

Finally, we have a shared commitment between the Congress and the President to reach a balanced budget. What we also need, and need very urgently in my opinion, is a shared commitment, including the commitment of House Republicans, to maintain a functioning Government. This Senate has acted responsibly in passing a continuing resolution to once again fund the Government as we did last evening. Today the House Republicans have the opportunity to act responsibly as well. I sincerely hope that they will seize that opportunity.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

#### COME TO AN AGREEMENT ON THE BUDGET

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I, like many of my colleagues, have returned to Washington this week, hopeful that the Congress and the President can come to an agreement on the differences they hold over the budget issues that the American public are now so aware of, as a result of the continuing shutdown of Government or a portion of our Government. I stood on this floor just before Christmas and asked the President to give the American people a present, a Christmas present, a balanced budget that would look toward the future, that would assure the economic viability and vitality of this country well into the next generation. And that it was at Christmastime that we should start.

That did not happen. In fact, the President did just the opposite. He vetoed appropriations bills that were sent to him. At least as a result of the veto of one appropriation bill, the Interior appropriation bill, he furloughed, by that action, a good number of workers in my State, Federal employees in the Forest Service and the BLM, who are now extremely frustrated and calling my office and saying why can we not work? Why can we not be paid? Why can we not continue to do what we do for our country?

Let me say to those workers that I am sorry they are not, today, at work. Not just them, but all Federal workers in my State. The President did not veto the Interior appropriations bill because of the dollars and cents of it. He vetoed it because of his belief in a policy or an attitude that is in disagreement with the majority of the U.S. Congress on how many trees ought to be cut in a forest in Alaska, or how certain lands ought to be mined.

So, I am sorry, to those employees in my State, because the Congress did its work and it responded to them, and to the Government, by sending the appropriate appropriations bill, only to be vetoed by the President.

So to those workers, let me tell you. You are today being held hostage by a President who refused to sign appropriations bills that had been sent to him. That is all I want to say on that

issue. And I say that because I believe the Federal workers who are furloughed ought to be paid. They are furloughed through no fault of their own. And this Congress and this President ought to come to an agreement to resolve that issue. And I hope that is accomplished before the week is out.

Yesterday, the Senate spoke in an effort to try to bring Federal employees back onto their jobs. And that did not work for the House is still considering its options as appropriately it should.

So, Mr. President, I hope you recognize the importance of the work that we are trying to accomplish here. And I hope that we would not continually look at just tomorrow because, while I am not happy that our Government is shut down, I am not worried about tomorrow and tomorrow's unemployed Federal workers. But I am worried about the future and a balanced budget; and, that we will have a strong, stable Government as a result of a strong, stable U.S. economy that is able to appropriately fund the needed services of Government and assure the long-term stability of the work force and the responsibilities and the goals of a Government. That is the way it ought to be. That is what this Congress has attempted to look at and make changes in over the course of the last 12 months.

It is my disappointment that the White House never sent a balanced budget to Capitol Hill, and it never once said, except in the last few weeks, that it would come to the table in an effort to resolve the budget crisis that we are now engaged in.

Several weeks ago the President did, while signing a continuing resolution, commit himself for the first time to work toward a balanced budget; to try to match up the rhetoric of his last campaign with the actions of his administration. Yet, the American people have watched. And we have worked day after day through Christmas and now into the new year at the White House and here on Capitol Hill to try to resolve the differences just to honor the commitment that we made to the American people and to try to cause this President to honor his.

I know there are fundamental differences. There are differences that are very difficult to resolve because there are some in this Congress, and certainly many in the administration, who do not believe in a balanced budget but who have profited politically over the years by the longevity of their service by assuring the perpetuation of the welfare state mentality; that you could just give and give and borrow and borrow and buy your way back year after year and continue to serve and to say all is well with the American citizen, the American Government, and the American economy.

While all was well for the short term, what became overpowering to the American people was the growth of a debt that is nearly \$5 trillion by its total amount and that is costing well over \$200 billion a year just to finance.

Finally, the American people spoke very clearly in the last general election across this country when it said the future of our country is every bit as important as the current well-being of our Government and the well-being of our citizens.

So I am here to work to resolve the issue. I say to the Federal workers in my State and across the Nation that while I wish you were not furloughed, and while I support you being paid when you return to work, and when we produce a balanced budget the future of our country is so very much more important than the short-term difficulty that I am sad you are experiencing but that, in fact, you are experiencing because the policies that will cause this Congress and our Government to operate in a near balanced budget year in and year out to stop building mounting debt is what is fundamentally important for the new year.

So while the President was unwilling to give the American people a Christmas gift, let me ask you, Mr. President, to make a New Year's resolution along with all of the Congress to by this weekend come to terms with the differences that we have between us to resolve a balanced budget in 7 years using the Congressional Budget Office numbers that we can all agree on, that makes sense to the American people, and that for the new year sets a resolution that says for the future, for America's future, for our young people's future, we will build a strong and stable economy in a Government whose policies are based on serving the truly needy but also recognize that the free market system unfettered by an ever-growing Federal Government is the one that serves the American people best.

Mr. President, make that New Year's resolution with us today. Resolve the issue before the week is out so that employees can go back to work who are responsible and dedicated and furloughed through no fault of their own. And they can be compensated, and the American people can see that politics in Washington is not politics or business as usual but that we have heard them well, we have heard them loudly, and we have heard them clearly. And we responded by producing a balanced budget that charts for future generations a responsible Government, and a strong and growing U.S. economy.

I yield the remainder of my time.

Mr. SARBANES addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

#### THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, we have witnessed over the last few weeks an unprecedented effort to use a coercive tactic in order to achieve a particular substantive result—in my judgment, a totally irresponsible and outrageous tactic; and, this is, to hold Government hostage by closing it down and, therefore, not only depriving the Federal workers of the opportunity to