

104TH CONGRESS MOVES NEARER ADJOURNMENT

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Federal lawmakers' hopes of putting the 104th Congress behind them evaporated Monday, despite the passage of a massive spending bill, probably the most important legislation to be considered during the session.

Passage of the bill and its signing by President Bill Clinton averted the possibility of another government shutdown like the one that plagued some federal government offices last year. Clinton inked his signature on the bill just two hours before the end of the fiscal year.

The Senate voted 84 to 15 to approve the bill, which provides approximately \$356 billion for domestic programs and benefits and \$244 billion for defense. Also attached to the bill was a measure that significantly toughens the government's powers to stem the flow of illegal immigration.

Combined into a single measure, the bill and its explanatory report totaled more than 3,000 pages and finances nine Cabinet-level departments — Commerce, Defense, Education, Health and Human Services, Interior, Justice, Labor, State and Treasury — and a handful of lower level agencies.

Oklahoma Senators Jim Inhofe, R-Tulsa, and Don Nickles, R-Ponca City, split in their votes on the bill, which won House approval, 370 to 37, late Saturday night. While Nickles voted for the measure, Inhofe called it "fiscally irresponsible" and voted against it.

"It employs smoke and mirrors accounting gimmicks and makes it harder to ever achieve a balanced budget," said Inhofe. "It takes us back to more Washington big spending, business-as-usual. This not the kind of prudent budgeting I was sent to Washington to support."

Senate leaders' hopes to adjourn Monday were shattered when a dispute over a separate bill reauthorizing air traffic systems developed. The dispute also means the House will not adjourn. That's because any changes in the proposal, which has already passed the House once, would need final approval by that side of the legislature.

Democrats complained that the bill, which contains the \$19 billion Federal Aviation Reauthorization, contains language which would help Federal Express prevent its truck drivers from unionizing. A vote on the bill is scheduled for Thursday, before which Democrats hope to win support to change the provision. If successful, the bill

would have to be returned to the House for consideration, further delaying its *sine die* adjournment.

Despite the last minute dramatics, more than 200 pieces of legislation have been approved and signed by President Clinton since the 104th Congress convened in 1994 under the control of Republicans.

Following are lists of those measures from their legislative house of origin.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H.R. 248 — Expanded studies and public awareness programs regarding traumatic brain injuries.

H.R. 255 — Designated a building in Miami as the "James Lawrence King Federal Justice Building."

H.R. 325 — Repealed requirements that forced 11 states with areas of severe smog problems to file air-cleanup plans including commuting-reduction mandates on businesses.

H.R. 394 — Barred states from taxing pensions amassed outside the state after the pensioner has moved into the state.

H.R. 395/S. 734 — Designated a building in Reno, Nev., the "Bruce R. Thompson United States Courthouse and Federal Building."

H.R. 402 — Resolved several land claims, mainly in Alaska.

H.R. 419 — Reimbursed the Benchmark Rail Group, Inc., for emergency work the company performed during the Northridge, Calif., earthquake in 1994.

H.R. 421 — Allowed Cook Inlet Region Inc. shareholders — a federally chartered corporation of indigenous Alaskans — in Alaska to purchase settlement common stock from other stockholders.

H.R. 436 — Requires federal agencies to differentiate between food oils and petroleum oils when issuing regulations.

H.R. 483 — Extends a pilot project allowing senior citizens to purchase discounted Medigap policies through managed care providers.

H.R. 497 — Established a commission to study the gambling industry.

H.R. 517 — Extended the boundaries of a federally protected area in the Southwest to protect ancient roads and artifacts.

H.R. 535 — Transferred ownership of the Corning National Fish Hatchery — closed due to budget cuts — to the State of Arkansas.

H.R. 584 — Transferred ownership of

the Fairport National Fish Hatchery — closed due to budget cuts — to the State of Iowa.

H.R. 614 — Transferred ownership of the New London National Fish Hatchery to the State of Minnesota.

H.R. 660 — Loosened the criteria for a housing developer to acquire special "housing for older persons" status. Also exempts real estate agents and condominium board members from liability for "good faith" violations of seniors-only residency requirements.

H.R. 701 — Transferred 10 acres of the Mark Twain National Forest to the city of Rolla, Mo. — for fair market value — to be used as a tourist center.

H.R. 716 — Extended a State Department program that pays fishing-related fines and fees illegally imposed by foreign governments. Also directs the State and Treasury departments to retaliate against the offending nation with in-kind fees and fines.

H.R. 782 — Allowed federal employees to communicate as individuals with government departments and agencies.

H.R. 831 — Removed a Federal Communications Commission tax incentive for minority owners of broadcast and cable systems. Also allows self-employed people to deduct 25 percent of health insurance costs, retroactively to 1994.

H.R. 869 — Designated a building in Youngstown, Ohio, as the "Thomas D. Lambros Federal Building and US Courthouse."

H.R. 889 — Provided \$3.04 billion in new funding for the Defense Department.

H.R. 927 — Expanded the legal rights of Cuban refugees whose property was confiscated by the Castro regime, allowing expatriate Cubans to sue third parties anywhere in the world who have since purchased their former property.

H.R. 965 — Designated a federal building in Louisville, Kentucky, as the "Romano L. Mazzoli Federal Building."

H.R. 1026 — Designated the US Post Office building in Colorado Springs, Colorado, as the "Winfield Scott Stratton Post Office."

H.R. 1051 — Extended the construction deadlines for two hydroelectric projects in West Virginia.

H.R. 1058 — Limits the ability of investors to sue financial advisers for making mistakes and lowers damage awards against

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