

Cuts rejected

Pa. congressmen defy Reagan

By GENE GRABOWSKI
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Five Republican congressmen from Pennsylvania defied President Reagan and helped the Democratic House majority approve the \$87.3 billion bill that retains money for dozens of social programs.

Tuesday's key vote to save the programs from further cuts marked the first time this year that so many of the state's GOP lawmakers broke ranks with the Reagan administration on domestic spending.

The congressmen, who represent districts from Philadelphia to rural northwestern counties, said they couldn't force their constituents to suffer further reductions in services without matching cuts in the Reagan administration's defense budget.

"My constituents have been asked to give a great deal already and they may be asked to give more, but unless defense is also cut, I cannot support continued slashing of the programs they need," said Rep. William Clinger, R-Warren, one of the five congressmen who voted against the administration's request.

"I'm convinced we can make additional cuts in the defense budget without impairing the president's commitment to keep the nation strong," Clinger said yesterday.

The other Pennsylvania Republicans who voted against further domestic spending cuts were Charles Dougherty of Philadelphia, William Goodling of York, Joseph McDade of Scranton and James Nelligan of Wilkes-Barre. Rep. Eugene Atkinson, D-Alliquippa, was the only Pennsylvania Democrat to vote for more cuts in social programs.

Altogether, 39 House Republicans de-

serted the president and opposed a motion to send the Labor, Health and Human Services bill back to committee.

With the exception of Dougherty, none of the defectors is a known member of the delegation of "Gypsy Moths." The name, which refers to the insects that ravage trees in the northeastern states, is given to northeastern and midwestern Republicans who oppose some of the president's domestic budget cuts.

The Pennsylvanians' refusal to approve further cuts in items such as jobs programs, family planning and educational aid is evidence that constituents are telling congressmen that reductions are hurting them.

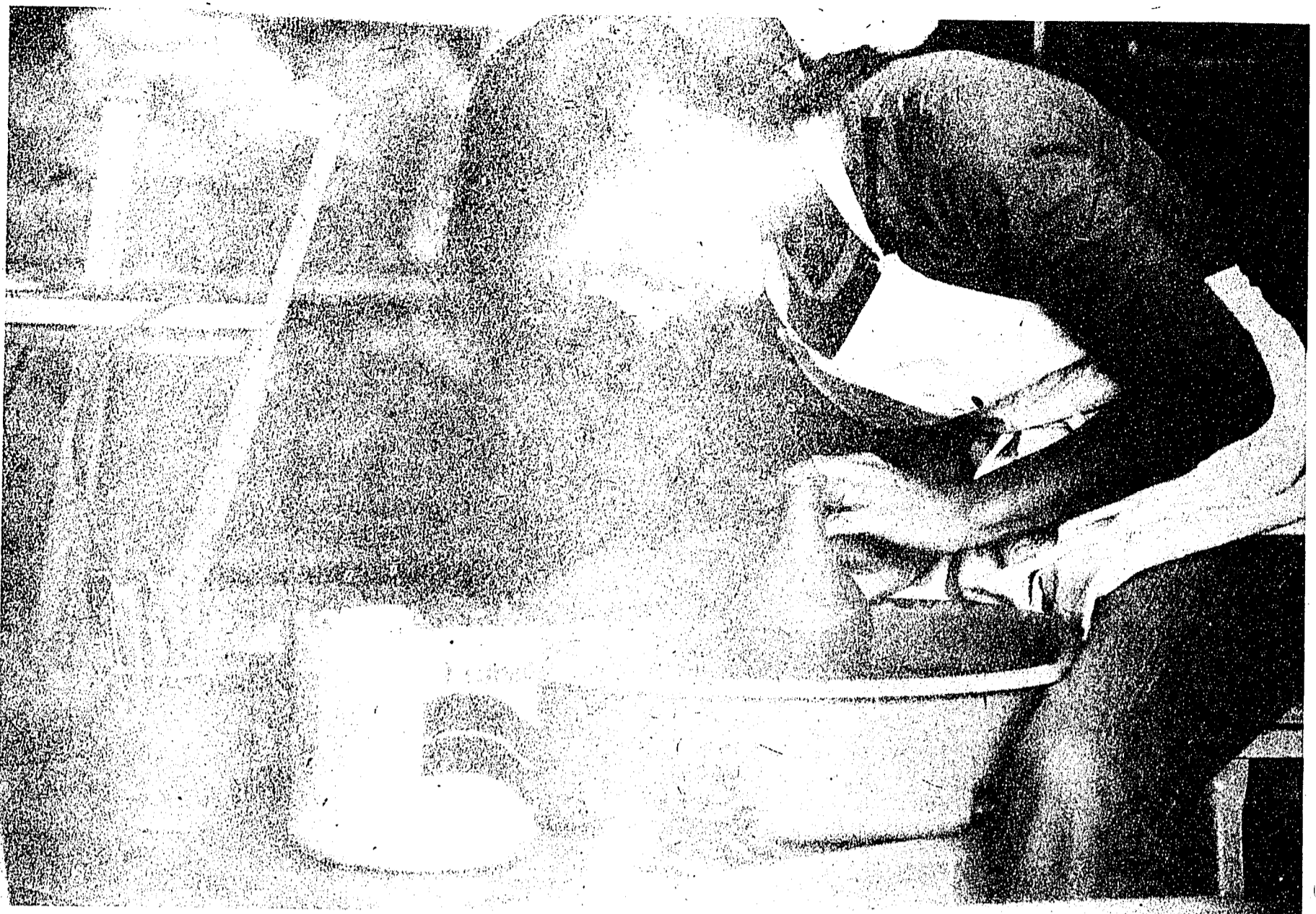
"Certain groups of people have absorbed enough budget cuts and they can't absorb more," said Jordan Clark, McDade's administrative assistant. "We have a lot of people on Social Security in our district and a lot of Democrats, too."

Atkinson's vote came amid speculation that he is considering changing his registration to the Republican party.

Although his press secretary, Bernice Friedlander, denied that he plans to bolt from the Democrats, a source at the Republican National Committee said Atkinson and one of his aides have met with GOP leaders to discuss the possibility.

With few exceptions, Atkinson has voted to support the Reagan administration's positions in the House. That action may have won him valuable support in the Republican-controlled state Legislature, which has drawn up a tentative congressional redistricting plan that preserves his seat.

The state's Democratic-controlled congressional delegation devised an earlier plan that would have dissolved Atkinson's district.



Creative concentration

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Photo by Barb Parkyn

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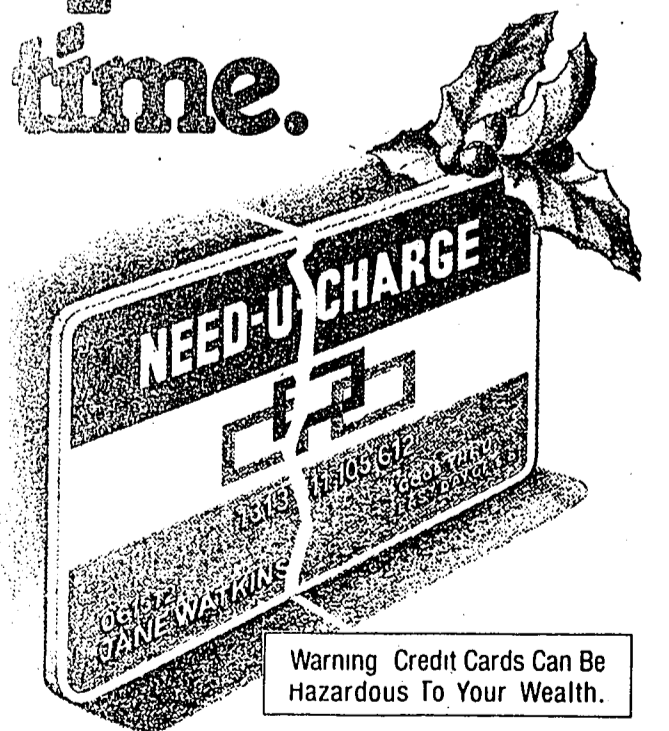
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