retirement accounts and 401(k) accounts.

"That's a lot of good stuff," Hastert said.

The spending bill provides \$618 million for land conservation and wildlife programs for coastal states as well as millions of dollars for the fishing industry, provisions helping broadcasting and telecommunications interests, and more than 200 projects for lawmakers with an estimated cost of \$800 million.

These include \$16 million for a water project for a company in Kentucky under a program designed for coastal states, thanks to Rep. Harold Rogers, R-Ky., an author of the bill; and \$8.5 million to clean up the Bronx River, home turf of Rep. Jose Serrano, D-N.Y., another sponsor.

Of the 13 remaining spending bills for fiscal 2001, which began Oct. 1, one remains stalled in Congress because of dispute over school spending and other issues: the \$350 billion measure financing the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education.

The tax measure also would provide tax breaks for economically depressed urban and rural communities and cut taxes for some farmers, fishermen, and adoptive parents.

White House officials and congressional budget writers resumed bargaining Friday as Republicans seemed to back away from a pre-election veto confrontation with President Clinton over tax cuts, immigration, schools and other issues.

A day after the House approved a \$240 billion, 10-year tax-cutting package and a \$39.9 billion spending measure that both drew White House veto threats, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott said the Senate would not vote on either until at least Tuesday or Wednesday to give bargainers a chance to strike deals.

That would leave just days until the Nov. 7 presidential and congressional elections a period when a high-profile budget battle could have an unpredictable effect on voters.

Lott, R-Miss., said he preferred hard bargaining on the bills, "rather than sending them down there for a veto and having to start all over again" in rewriting the legislation.

Lott's stance did not seem to be unanimous among GOP leaders. House Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-Texas, told a reporter that Clinton would make "a bad mistake" if he vetoed the two bills with their tax cuts for health-care and school construction, a minimum wage increase, and spending for three Cabinet departments.

"That's the national story?" he said. "Gee, I would hate to have that right before the election."

Even so, GOP bargainers began showing give in budget talks, offering \$4.5 billion for Clinton administration priorities for schools, health and labor programs, said one person familiar with the discussions who spoke on condition of anonymity. That was \$1 billion more than Republicans offered earlier in the week, and was in addition to \$600 million they would add for their own priorities.

## Clinton, Congress in Veto Showdown

Friday's bargaining focused on the \$39.9 billion measure for the departments of Commerce, Justice and State, which the House approved Thursday by 206-198, and a separate \$350 billion measure for labor, health and education programs.

The Senate has yet to vote on the Commerce-Justice measure, and there is not yet a final version of the labor-education **bill** for either chamber to vote on.

The House approved another one-day stopgap **bill** to keep agencies open by 366-13, the seventh such extension since fiscal 2001 began Oct. 1 without most of the must-pass budget **bills** completed.

The Senate planned its vote for later in the day. Lott and others said they hoped that by then, progress in negotiations would persuade administration officials to allow the next extension to run through next Tuesday to give bargainers a chance to complete their work and to avoid forcing lawmakers to vote every day to keep the government open.

The House approved the tax **bill** by 237-174, which like the House vote on the spending **bill** fell short of the two-thirds majorities needed to reverse a presidential **veto**.

Even so, the brewing confrontation seemed likely to draw public attention to this year's long-running budget fight, just as it was looking as if Congress might finally complete its business and adjourn quietly less than two weeks from Election Day.

**Clinton's veto threat** on the commerce-justice **bill** focused on the GOP's failure to overhaul **immigration** laws as broadly as **Clinton** wants.

The president would grant amnesty to all aliens who arrived illegally before 1986, while Republicans would ease restrictions for some close relatives of permanent residents and let others with long-running disputes over their **immigration** status go to court.

Besides seeking amnesty, **Clinton** wants permanent residency for political refugees from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti. He also would let some applicants for permanent residency avoid having to return home to await a final decision.

**Clinton** also complained that the **bill** ignored his plans to pay legal costs of the government's lawsuit against the cigarette industry and to expand hate crime protections to cover victims chosen for their sexual orientation.

The tax **bill** would cut taxes by \$240 billion over the next 10 years for some small businesses, people saving for retirement and others, and gradually raise the \$5.15 hourly minimum wage by \$1 by January 2002. It also would erase \$30 billion in cuts planned for the next five years in Medicare reimbursements for health-maintenance organizations, hospitals and other health care providers.

**Clinton** said the tax package contained less than he wanted for bonds financing school construction, breaks for helping people afford health care and long-term care of relatives, and pension provisions. He also said HMOs would be treated too generously without being required to remain in Medicare, which some of them would like to leave.

Of the 13 remaining spending **bills** for fiscal 2001, which began Oct. 1, one remains stalled in Congress because of dispute over school spending and other issues: the \$350 billion measure financing the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education.

The tax measure also would provide tax breaks for economically depressed urban and rural communities and cut taxes for some farmers, fishermen, and adoptive parents.

Saying congressional Republicans have "literally closed the doors to compromise," President **Clinton** signed two spending **bills** Friday and threatened to **veto** another unless lawmakers scale back a proposed tax cut.

## Clinton, Congress in Veto Showdown

Clinton signed appropriations bills for veterans, housing, energy and water programs without ceremony. He announced the signings in the Rose Garden, telling reporters he was disappointed that GOP leaders met among themselves, then wrote a tax plan "for the benefit of the elements in the right wing of their caucus."

"The Republican leadership closed its doors to compromise \_ literally closed the doors to compromise," Clinton said. "The Republican tax package fails to meet the test of fairness to our children, our seniors, or the millions of Americans without health care coverage. If it reaches my desk in its present form, I will have no choice but to veto it."

Clinton accused GOP leaders of playing politics with the budget while turning back criticisms that he is doing so too.

"Did I get everything I wanted in these bills? I did not," Clinton said. "There's no secret to getting things done: We have to work together."

White House officials and congressional budget writers resumed bargaining Friday, a day after the House approved a \$240 billion, 10-year tax-cutting package and a \$39.9 billion spending measure that both drew veto threats. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott said the Senate would not vote on either until at least Tuesday or Wednesday to give bargainers a chance to strike deals.

That would leave just days until the Nov. 7 presidential and congressional elections a period when a high-profile budget battle could have an unpredictable effect on voters.

Lott, R-Miss., said he preferred hard bargaining on the bills, "rather than sending them down there for a veto and having to start all over again" in rewriting the legislation.

Lott's stance did not seem to be unanimous among GOP leaders. House Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-Texas, told a reporter that Clinton would make "a bad mistake" if he vetoed the two bills with their tax cuts for health care and school construction, a minimum wage increase, and spending for three Cabinet departments.

"That's the national story?" he said. "Gee, I would hate to have that right before the election."

Even so, GOP bargainers began showing give in budget talks, offering \$4.5 billion for Clinton administration priorities for schools, health and labor programs, said one person familiar with the discussions who spoke on condition of anonymity. That was \$1 billion more than Republicans offered earlier in the week, and was in addition to \$600 million they would add for their own priorities.

Friday's bargaining focused on the \$39.9 billion measure for the departments of Commerce, Justice and State, which the House approved Thursday by 206-198, and a separate \$350 billion measure for labor, health and education programs.

The Senate has yet to vote on the Commerce-Justice measure, and there is not yet a final version of the labor-education bill for either chamber to vote on.

The House approved another one-day stopgap bill to keep agencies open by 366-13, the seventh such extension since fiscal 2001 began Oct. 1 without most of the must-pass budget bills completed.

The Senate planned its vote for later in the day. Lott and others said they hoped that by then, progress in negotiations would persuade administration officials to allow the next extension to run through Tuesday to allow completion of work on other bills and to avoid forcing a vote every day to keep the government open.

The House approved the tax bill by 237-174, which like the House vote on the spending bill fell short of the two-thirds majorities needed to reverse a presidential veto.

## Clinton, Congress in Veto Showdown

Even so, the brewing confrontation seemed likely to draw public attention to this year's long-running budget fight, just as it was looking as if Congress might finally complete its business and adjourn quietly less than two weeks from Election Day.

Clinton's veto threat on the Commerce-Justice bill focused on the GOP's failure to overhaul immigration laws as broadly as Clinton wants.

The president would grant amnesty to all aliens who arrived illegally before 1986, while Republicans would ease restrictions for some close relatives of permanent residents and let others with long-running disputes over their immigration status go to court.

Besides seeking amnesty, Clinton wants permanent residency for political refugees from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti. He also would let some applicants for permanent residency avoid having to return home to await a final decision.

Clinton also complained that the bill ignored his plans to pay legal costs of the government's lawsuit against the cigarette industry and to expand hate crime protections to cover victims chosen for their sexual orientation.

The tax bill would cut taxes by \$240 billion over the next 10 years for some small businesses, people saving for retirement and others, and gradually raise the \$5.15 hourly minimum wage by \$1 by January 2002. It also would erase \$30 billion in cuts planned for the next five years in Medicare reimbursements for health-maintenance organizations, hospitals and other health care providers.

Clinton said the tax package contained less than he wanted for bonds financing school construction, breaks for helping people afford health care and long-term care of relatives, and pension provisions. He also said HMOs would be treated too generously without being required to remain in Medicare, which some of them would like to leave.

Of the 13 remaining spending bills for fiscal 2001, which began Oct. 1, one remains stalled in Congress because of dispute over school spending and other issues: the \$350 billion measure financing the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education.

The tax measure also would provide tax breaks for economically depressed urban and rural communities and cut taxes for some farmers, fishermen and adoptive parents.

Congress gave final approval Friday to a \$39.9 billion bill that has become entangled in a pre-election veto battle over immigration, spending and taxes as President Clinton accused Republicans of having "literally closed the doors to compromise."

By a 49-42 tally, the Senate approved a measure that Clinton threatened to veto because of its failure to revise immigration laws as broadly as he wants and other disputes. The bill also would finance the departments of Commerce, Justice and State for fiscal 2001, which began Oct. 1.

White House and congressional officials said Clinton would veto the measure promptly.

But in a sign of potential progress, a new round of budget talks commenced that were aimed at resolving differences on that bill and a separate measure covering labor, health and education programs.

On a day in which strategies shifted repeatedly, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., had said just hours earlier that the spending bills and a separate \$240 billion, 10-year tax bill that Clinton has also threatened to veto would not be sent to the White House until at least next Tuesday.

It still appeared likely the Senate would not vote on the tax bill until next week. That would leave just days until the Nov. 7 presidential and congressional elections a period when a high-profile budget battle could have an unpredictable effect on voters.

## Clinton, Congress in Veto Showdown

At the White House, **Clinton** without ceremony signed appropriations **bills** for veterans, housing, energy and water programs.

**Clinton** announced the signings in the Rose Garden, then denounced the GOP's tax plan, telling reporters he was disappointed that Republican leaders met among themselves, then wrote a tax plan "for the benefit of the elements in the right wing of their caucus."

"The Republican leadership closed its doors to compromise \_ literally closed the doors to compromise," **Clinton** said. "The Republican tax package fails to meet the test of fairness to our children, our seniors, or the millions of Americans without health care coverage. If it reaches my desk in its present form, I will have no choice but to **veto** it."

GOP bargainers began showing give in budget talks, offering \$4.5 billion for **Clinton** administration priorities for schools, health and labor programs, said one person familiar with the discussions who spoke on condition of anonymity. That was \$1 billion more than Republicans offered earlier in the week, and was in addition to \$600 million they would add for their own priorities.

Friday's negotiating focused on the \$39.9 billion measure for the departments of Commerce, Justice and State, which the House approved Thursday, 206-198, and a separate \$350 billion measure for labor, health and education programs.

The House approved another one-day stopgap **bill** to keep agencies open by 366-13, the seventh such extension since fiscal 2001 began Oct. 1 without most of the must-pass budget **bills** completed.

The Senate planned its vote for later in the day. Lott and others said they hoped that by then, progress in negotiations would persuade administration officials to let the next extension run through Tuesday to allow completion of work on other **bills** and to avoid forcing a vote every day to keep the government open.

The House approved the tax **bill**, 237-174, on Thursday. Like the House vote on the spending **bill** Thursday, it fell short of the two-thirds majority needed to reverse a presidential **veto**.

Even so, the brewing confrontation seemed likely to draw public attention to this year's long-running budget fight, just as it was looking as if Congress might finally complete its business and adjourn quietly.

**Clinton**'s **veto threat** on the Commerce-Justice **bill** focused on the GOP's failure to overhaul **immigration** laws as much as **Clinton** wants.

The president would grant amnesty to all aliens who arrived illegally before 1986, while Republicans would ease restrictions for some close relatives of permanent residents and let others with long-running disputes over their **immigration** status go to court.

Besides seeking amnesty, **Clinton** wants permanent residency for political refugees from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti. He also would let some applicants for permanent residency avoid having to return home to await a final decision.

**Clinton** also complained that the **bill** ignored his plans to pay legal costs of the government's lawsuit against the cigarette industry and to expand hate crime protections to cover victims chosen for their sexual orientation.

The tax **bill** would cut taxes by \$240 billion over the next 10 years for some small businesses, people saving for retirement and others, and gradually raise the \$5.15 hourly minimum wage by \$1 by January 2002. It also would erase \$30 billion in cuts planned for the next five years in Medicare reimbursements for health-maintenance organizations, hospitals and other health care providers.

**Clinton** said the tax package contained less than he wanted for bonds financing school construction, breaks for helping people afford health care and long-term care of relatives, and pension provisions. He also said HMOs would be treated too generously without being required to remain in Medicare, which some of them would like to leave.

## Clinton, Congress in Veto Showdown

The measure also would provide tax breaks for economically depressed urban and rural communities and cut taxes for some farmers, fishermen and adoptive parents.

Of the 13 remaining spending bills for fiscal 2001, one remains stalled in Congress because of a dispute over school spending and other issues: the \$350 billion measure financing the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education.

Congress gave final approval Friday to a \$39.9 billion bill that has become entangled in a pre-election veto battle over immigration, spending and taxes as President Clinton accused Republicans of having "closed the doors to compromise."

By a 49-42 tally, the Senate approved a measure that Clinton threatened to veto because of its failure to revise immigration laws as broadly as he wants and other disputes. The bill also would finance the departments of Commerce, Justice and State for fiscal 2001, which began Oct. 1.

White House and congressional officials said Clinton would veto the measure promptly.

But in a sign of potential progress, a new round of budget talks commenced that were aimed at resolving differences on that bill and a separate measure covering labor, health and education programs.

On a day in which strategies shifted repeatedly, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., had said just hours earlier that the spending bills and a separate \$240 billion, 10-year tax bill that Clinton has also threatened to veto would not be sent to the White House until at least next Tuesday.

It still appeared likely the Senate would not vote on the tax bill until next week. That would leave just days until the Nov. 7 presidential and congressional elections a period when a high-profile budget battle could have an unpredictable effect on voters.

At the White House, Clinton without ceremony signed appropriations bills for veterans, housing, energy and water programs.

Clinton announced the signings in the Rose Garden, then denounced the GOP's tax plan, telling reporters he was disappointed that Republican leaders met among themselves, then wrote a tax plan "for the benefit of the elements in the right wing of their caucus."

"The Republican leadership closed its doors to compromise \_ literally closed the doors to compromise," Clinton said. "The Republican tax package fails to meet the test of fairness to our children, our seniors, or the millions of Americans without health care coverage. If it reaches my desk in its present form, I will have no choice but to veto it."

GOP bargainers began showing give in budget talks, offering \$4.5 billion for Clinton administration priorities for schools, health and labor programs, said one person familiar with the discussions who spoke on condition of anonymity. That was \$1 billion more than Republicans offered earlier in the week, and was in addition to \$600 million they would add for their own priorities.

Friday's negotiating focused on the \$39.9 billion measure for the departments of Commerce, Justice and State, which the House approved Thursday, 206-198, and a separate \$350 billion measure for labor, health and education programs.

Another one-day stopgap bill to keep agencies open was approved by the House, 366-13, and the Senate, 86-3. This was the seventh such extension since fiscal 2001 began Oct. 1 without most of the must-pass budget bills completed.

The House approved the tax bill, 237-174, on Thursday. Like the House vote on the spending bill Thursday, it fell short of the two-thirds majority needed to reverse a presidential veto.

## Clinton, Congress in Veto Showdown

Even so, the brewing confrontation seemed likely to draw public attention to this year's long-running budget fight, just as it was looking as if Congress might finally complete its business and adjourn quietly.

Clinton's veto threat on the Commerce-Justice bill focused on the GOP's failure to overhaul immigration laws as much as Clinton wants.

The president would grant amnesty to all aliens who arrived illegally before 1986, while Republicans would ease restrictions for some close relatives of permanent residents and let others with long-running disputes over their immigration status go to court.

Besides seeking amnesty, Clinton wants permanent residency for political refugees from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti. He also would let some applicants for permanent residency avoid having to return home to await a final decision.

Clinton also complained that the bill ignored his plans to pay legal costs of the government's lawsuit against the cigarette industry and to expand hate crime protections to cover victims chosen for their sexual orientation.

The tax bill would cut taxes by \$240 billion over the next 10 years for some small businesses, people saving for retirement and others, and gradually raise the \$5.15 hourly minimum wage by \$1 by January 2002. It also would erase \$30 billion in cuts planned for the next five years in Medicare reimbursements for health-maintenance organizations, hospitals and other health care providers.

Clinton said the tax package contained less than he wanted for bonds financing school construction, breaks for helping people afford health care and long-term care of relatives, and pension provisions. He also said HMOs would be treated too generously without being required to remain in Medicare, which some of them would like to leave.

The measure also would provide tax breaks for economically depressed urban and rural communities and cut taxes for some farmers, fishermen and adoptive parents.

Of the 13 remaining spending bills for fiscal 2001, one remains stalled in Congress because of a dispute over school spending and other issues: the \$350 billion measure financing the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education.

Locked in a furious budget showdown just days from the election, President Clinton and Republicans battled over tax cuts, immigration and school aid Friday even as bargainers sought middle ground on their disputes.

"I'll stay here to Election Day, if I have to, to do right by the American people, because my first job is to take care of them," Clinton said at the White House.

Republicans said it was Clinton and Democrats who were being intransigent. They spoke of a different approach by Gov. George W. Bush, the GOP presidential candidate, who has promised to change Washington's partisan atmosphere.

"Next year, thank goodness, we're going to have a different president," said Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss. "Hopefully we'll have a better atmosphere around here. Maybe we can work together."

By 49-42, the Senate gave final congressional approval to a \$39.9 billion measure financing the Commerce, Justice and State departments that Clinton has promised to veto, chiefly because it fails to liberalize immigration laws as much as he wants. With both sides insisting the battle would help them with Hispanic voters and others, White House officials said he would veto the bill quickly.

GOP leaders held off on a final Senate vote on a separate bill that would cut taxes for health care costs, small businesses and others by \$240 billion over 10 years. That measure which would also boost the minimum wage and eliminate \$30 billion in planned Medicare cuts for health care providers also faces a veto threat because Clinton says it shortchanges school construction and low-income families and is overly generous to health-maintenance organizations.



## Clinton, Congress in Veto Showdown

Congress planned rare sessions for Saturday and Sunday so lawmakers could approve daily, stopgap bills to keep federal agencies open while negotiations proceed.

Leaders also scheduled votes for Tuesday Halloween which would surpass Oct. 28, 1990, as the closest Congress has ever worked up to Election Day, which this year falls Nov. 7. Lawmakers have often returned after elections to complete work, but in those years always began a break by mid-October.

At the White House, Clinton, without ceremony, signed spending bills for veterans, housing, energy and water programs.

Sensing an opportunity to win votes in the neck-and-neck elections for the presidency and Congress, both sides fired rhetorical volleys at each other.

Clinton said that instead of bargaining, the GOP leadership "closed its doors to compromise," producing unacceptable packages "for the benefit of the elements in the right wing" of their party.

House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., leveled a similar charge in a letter to Clinton.

"It's difficult to negotiate with House Democrats when their leader puts on warpaint and wields a spear to show his readiness for battle," Hastert wrote.

Hastert's reference was to House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt, D-Mo., who fired up House Democrats at a meeting this week dressed as a character from the movie "Braveheart," which depicted 13th century Scottish warriors.

Amid the verbal battling, White House and congressional negotiators sought middle ground on a \$350 billion measure financing the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

In daylong closed-door talks, the two sides were moving toward providing roughly \$4.4 billion more for hiring teachers, upgrading schools and other Democratic priorities in the measure, participants said. There would also be an additional \$600 million for programs Republicans want.

But disagreements remained over specifics, including a GOP effort to block the Clinton administration from imposing business-opposed rules aimed at reducing workplace injuries.

"The acidity factor is high," said Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, about the talks.

After Clinton's veto of the Commerce-Justice bill, negotiations over it were expected to intensify, including on the issue of immigration.

Clinton wants to help up to 2 million people, including amnesty for immigrants who arrived illegally before 1986. Republicans, led by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, would help half that many people by easing restrictions on relatives of permanent residents and giving others with decade-old immigration disputes go to court.

In a letter Friday to Hatch, White House chief of staff John Podesta said the Republican proposal "simply does not go far enough."

But Hatch replied in a floor speech that help should be limited to legal immigrants. He accused Clinton of "political posturing" and playing "wedge politics" for Latino voters that both parties are courting in the Nov. 7 election.

Republicans said they had less flexibility to bargain on the tax bill because it would be too difficult to get GOP support for changes.

"I don't think you can put Humpty Dumpty back together again," Hastert said.

## Clinton, Congress in Veto Showdown

The tax measure contains reductions aimed at encouraging investments in poor urban and rural communities, helping people with long-term care and health expenses and aiding people who use individual savings accounts and other pension plans. It would also boost the \$5.15 hourly minimum wage by \$1 by January 2002, a major priority for unions.

Meanwhile, another one-day stopgap bill to keep agencies open was approved by the House, 366-13, and the Senate, 86-3. This was the seventh such extension since fiscal 2001 began Oct. 1 without most of the must-pass budget bills completed.

Clinton's signature was certain.

Locked in a furious budget showdown just days from the election, President Clinton and Republicans battled over tax cuts, immigration and school aid Friday even as bargainers sought middle ground on their disputes.

"I'll stay here to Election Day, if I have to, to do right by the American people, because my first job is to take care of them," Clinton said at the White House.

Republicans said it was Clinton and Democrats who were being intransigent. They spoke of a different approach by Gov. George W. Bush, the GOP presidential candidate, who has promised to change Washington's partisan atmosphere.

"Next year, thank goodness, we're going to have a different president," said Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss. "Hopefully we'll have a better atmosphere around here. Maybe we can work together."

By 49-42, the Senate gave final congressional approval to a \$39.9 billion measure financing the Commerce, Justice and State departments that Clinton has promised to veto, chiefly because it fails to liberalize immigration laws as much as he wants. With both sides insisting the battle would help them with Hispanic voters and others, White House officials said he would veto the bill quickly.

GOP leaders held off on a final Senate vote on a separate bill that would cut taxes for health care costs, small businesses and others by \$240 billion over 10 years. That measure which would also boost the minimum wage and eliminate \$30 billion in planned Medicare cuts for health care providers also faces a veto threat because Clinton says it shortchanges school construction and low-income families and is overly generous to health-maintenance organizations.

Congress planned rare sessions for Saturday and Sunday so lawmakers could approve daily, stopgap bills to keep federal agencies open while negotiations proceed.

Leaders also scheduled votes for Tuesday Halloween which would surpass Oct. 28, 1990, as the closest Congress has ever worked up to Election Day, which this year falls Nov. 7. Lawmakers have often returned after elections to complete work, but in those years always began a break by mid-October.

At the White House, Clinton, without ceremony, signed spending bills for veterans, housing, energy and water programs.

Sensing an opportunity to win votes in the neck-and-neck elections for the presidency and Congress, both sides fired rhetorical volleys at each other.

Clinton said that instead of bargaining, the GOP leadership "closed its doors to compromise," producing unacceptable packages "for the benefit of the elements in the right wing" of their party.

House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., leveled a similar charge in a letter to Clinton.

"It's difficult to negotiate with House Democrats when their leader puts on warpaint and wields a spear to show his readiness for battle," Hastert wrote.

## Clinton, Congress in Veto Showdown

Hastert's reference was to House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt, D-Mo., who fired up House Democrats at a meeting this week dressed as a character from the movie "Braveheart," which depicted 13th century Scottish warriors.

Amid the verbal battling, White House and congressional negotiators sought middle ground on a \$350 billion measure financing the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

In daylong closed-door talks, the two sides were moving toward providing roughly \$4.4 billion more for hiring teachers, upgrading schools and other Democratic priorities in the measure, participants said. There would also be an additional \$600 million for programs Republicans want.

But disagreements remained over specifics, including a GOP effort to block the Clinton administration from imposing business-opposed rules aimed at reducing workplace injuries.

"The acidity factor is high," said Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, about the talks.

Bargainers were also facing a deluge of lawmakers' requests \_ 235 by one list for last-minute add-ons to the bills, from Internet gambling legislation to \$1.7 million for an Oklahoma land rush memorial.

After Clinton's veto of the Commerce-Justice bill, negotiations over it were expected to intensify, including on the issue of immigration.

Clinton wants to help up to 2 million people, including amnesty for immigrants who arrived illegally before 1986. Republicans, led by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, would help half that many people by easing restrictions on relatives of permanent residents and letting others with decade-old immigration disputes go to court.

In a letter Friday to Hatch, White House chief of staff John Podesta said the Republican proposal "simply does not go far enough."

But Hatch replied in a floor speech that help should be limited to legal immigrants. He accused Clinton of "political posturing" and playing "wedge politics" for Latino voters that both parties are courting in the Nov. 7 election.

Republicans said they had less flexibility to bargain on the tax bill because it would be too difficult to get GOP support for changes.

"I don't think you can put Humpty Dumpty back together again," Hastert said.

The tax measure contains reductions aimed at encouraging investments in poor urban and rural communities, helping people with long-term care and health expenses and aiding people who use individual savings accounts and other pension plans. It would also boost the \$5.15 hourly minimum wage by \$1 by January 2002, a major priority for unions.

Meanwhile, another one-day stopgap bill to keep agencies open was approved by the House, 366-13, and the Senate, 86-3. This was the seventh such extension since fiscal 2001 began Oct. 1 without most of the must-pass budget bills completed.

Clinton's signature was certain.

## Classification

---

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: LEGISLATION (92%); IMMIGRATION (91%); VETO (91%); IMMIGRATION LAW (91%); POLITICAL

## Clinton, Congress in Veto Showdown

PARTIES (90%); ELECTIONS (90%); TAXES & TAXATION (90%); US REPUBLICAN PARTY (90%); VOTERS & VOTING (90%); TAX RELIEF (90%); US DEMOCRATIC PARTY (90%); TAX LAW (90%); APPROPRIATIONS (90%); US PRESIDENTS (89%); CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS (78%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (78%); US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS (78%); PUBLIC POLICY (78%); **IMMIGRATION** REGULATION & POLICY (78%); REFUGEES (78%); HEADS OF GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS (78%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2008 (77%); SUITS & CLAIMS (73%); EDUCATION FUNDING (73%); LITIGATION (72%); AMNESTY (72%); APPROVALS (72%); SMALL BUSINESS (69%); POLLS & SURVEYS (67%); RACISM & XENOPHOBIA (67%); MEDICARE (64%); HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS (60%); SCHOOL BUILDINGS (60%); WAGES & SALARIES (60%)

**Industry:** BUDGETS (78%); BUDGET CUTS (74%); PERSONAL FINANCE (69%); MEDICARE (64%); MANAGED CARE ORGANIZATIONS (64%); HEALTH CARE (61%); LONG TERM HEALTH CARE (60%); HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS (60%); HEALTH MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATIONS (50%); TOBACCO INDUSTRY (50%); TOBACCO MFG (50%)

**Person:** **BILL CLINTON** (79%); AL GORE (58%); GEORGE W BUSH (58%)

**Geographic:** CALIFORNIA, USA (92%); TEXAS, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (92%); HONDURAS (79%); HAITI (79%); EL SALVADOR (79%); GUATEMALA (79%)

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2000

---

End of Document