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Battalion/Page 10  
December 15, 1982

## Raises and jobs key issues

# House, Senate debate funds

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — A \$5.4 billion jobs program opposed by President Reagan and a congressional pay raise are the key issues surrounding a stopgap funding measure Congress

must pass to keep the government operating beyond Friday.

The House was to debate and vote on the "continuing resolution" Tuesday, with Republicans warning that Reagan will veto the crucial money measure if it contains the public works program Democrats contend will create 447,600 year-round jobs.

"We're going to be here Dec. 24," predicted Rep. Silvio Conte, R-Mass.

Conte, the ranking Republican on the House Appropriations Committee, told the House Rules Committee Monday he

has a "clean" continuing resolution already drafted and ready to go in the event Reagan vetoes the funding and jobs measure.

A continuing resolution is necessary because Congress has enacted only three of 13 annual appropriations bills that fund federal departments and agencies. The current continuing resolution, passed in October, expires at midnight Friday.

The House Rules Committee agreed to allow eight amendments to be offered on the House floor Tuesday to the continuing resolution, including

two on congressional pay raises.

House members will vote whether to defer an automatic \$16,638 pay raise for themselves or to accept a smaller salary increase.

If members vote no on both counts, their annual pay could rise automatically, as early as Saturday, from the current level of \$60,662 to \$77,300.


"I don't know of any member who seriously believes we should take the \$77,300 figure," said Rep. Vic Fazio, D-Calif., in arguing for a chance to put a

smaller pay raise to a vote on the House floor.

"Most of us understand we've had very few pay raises in the history of the Republic," Fazio told the committee. "We are quite far behind anyone in the private sector."

The panel accepted the Fazio proposal and also one by Rep. Bob Traxler, D-Mich., to keep intact a current cap on the \$60,662 annual congressional salary. The cap will expire with the current stopgap funding measure.

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# Holiday spending okay, experts say

United Press International  
It took some survival tricks like special sales, but the recession will not kill the Christmas industry this year. Shoppers are being selective and apparently holding back for a late rush but retailers say sales generally range from fair to very good.

The Christmas shopping season is in the home stretch, which marketing officials say is the most crucial time, and stores are ready with huge inventories of the popular items like video games and equipment, clothing

and E.T. paraphernalia.

Sales were lagging in economically depressed areas such as Detroit and parts of Ohio but a random sampling showed most department stores were at least keeping even with the 1981 Christmas season.

Michigan's 17.2 percent unemployment rate is the nation's worst and Christmas sales have been restrained because of financial instability. Marketing executives are hoping for a last-minute surge.

However, sales in general are up substantially, said Mark Hunter, marketing director for the 160-store Woodland Hills mall in Tulsa, Okla.

A panel of economists says Americans will spend \$91.3 billion on Christmas — 5.5 percent more than they did last year. Adjusted for inflation, the gain will be 2 to 2.5 percent.

"I wouldn't want to imply this is going to be the great savior," said Robert Eggert, publisher of Blue Chip Economic Indicators, who put together the survey. "But it may be the start of the improvement we've all looked forward to."

Lower interest rates, consumer confidence and the stockmar-

ket boom are responsible for the surge in Christmas spending, Eggert's group says.

Another key reason is many stores broke tradition this year by having seductive pre-Christmas sales.

"It's a real cat fight," Robert Dicker, president of San Diego based Walker Scott, said of the sales. "We try to look like a traditional department store, not a discount house."

In Houston, Robert Sakowitz said his competitors had forced his Houston-based Sakowitz chain to have sales, but it could have a negative effect similar to the airline industry's price-cutting wars.

"You gain an edge for a few days or maybe a week but then someone comes right back and undercuts you," he said. "We're building up a credibility problem with the consumer as to what the real prices should be."

"It'll be a late Christmas, much like last year," said Robert Carlson, senior vice president for merchandising at Crowley, Milner and Co. of Detroit.

Shoppers also are becoming smarter, going for quality items and paring their Christmas lists, officials said.

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## Santa-clad thief robs city bank

United Press International  
MAURY CITY, Tenn. — A bandit dressed as Santa Claus robbed the Maury City branch of the Bank of Alamo of an undetermined amount of cash and escaped, saying he was sorry he hadn't brought his elves.

Crockett County Sheriff's Deputy Tim McCoy said the man walked into the bank Monday carrying two wrapped packages. He handed one of the boxes to teller Dana Sanders, but it was empty. The other one had a gun in it.

"He took the top off one of the boxes and got the gun," the deputy said. "He told them that he wanted cash (put in the box) and they cooperated."

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