

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, earlier today during a one-minute I mentioned that what I see going on in this Congress and this House is just pure lunacy. You know, under Webster's Dictionary, lunacy is intermittent derangement. I recognize that here. It is insanity. That has been mentioned here. Great or wild foolishness, a lot of that, and a widely foolish act.

There is no question in my mind that what has been going on in this House of Representatives since the December 15 is lunacy. You know, I can remember back when I was a young person we had a name for people with lunacy. They called them lunatics. There is no question in my mind that in this House today we have got a whole bunch of lunatics. They do not understand really how this government is supposed to operate.

They do not understand that under the forefathers, this government, under our Constitution, was developed as a tripartite, three-body, system. We had the Congress, the Supreme Court, and the President. They are coequal. One is not better than the other. One is not supposed to be more powerful than the other.

Then in a range of appropriations, they gave the House the power; taxation the same; the power to initiate legislation, only the House. But then they gave the President the power of veto, and they said if you want to override that veto, it takes two-thirds of each house to do it.

That is the way this Congress had operated for over 200 years, until 1995. In 1995, our imperialistic Speaker, Speaker GINGRICH, and the radical Republicans decided that is not the way that this government should operate any longer. Oh, no. We are not going to do that anymore. If we do not get our way, on our so-called, and I say so-called, seven-year balanced budget, if the President does not sign it, which he did not, he vetoed it, then we are not going to appropriate funds for various agencies of the government, which they have not, Labor, HHS, D.C., foreign aid, or if the President vetoes it, then we are not going to pass a continuing resolution to fund the government while we negotiate with the President. We are just going to shut the government down.

That is what has happened. And, lo and behold though, these people that suffer from this disease of lunacy now also suffer from a disease of irresponsibility, because they say it is not our fault. We did not do it. They are not man enough to accept the responsibility of what they decided, to run the government by shutdown. Oh, no, it is the President. I heard the majority leader just this morning on TV; it is the President's fault. The President is shutting the government down.

The President does not appropriate one penny. Folks, he has no power under our Constitution to appropriate one penny. He can only sign a bill. If he decides to veto it, then the House has

the right to try and override; if not, then pass legislation continuing it. Like I say, that is what we did under Reagan, while I was here, under Reagan, Bush, Carter before him, everybody.

That is the way it happened. But no, not under this group. No. Shut the government down, but do not accept responsibility. Place the responsibility somewhere else.

I even had some of these freshmen tell me earlier, before we broke for Christmas, that this is just the start, too, folks, because next year they say they we do the appropriation bills, if the President does not sign it and he vetoes it, there will not be a CR, there will not be another bill, we will just shut it down. And guess what? When I said, you know, this one we have here, this is back in December, it may last for several months, they said good. Good, we save that much money. We will not be spending the money.

What kind of government is it where people say it is good to tell people you have got to work, but you are not going to get paid? That is what happened. That is happening today. Or those of you who do not work, you are going to get paid?

Not only that, at the same time, they keep getting paid all the time. And they do not do anything. We have not done anything in this House for a month.

HOW MUCH GOVERNMENT CAN WORKING PEOPLE AFFORD?

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

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as Congress and the Clinton administration continue negotiations to balance the Federal budget, I am reminded of the question I heard from residents in Georgia's Third District last week: How much government can working people afford?

I want to repeat that question: How much government can working people afford?

Today the combined Federal, State, and local taxes consume nearly 40 percent of the disposable income of working Americans. Federal taxes place the harshest burdens on taxpayers. In 1994, the average American family turned over 25 percent of its income to the Federal Government. That compared to just 2 percent in 1954.

During the 1950's and the early 1960's, the Federal Government managed to pay for the national defense, build a nationwide Interstate Highway System, deliver our mail, and provide other vital government functions while living within its means. Today the Federal Government spends \$500 million per day more than it collects in taxes and revenues. We are \$4.9 trillion in debt. Interest on our national debt is the third largest single item in the Federal budget, topped only by Social

Security and the national defense outlays.

Federal entitlement programs are responsible in large part for our national financial predicament. Today working Americans are paying the bills to provide health care to the elderly, the poor, and the disabled. Today working Americans are paying the bills to fund numerous Federal welfare programs that create a lifestyle of government dependence. Today working Americans are paying the bills to subsidize various Federal programs for farmers, students, cities, counties, States, businesses, and the list goes on and on, which brings me back to the question I heard from my constituents: How much government can working people afford?

We Americans are a fair and compassionate people. We believe in providing the benefits of Federal programs, such as Social Security and Medicare, for which people have paid for and earned. We also believe in helping those who want to help themselves. We are providing the programs that will help those citizens in our society who have encountered difficulties. But we must reform those programs that encourage government dependence as a way of life for millions of Americans.

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Mr. Speaker, working people pay the bills. They provide the funds to pay for all Federal programs and they must pay for the Federal debt and the interest that accrues because of irresponsible deficit spending.

While Democrats criticize tax breaks for fat-cat corporations and businesses, who do they really think pays the corporate taxes? The working people of this country, Mr. Speaker. That is who pays corporate taxes. Corporate taxes are built into the cost of products and services purchased by consumers.

When a consumer goes to the store and buys a product or purchases a service, he or she does not get two receipts for that product or service. They get one receipt for the item and within that one receipt are all the taxes that have been paid on that product. Instead, this consumer has only one receipt rather than two. No receipt for just the tax portion of the profits earned on the sale of that item.

American workers pay the bills for all government programs and for all services. How much more government can they afford?

Mr. Speaker, I urge President Clinton to join Congress in our effort to preserve Medicare, to change welfare, and to provide tax relief for working Americans and pass a 7-year balanced budget. This is the only way we can provide a Federal Government that working people can afford.

WE ARE OUR BROTHERS' AND SISTERS' KEEPERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.