

Tab 4

Citation

Search Result

Rank 90 of 104

Database
WP

'14/95 WASHPOST A03
 14/95 Wash. Post A03
 1995 WL 9272296

The Washington Post
 Copyright 1995

Tuesday, November 14, 1995

A SECTION

At White House, on Hill, Pondering the Essentials

Guy Gugliotta

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sen. Alfonse M. D'Amato (R-N.Y.) was planning to hold "essential" Whitewater hearings, then canceled. Rep. John R. Kasich (R-Ohio) wants his pay held, but doesn't know how to do it. The White House is going down to one chef. Senators may bring lunch -- their dining rooms will be closed.

With a government shutdown only hours away, the opposing camps in the White House vs. Congress budget battle last night tried to decide who would work tomorrow and who would not.

Not surprisingly, the White House, with only one boss calling the shots, had things pretty well figured out by sundown. President Clinton and top White House staff were "essential personnel," as were the Secret Service and the people working in the Situation Room.

But first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's staff will fall from 16 to four, and maintenance will drop from 70 to 14. Where there are normally four chefs, there will be only one during the day and another at night -- only 90 of the White House's 430 employees were expected to stick around for a day's work.

In Congress, by contrast, where there are 535 bosses, any meaningful count of the total considered "essential" was impossible. Secretary of the Senate Kelly Johnston said there will be no guided tours, but the Capitol will be open and Capitol Police will see that visitors don't get into harm's way.

House Oversight Committee Chairman Bill Thomas (R-Calif.) sent a letter to House members early in the afternoon yesterday describing "essential" personnel as "only those whose primary job responsibilities are linked directly to legislative activities."

Thomas himself, however, found wandering the halls late

11/14/95 WASHPOST A03

terday looking for House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), confirmed the vagueness of this dictum, saying "I don't know of any shutdown," and offering the opinion that Congress was deeply involved in the nation's essential business.

The House Budget Committee chairman wanted to "make sure my pay is held, just like any federal employee. So I asked somebody how to do that this morning," Kasich said, "and they said, 'I have no idea.' "

Also planning on coming to work was Gingrich spokesman Tony Blankley. "My dog thinks I'm essential," he said. "I bring him food -- he told me in dog words." Besides, he added, "McCurry would be disappointed if I wasn't there."

Michael McCurry, the White House press secretary, was not immediately available for comment, but as one of the White House's 90 anointed, he can watch Blankley twisting the knife on TV and will be able to return the favor.

The House was lucky on food, because it privatized all its cafeterias and dining rooms. The Senate, which runs its own eating places, is shutting them down, leaving senators with the awkward choice of visiting the House to eat or making do with vending machines.

D'Amato, the Senate's Banking Committee chairman, said late yesterday that he'd planned to conduct a Whitewater hearing today, saying it was "essential" to the "fulfillment of our objectives." How essential?

Not that essential: He later postponed the hearing, issuing a release citing "the tremendous press of business relating to the budget." Hearings to resume, he said, after Thanksgiving.

Staff writer Helen Dewar contributed to this report.

---- INDEX REFERENCES ----

NAMED PERSON: BILL THOMAS; ALFONSE M. D'AMATO

KEY WORDS: FEDERAL GOVERNMENT; U.S. CONGRESS; FEDERAL EMPLOYEES; FURLOUGHS; MEMBERS OF CONGRESS; BUDGET; DEFICIT

NEWS SUBJECT: Labor, Personnel Issues (LAB)

NEWS CATEGORY: NEWS

ERNMENT: Federal Government; Congress (FDL CNG)

11/14/95 WASHPOST A03

TION: FINAL

Word Count: 536
11/14/95 WASHPOST A03
END OF DOCUMENT

