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This Week In Congress Radio Address: Appropriation of Government Funds for National
Defense, 1958 January 20

Speaker: Senator J. Allen Frear

Transcribed by: David Cardillo

[00:00]

Announcer: The Week in Congress, recorded on January 20th, 1958.

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, Mr. Kelly. Congress is settling down to the difficult and perhaps unpleasant task of finding ways and means to provide necessary funds with which to pay for the expanding defense program. The new budget recommendation of seventy-three billion, nine hundred and thirty-four million dollars has given us an indication of the government's needs for the next fiscal year. Congress may see fit to approve the budget as it stands, but in all likelihood, there will be many changes from the original estimate proposed by Mr. Eisenhower. It is to be strongly hoped that appropriations will be kept to a minimum. As a part of its financing program, the President, through his Secretary of the Treasury, is now asking for an increase in the statutory limitation of the public debt. The debt owed by the Federal government, and now fixed at two hundred and seventy-five billion dollars, cannot be increased without specific authority by Congress. But to meet new and future commitments in national defense, it has been proposed that the debt limit be raised five billion dollars on a temporary basis until June 30th, 1959. Treasury Secretary Anderson has already been before the Ways and Means Committee of the House to successfully request this new authority. Our Finance Committee is expected to give its attention to the matter very shortly. As we all know, the public debt has steadily risen over the past years until it now stands at the two hundred and seventy-five billion dollar figure. On occasions during war emergencies, it has even exceeded that staggering sum, but only on a temporary basis. I should point out that the new request now before Congress, which would raise the debt limit another five billion dollars, is also for a temporary period, as I have indicated. Approval by the Congress of this requested increase means that the government will be able to borrow added money from various lending sources for use in meeting its financial obligations. As a member of the Finance Committee, I have been most reluctant in the past to support increases in the debt limit, favoring instead cuts in appropriations and more economical operation of our Federal agencies. It is so relatively simple for the Federal government to spend unlimited sums of the

peoples' money that I believe that a clear obligation on the part of Congress to try to reduce, if possible, the demands of the Federal Treasury on the American taxpayers. In the present period of international uncertainty, however, adequate national security for ourselves and our allies is imperative. We clearly cannot spare any efforts to make certain that our defensive position is not only equal to, but better than that of any potential aggressor, for if we were to allow ourselves to fall behind, the results would be disastrous. Thus, with reluctance, but with a feeling of necessity, I believe it will be the decision of the Finance Committee to promptly approve the five billion dollar temporary increase in the public debt so as to permit the government more latitude to obtain the necessary items for ensuring our national welfare. It is still my strong belief that no increase in taxes will be required. This view appears to be shared by most responsible members of Congress and the executive branch of the government. A hope for reduction in taxes, though, is extremely remote, at least for the next year. I intend to work vigorously for whatever economies and federal spending can be realistically sought, keeping in mind that certain areas of our economy are now in a less than vigorous condition. This brings me to a final but most important point which I wish to stress very strongly. Despite the urgency of national defense, the welfare of our domestic economy cannot be minimized. It seems to me that Congress must devote equal attention and constructive effort to our domestic problems in the many fields where they exist. We cannot forget for a single moment that without a strong and expanding economy here at home, the future of the United States would be in serious jeopardy.

[05:07]

Mr. Kelly:

Thank you, Senator Frear. From the nation's capital, you have heard United States Senator J. Allen Frear in his regular report to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Senator Frear will be heard again next week at this same time, speaking from the Senate Office Building in Washington.

[End 05:29]