

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House this morning with a special plea. In 200 years of the Nation's Capital, there has never been a crisis like this. There has never been a crisis where this capital city has been left without a budget and forced to contemplate closing down.

We have seen countless violations of home rule, all on the basis that it was your constitutional responsibility. Where is your constitutional responsibility to keep the city alive now? We have seen the abandonment of that responsibility for 3 months with no budget.

It is pointless to continue to fight this fight on a voucher principle. You have the votes for vouchers. Bring it to the floor on your own motion. A stand-off with the Senate, a body you do not control, on the backs of the District is wrong.

At the very least, Congress must not leave town without granting a CR for the District of Columbia to spend its own money. It has a responsibility to treat the 500,000 human beings I represent as a city, and not as if they were a Federal agency. It is your constitutional responsibility.

DEDICATED TO BALANCING THE FEDERAL BUDGET

(Mr. GUTKNECHT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, the American people have probably heard a lot about how awful things are in Washington. They probably hear about the Government being shutdown, and about extremist freshmen holding President Clinton hostage, and on and on.

Mr. Speaker, what we have here is, in fact, a celebration of freedom, of democracy, and of the constitutional framework our Founding Fathers crafted.

Yes, there is a conflict over the budget. Yes, parts of the Government are closed. Yes, there are strong feelings.

All of us here in Congress were freely elected. Some of us feel that the direction Government has taken over the last generation needs to be changed. And we are absolutely dedicated to balancing the Federal budget, not just for accounting purposes, but for moral purposes. Our children should not bear the consequences for our irresponsibility. And that is why I believe that, in the end, Congress and the President will do the right thing and balance the budget.

Merry Christmas America.

SCROOGE STALKS THE HALLS OF CONGRESS

(Mr. SCHUMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, in this holiday season, Scrooge stalks the

Halls of this Congress. Yesterday we saw images on television of 80 tough freshmen Republicans saying we are going to do everything we can to balance the budget, even if it means shutting the Government down.

Here is what they do not tell you. They are going away. They will be home with their families while the families of the victims of flight 103 were shut out of Arlington Cemetery, while veterans will not get their checks—it was reported in the L.A. Times that one veteran was told he would be kicked out of his house if he did not have his check January 1—and while the poorest children in America do not get their checks at all.

Courage? Courage to tell the poorest children they do not get their checks, while these Members of Congress go off on their vacations, their warm fireplaces with their families?

Bah, humbug.

STRENGTH TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT

(Mrs. SMITH of Washington asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, we know today that it is morally wrong to spend more than we have available, and we know it is wrong to tax small business out of their small business; and what they have left, if they survive, is taken away at retirement. It used to be called losing the farm for the taxes.

We know that we have been doing this for many years, and policy makers in both parties have been indulging and shifting the cost to steal the future of America's children, and we know that that is wrong.

Negotiating the final budget is not going to be easy. The priorities are difficult. But the one thing America can do, one citizen at a time, is that they can pray that Congress and the negotiators will have God's wisdom to know what is right, and then have the strength that has not been in other Congresses to do that right.

EXPRESSION OF OUTRAGE

Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is day 7 of the Government shutdown, and, once again, the Republicans come to the floor without a continuing resolution to keep the Government going. But yesterday they passed a resolution that allows them to go home next week for a holiday.

We all know that is what is going to happen today. The House is going to recess sometime this afternoon, the Republican majority is going to send everyone home for at least a week, and over the Christmas holiday and through New Year's the Government will continue to be shut down. Veter-

ans will not get their benefits, AFDC children will not get their benefits, we do not know what is going to happen to Medicaid and all the other benefit programs that many people rely on during the holidays and all seasons in order to keep their lives going.

It is not fair what this Republican majority is doing. They are not governing. The Constitution says that the majority party has the responsibility to govern. They should not simply go home for a nice Christmas vacation while the Government is shut down and so many other Americans do not receive the benefits they should be getting from this Government.

I am outraged at what is occurring.

PLACING BLAME

(Mr. BAKER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BAKER of California. Mr. Speaker, do not you love it? It is the Christmas season, and they are sitting here lying today. Oh, it is terrible what the Republicans have done. In just 11 months we ended western democracy as we know it. "Yes, in just 11 months, these terrible Republican majorities have shut down Government. And here they are, calling for a balanced budget, and they are going to go home on Christmas."

For 40 years this pack ran this place, blaming President after President. "Oh, it was Carter's fault. He knew who was on the tennis court but he didn't know anything about finances. But we do, so we kept spending."

"Oh, it was Reagan's fault. He slept through the Cabinet meetings. But we know how to spend, so we kept spending."

So, it was Bush's fault, it was Clinton's fault, it was everybody else's fault.

But it was the fault of this Congress, who had their foot on the accelerator. Here they have the gall to stand up and say the marketplace tells us that Medigap is going up. Yes, that is AARP, the people that oppose our reforming Medicare, and the Medigap insurance is going up 33 percent; not because of anything that is going to be done, but because of what has been done, overutilization.

Yes, we are going to reform this place; yes, we are going to balance the budget. Merry Christmas, America.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EWING). The gentleman will state it.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, in this Christmas spirit, is it appropriate to refer to Members as "lying" on the House floor?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There should be no reference of that sort in debate to specific Members.