5-23-1957

Radio program of Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC) for his weekly broadcast, recorded 1957 May 23

Strom Thurmond

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MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:

As this session of Congress moves along, the continuing chief topic of consideration and conversation is the size of the proposed budget. The President has appealed to Congress not to cut the budget, but many of us are still trying to reduce the budget and, at the same time, provide amply for all necessary expenditures.

Perhaps the budget is generally a dry subject to you. The reason I have been discussing it is that I believe you should know what is happening to your tax dollars. Permit me again to point out some of the things that happen in the handling of appropriations to meet the budget.

Sometimes the actual expenditures for a budget year -- from July 1 of one year through June 30 of the next -- are far greater than the total appropriations approved by the Congress for that particular year.

This comes about as a result of several situations, two of which I want to point out. First, is the matter of deficiency or supplemental appropriations bills. These are bills which each year provide certain departments with additional funds to spend that same fiscal year above the amount originally appropriated in the preceding session of Congress.

For example, let’s take the situation regarding deficiency and supplemental appropriations approved at the session of the Congress held last year. In 1955 Congress had appropriated about $64.5 billion for 1956. But when the 1956 session of Congress met,
deficiency and supplemental appropriations were requested by the departments, and Congress appropriated an additional $57,414,000 for use in fiscal 1956. Thus, in effect, the total appropriations for 1956 was increased by nearly a billion dollars.

Thus, the appropriation made for each fiscal year of the Federal Government is not final until all the deficiency and supplemental appropriations bills are counted in the total.

Budget requests in 1956 totaled $73.3 billion. Total appropriations were slightly less than that amount but nearly $5 billion of the $73 billion was for deficiency and supplemental appropriations to be used before July 1 of last year -- actually in the budget year of 1956.

Already in this session of Congress, the Senate has considered and approved five deficiency and supplemental appropriation bills. The funds approved in these bills total more than half a billion dollars in money which must be charged against the 1957 budget and added to the total appropriations for 1957 which were approved last year by Congress.

In as far as possible, I believe deficiency and supplemental appropriations bills should be eliminated. Deficiency and supplemental funds should be limited to real emergencies or the occurrence of uncontrollable situations.

I intend to do all I can to bring about some readjustment of this present method of appropriating additional funds for so-called deficiencies when they often are simply expansions or extensions of departmental activities.

A second budget matter which concerns me greatly is the fact that
certain funds appropriated during any given fiscal year are permitted to be carried over for use in future years.

Although we are complaining about the size of the $71.8 billion budget proposed for 1958, that amount is only about one-half of the total expenditures the Federal Government will make during the year beginning July 1.

Funds carried over from prior years, which will be spent in 1958, now total more than the 1958 budget itself.

Senator Byrd of Virginia, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, has stated that more than $143 billion will be spent if the proposed budget is added to the funds available from prior years. Highway trust fund appropriations and balances might raise the total above $150 billion.

This year I have already voted to reduce the budget requests by nearly half a billion dollars in the regular appropriation bills which have been considered in the Senate. Before the year is out, I hope we can trim billions more and make a start toward better regulation of the matters I have discussed.

This is Strom Thurmond in Washington. Thank you for listening and this station for making this time available each week.