

Republicans will seek to balance the budget. Overwhelmingly, both parties join in saying, yes, we want a balanced budget. The President wants a balanced budget. He said it many times.

In reviewing the document that the President submitted to this Congress, the only difference is that it incurs hundreds of billions of dollars of budget deficits for the next 7 years. That is not balancing a budget. Maybe in Washington spending \$115 billion more than we have next year is balancing a budget, but in real America, in the real business community that is bankrupt. That is out of business.

So as we approach the season of Christmas, the Speaker and Members of Congress have committed to staying here as long as it takes. That is not good news for families. It is not good news for anyone that Congress would work in session through Christmas. But I think we must honor the tradition of this House.

When we run for elections we tell voters if they will send us to Congress, that we will do the heavy lifting; that we will bring back a balanced budget and restore fiscal unity and dignity to this Nation. So we cannot just say, oh, well, it is almost Christmas. We have to be home. We have to leave Washington. We cannot be here. We cannot be away from the house, our districts, because certainly the balanced budget can come later.

This is a milestone in our Nation. This is a unique opportunity. As Mr. GINGRICH says, this is gut-check time, whether we have the fortitude to bring down overspending or do we want to just keep playing games.

We have heard the Medicare scam, and many people have talked about it, but we have seen the tapes, we have seen the visuals of Mr. and Mrs. Clinton saying we should bring it down to 6 or 7 percent a year. Well, we are doing 7-plus percent a year in Medicare spending per recipient. So it is not a cut. We know that. We have proven that. We will go on to the next issues.

Wasting taxpayers' dollars, though, is legendary around this process. We have appropriators, authorizers, the Committee on the Budget, all working somewhat together and then, at times, apart.

Mr. Speaker, I had an interesting opportunity to kill the gas turbine this year, which was an exciting year for me and an exciting project for me, because it had spent hundreds of millions of dollars a year. Always killed in the Senate, denounced by three Presidents, but here in the House it survived year after year. We killed it here in the House, went over to the Senate and killed it there, and, finally, the gas turbine no longer finds its way into our budget. The same Government that had the Department of Defense procurement system paying \$450 for a hammer.

We just heard from one of my colleagues, the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. TIAHRT], talking about Secretary O'Leary's trips. As I recall, we started the Department of Energy during the

Carter administration because we had a gas shortage, a crisis, and they wanted to make certain that the thermostats would stay at 78 degrees. Now we are traveling the globe trying to seek out whatever we are trying to look for and spending hundreds of millions of dollars to do it.

I think the Cabinet Secretary needs to reexamine her priorities, reexamine why the Department was created and show some leadership and some frugality and not spend the taxpayers' money as if she is, in fact, a corporate executive on the shareholders' nickel.

Yes, Congress has failed to act. Many people look back at the Reagan years and say, oh, it is Reagan's fault for running up massive deficits. Hey, the buck stops here in Congress, folks. The buck stops here in Congress. The Congress are the appropriators. They are the authorizers. They are the check writers. They are the fiscal clearinghouse for this Nation. So Congress has to accept the responsibilities.

The President submits a budget, and we have sure seen his. It does not look like it is going to reduce the debt, but, no, he gets a chance to submit it and he gets a chance to veto, which he has done.

I was proud today, Mr. Speaker, when we came to the securities legislation, that a number of our colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, overrode his veto. We are sending him a message that it is time to start working and stop vetoing messages and then sending hollow bills back to this floor suggesting he is committed to deficit reduction.

We have a lot of problems in America and we have a lot of problems we can solve together, and I think there has been a great bipartisan spirit on a number of issues. But I do think it is time for all of us to end the charade, end the political games, end the characterizations and assaults against the Speaker, and on both sides of the aisle. The Republicans do not need to fire missiles over to the Democrats, and I think the Democrats need to cease and desist.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK] talk about the exonerations of the Clintons. The same thing is happening to the Speaker on the numerous charges being filed by the other side of the aisle, in order to tie up the process, in order to try to impugn his reputation and trying to do a number of things.

So I think if this Congress is serious about Christmas, about the holidays, and about the future of this Nation, that we will put aside personalities and get down to balancing the budget initiative, and we will work on it successfully, like we should. We have all voted for it, we have all supported it, and now let us do the heavy lifting and provide the leadership necessary in order to pass it.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. MILLER of California., Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to exchange special order times with the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK].

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COBLE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman?

There was no objection.

FRESHMEN REPUBLICANS DO NOT CARE ABOUT FAMILY VALUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the previous speaker said that this was not about ruining the holidays for the families of Federal employees; that that really was not important and what was important was a balanced budget.

I think that that shows such incredible lack of respect for those families, for their relationships with their children at a time of the holidays, for their religious beliefs. I think it shows such an incredible lack of respect for our families and our religious beliefs. This is more than shopping days. This is a religious holiday. It is a time when we gather with our families and we think of our fortunes and our misfortunes, and we take stock of the year we have and the year we look forward to and we pay respect to our God.

The suggestion somehow is that that can all be held ransom, that can be held ransom and somehow that will make the negotiations more serious; that, apparently, the Speaker of the House of Representatives is incapable of negotiating unless he has a hostage. He shut down the Government a month ago because the President of the United States would not talk to him. Now he is shutting down the Government because the President is talking to him.

Last night the President agreed to sit down with Senator DOLE and with Speaker GINGRICH, they would roll up their sleeves and they would negotiate a balanced budget that would be scored, the numbers would be guaranteed so it truly came into balance by the Congressional Budget Office.

They walked out of that office with that agreement: and, apparently, the Speaker brought that back to the Hill and the freshmen Republicans told him, no; that that was not good enough to release the Federal hostages; that that was not good enough to let people enjoy Christmas; and that was not good enough to put people back to work.

Maybe we were wrong. I assume that the President assumed that when the Speaker said he wanted to negotiate vis-a-vis the President, that he assumed he had the authority to negotiate. The President was speaking for the Presidency, the executive branch and the people he represents. Senator

DOLE seemed to think he was representing the people in the Senate from the Republican Party. Apparently, the Speaker did not have negotiating authority from the freshmen in the House of Representatives.

So apparently, the Government will remain shut down through Christmas. We will or will not be here through Christmas, and families will have to go through that kind of trauma. It is terribly unfortunate, but it shows such a basic flaw in all of the rhetoric and all of the debate and all of the hot air from the Republicans about family values, about the importance of families, about how this was going to be a Congress that took that into consideration when we recognize the importance of the Christmas season to our families.

Now, what is the debate about? The debate, apparently, is that the freshmen Republicans told the Speaker there will be no give on the \$245 billion tax cut; that that was sacred to their sense of a balanced budget. So at the time that we are cutting the seniors' health care benefits, at a time that we are limiting the amount of money to be made available for the elderly in nursing homes, at a time that we are cutting back on health care benefits and abolishing the Medicaid Program for children, for poor women in this country, the first time that we have put children back into poverty instead of lifting them out of poverty, at a time that we are cutting back on access to student loans and increasing the cost of education, at a time that we are making those fundamental changes and cutbacks that affect every family in America, the bottom line for the Republicans is that if they do not get the tax cut for the wealthy in this country, if they do not get that, then there can be no negotiations.

To hold on to that position, they have decided, for the second time, to take hostages from the Federal work force. This is a little bit like a family that sits down, as we must do to balance a budget, and decides that they will only go to the show once a week, they will not eat out any longer, they will drive the car for a longer period of time, they will not buy a new house, they will take an extra job, maybe the kids will have to work, but then, all of a sudden, they turn around and say, but we are going to give the children a raise in their allowance.

We do not have the money for this tax cut. We do not have the \$245 billion when we are cutting \$270 billion out of seniors' health care and \$180 billion out of Medicaid. I think the freshmen Republicans ought to quit being so selfish and start thinking about America's families and families that need their help.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky [Mr. LEWIS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky addressed the House. His remarks will appear

hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

A BALANCED BUDGET IS THE MOST SERIOUS CRISIS OF THIS GENERATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. MCINNIS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, we need a Government that keeps on ticking, but we do not need a Government that keeps on giving. This balanced budget is the most serious crisis of this generation. There is not a family in America that finds themselves in a situation where they spend more money than they bring in that they do not call it a crisis. There is not a family in America that if they got themselves into the same kind of situation as this Government, spending more than they bring in, would not sit down at a table and say, you know something, somewhere we are going to have to reduce the amount of money that we are spending.

Our problem back here in Washington, D.C., by the way, is not a lack of money. We have plenty of money in Washington. We have twice as much as we did 10 years ago. Our problem back here in the Nation's Capital is spending. We are spending more money than we bring in. Our problem back here is not a lack of taxes. In fact, the average person in this country spends the first 2 hours and 45 minutes of every working day just paying their taxes.

Like an old farmer one time told me, before you put more water in the bucket, you better plug the holes. That is what is happening in this Government. We need to plug the holes. We need to reduce this spending. You cannot tax the American people anymore.

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And the American people have every right to expect this Government to conduct its business as we expect them, the constituents, our bosses, to conduct their business.

Mr. Speaker, what will happen if we can balance this budget? First of all, let me tell my colleagues that the President, regardless of all of the rhetoric that goes on, regardless of what the President says right now, I can guarantee my colleagues that this President will be forced to accept a 7-year balanced budget; I can guarantee my colleagues that this President will be forced to have that scored by the Congressional Budget Office; and I can guarantee my colleagues that the President is going to have to address entitlement programs.

Mr. Speaker, if my colleagues think entitlement programs in this country are run well, ask anybody how well our welfare system is run. Imagine winning \$100 million in the lottery and wanting to give \$50 million of it to the poor people in this country. Would anyone send that to Washington, DC for distribution to the poor people in this country? Of course they would not. The system

is broken, and the President is going to have to be part of the solution in fixing that.

Mr. Speaker, another thing we have got to do is we have got to restore confidence in the American people. How confident can the American people be that business in Washington is changing when we have the Secretary of Energy traveling around the country in one of her jet rides that costs \$400,000 just for the jet, taking an entourage of 50 or 60 or 70 staff people with her, having 500 people to handle public relations?

We cannot allow that to go on. How confident can the American people be when we stand by and let that happen? The President should immediately ask for, and the Secretary of Energy should immediately submit, her resignation. We need to look at the scare tactics that are being deployed, and we have heard some of them on this floor today.

Mr. Speaker, we are not ending Medicaid. We are doing it in a different way. We are sending the money to the States and bypassing the bureaucracy in Washington, DC. Medicare is not being eliminated.

Mr. Speaker, if we listened to some of the scare tactics, we would think there will be no more school lunches for kids. That is obviously false. Not one kid who got a lunch this year is going to be denied lunch next year. We would believe that students will not get loans and the senior citizens are going to be thrown out in the street to starve. We would think all of these dramatic things are going to happen.

Mr. Speaker, a year from now, after this President is forced to accept a 7-year balanced budget and after this President is forced to have it scored by the CBO, a year from now we are not going to find any of that having occurred.

In fact, what we are going to find is lower interest rates. We are going to find that the next generation has got this generation paying off its credit card so that we do not send that debt on to the next generation. That debt right now accrues at a rate of \$30 million an hour. This next generation is watching our generation overspend the budget by \$30 million an hour.

What will we see a year from now? We are going to see that come to an end. We are going to see the U.S. Government in Washington, DC do as 48 States do, and every family in America is expected to do, and that is to balance their budget, to not spend more money than they bring in.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that our issue back here is spending. We are not cutting Medicare; we are reducing the growth of Medicare. The President's proposal, by the way, on Medicare is very similar to ours. If some of these people get up talk about the Republicans and want to use the word "cut," they better talk about their own President.

Mr. Speaker, we need to stop the spending in Washington and we need to