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This Week In Congress Radio Address: Reducing the Size of the Federal Budget,
1953 February 25

Speaker: Senator J. Allen Frear

Transcribed by: David Cardillo

[00:00]

Announcer: The week in Congress recorded on February twenty-third, 1953, and played on WDOV February twenty-fifth, 1953.

Mr. Kelly: From Washington, DC, transcribed, United States Senator J. Allen Frear reports again to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Ladies and gentlemen, Senator Frear.

Senator Frear: Thank you, Bob. There has been considerable discussion lately over the possibility of reducing the size of the Federal budget for the next fiscal year. As you know, President Truman, prior to leaving office, recommended expenditures in the amount of nearly 79 billion dollars, declaring that such a sum was necessary to meet the cost of government. President Eisenhower and leading members of congress have indicated a strong desire to sharply lower this figure through the elimination of unnecessary items. The overall objective in lessening the cost of government is two-fold. First, to balance the federal budget and remove the existing deficit. And second, to lower taxes. Both of these are highly commendable goals. As to the best ways of cutting down the 1954 budget, there has already been a host of suggestions from people both in and out of government circles. It is the responsibility of congress to control the purse strings of the Treasury. Therefore, in the final analysis, the obligation to determine how much of the American taxpayer's hard-earned money will be used to operate the Federal government belongs to the legislative branch. But congress must inevitably accept many of its recommendations from the executive branches of government in budget matters because it cannot conceivably be acquainted with all of the operations of the various departments. The President, of course, is the principal recommending authority to congress on budget matters. He and the director of the bureau of the budget must approve the requests of the various agencies, modify or increase them as may be necessary, and then forward the overall figures to congress. Normally, the President, like congress, must rely on the judgment of his department heads to determine the amount of money needed for the efficient functioning of their agencies. These recommendations are not always followed by any means. The general knowledge of governmental affairs possessed by the congress is often extensive enough that the legislative branch will proceed to make reductions in government appropriations even over the objections of the affected departments. In other words, congress can, and often does, wield the appropriation axe on its own, and usually with good reasons. Many of

these reductions, though, are often made in what are called areas of non-defense spending. As one who has long advocated economy in government, I am happy to see cutbacks in any government operation which can be efficiently made. This applies as much to new appropriation requests as to unexpended balances of funds which have been approved at earlier dates. It seems to me, however, that one of the greatest potential savings of government funds may lie within the defense department. We have heard many charges of overlapping, duplication, and even waste within the military services. This may be true, or it may not. [05:02] But as you know, the largest single item in the budget is for defense and related items. Approximately fifty billion dollars. Now, since we have a President who has had years of experience in defense matters, I feel that we can confidently rely on his ability to appraise the defense budget and perhaps reduce it by a considerable amount. Some authorities believe it can be cut by as much as ten billion dollars. Therefore it is to be hoped that President Eisenhower will take a keen personal interest in the defense budget and give to congress a carefully detailed and accurate statement of what he knows from long experience to be the necessary needs of the military services. I know that President Eisenhower will not sacrifice efficiency nor risk impairing our security.

Mr. Kelly:

Thank you, Senator Frear. From the nation's capital, you have heard United States Senator J. Allen Frear in the eighth of a new series of brief reports to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Senator Frear spoke from the Senate Office Building in Washington, and will be heard again next week at this same time.

[End 06:45]