

form set forth in paragraph (2)) declaring that the conditions specified in section 254(j) are met and suspending the relevant provisions of this title, titles III and VI of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, and section 1103¹⁶⁸⁷ of title 31, United States Code.¹⁶⁸⁸

¹⁶⁸⁶(...continued)

186, 102d Cong., 1st Sess., 137 CONG. REC. S11,550, S11,580 (daily ed. July 31, 1991). Following the August Senate recess, the Committee on the Budget reported it unfavorably. 137 CONG. REC. S12,921, D1079 (daily ed. Sept. 12, 1991). On September 19, 1991, the Senate rejected the joint resolution by a vote of 88 to 8. *Id.* at S13,308 (daily ed. Sept. 19, 1991). For the debate on that joint resolution, see *id.* at S13,225-29 (daily ed. Sept. 18, 1991); *id.* at S13,294-308 (daily ed. Sept. 19, 1991).

¹⁶⁸⁷ This is so in the original; it should be 1105(f). See *infra* note 1701.

¹⁶⁸⁸ The Chairman of the Budget Committee has likened this trigger procedure to a circuit breaker:

Mr. President, the issue before the body today is, simply stated, whether to suspend the provisions of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings law. In essence, what we are doing today is dealing with a circuit-breaker concept.

As the body knows, a circuit breaker is a mechanical device that automatically interrupts the flow of electric current under an infrequent abnormal condition. The circuit breaker turns off the power to a circuit, or path of electrical energy, whenever too much current surges through the system for it to operate safely. Circuit breakers, as we all know, provide important protection for the home and for the office. Without a circuit breaker, a short circuit could cause extremely high temperatures in the wiring and that could set a house on fire.

The drafters of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings law prudently built two circuit breakers into that system. One of these circuit breakers is tripped by a Congressional declaration of war. As much as the events of the Middle East weigh heavily on all our minds, here today and indeed on the minds of our countrymen all across this land, we are not here today to address the issue of a declaration of war.

The second circuit breaker in the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings statute is tripped by a forecast of an economic recession or, in the alternative, actual results showing low economic growth for two successive quarters. Specifically, this circuit breaker device is triggered if either the Office of Management and Budget or the Congressional Budget Office projects that real economic growth will be negative for two consecutive quarters during the year-and-a-half starting with the quarter just ended. . . .

(continued...)

¹⁰⁰⁰(...continued)

I might note, Mr. President, that this circuit breaker can also be triggered by the Department of Commerce which can report that actual real economic growth for the last two quarters came in at less than 1 percent. So there is a distinction. Projected growth has to be negative, but actual growth, as certified by the department of commerce, may also trip the circuit if it is less than 1-percent real growth.

Tripping the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings recession circuit breaker forces the majority leader to introduce a joint resolution, a joint resolution stating that the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings law shall be suspended. The Budget Committee must report on this joint resolution within 5 session days or be discharged. . . .

Following the action of the Senate Budget Committee, the Senate as a whole must vote on this resolution within 5 session days. If the Senate has not voted on it by midnight of the fifth day, then under a 1986 precedent, the presiding officer must automatically put the question before the body at that time.

The substance of the joint resolution is simple and it is prescribed by statute. If Congress adopts the joint resolution and the President signs it —or if Congress enacts the joint resolution over the President's veto — then it will suspend Gramm-Rudman-Hollings's system of reports and orders for fiscal years 1991 and 1992. It would also suspend points of order on spending bills for the same period. All Gramm-Rudman-Hollings procedures would then come back automatically in fiscal year 1993.

When a circuit breaker shuts off power in our home, it can mean one of two things[.]

One of these conditions is normal; one is not. The first condition may mean we have turned on too many appliances at the same time on the same circuit, that we have connected too many devices to a circuit. Or it may mean that we have a short circuit, which can be very dangerous.

If we just turned on too many appliances at the same time, we go downstairs to the panel of switches and turn the circuit breaker back on. If we have a short circuit, however, we have to call an electrician to troubleshoot and perhaps rework the system.

With the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings recession circuit breaker, the Senate must examine the economic system and vote. If the economic system is basically sound, we should vote to leave the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings structure in place. But, if instead we find the economic system to be in great peril at the moment, then we should vote to suspend the Gramm-Rudman-

(continued...)

§ 258(a)(2) (2) FORM OF JOINT RESOLUTION. —

§ 258(a)(2)(A) (A) The matter after the resolving clause in any joint resolution introduced pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be as follows: "That the Congress declares that the conditions specified in section 254(j) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 are met, and the implementation of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, chapter 11 of title 31, United States Code, and part C¹⁶⁸⁹ of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 are modified as described in section 258(b)¹⁶⁹⁰ of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985."

§ 258(a)(2)(B) (B) The title of the joint resolution shall be "Joint resolution suspending certain provisions of law pursuant to section 258(a)(2) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985."; and the joint resolution shall not contain any preamble.

§ 258(a)(3) (3) COMMITTEE ACTION. — Each joint resolution introduced pursuant to paragraph (1)¹⁶⁹¹ shall be

¹⁶⁸⁸(...continued)

Hollings rules and take dramatic action to stimulate the economy.

We do not have to rework the system every time the circuit breaker trips. It is merely a device that operates automatically to force us, then, to exercise judgement. And that is precisely what the Senate is being called upon to do this afternoon; to exercise a judgment on the economy.

137 CONG. REC. S1346-47 (daily ed. Jan. 31, 1991) (remarks of Sen. Sasser).

¹⁶⁸⁹ See pp. 437-666.

¹⁶⁹⁰ See *infra* pp. 627-628.

¹⁶⁹¹ See *supra* pp. 619-620.