

in a bipartisan effort. We have over 40 Members who have joined already to cosponsor a resolution that would open the Government, stop the bleeding, stop the loss of money, but let us continue to debate whether we cut Medicare and Medicaid, whether we cut the education loans, whether we cut in the environment, but open the Government so we are not losing \$50 million a day.

This funds the Government at 90 percent. It allows people to be back at work doing the nursing home inspections that they are entitled and must be responsible to do, opening the national parks, opening the monuments, taking down the image internationally that the Government is shut down. Our embassies have had to send out letters to ensure our foreign governments that we are, in fact, not a government in crisis or revolution. This should not be.

And let me remind my colleagues that under the Constitution we are to work with the three branches of government, and we must work with the President and this House and the Senate. Let us work together, pass House Joint Resolution 155, and allow us to open this Government up. It is most important. House Joint Resolution 155. Let us pass it and open the Government.

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

[Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order in place of the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES].

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

#### TALK IS EASY; BALANCING THE BUDGET IS DIFFICULT

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

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, actually, I do believe with some of the Members here on the floor, we could actually work out the budget deal. Don't you think? That is about how I feel at the moment, is to override that which is down below the hill so that we can get it done.

One thing that did bother me, before I start in on this, is when I heard one of my colleagues mention the word "perhaps." Balancing the budget is perhaps a laudatory thing to do. Perhaps is kind of a word like a maybe. Like balancing the budget may be a good thing to do. It does not imply any form of desirability, which, in fact, bothers

me somewhat, and that is the problem that we have.

It is easy to talk about let us balance the Nation's budget, but when we actually get down to doing it, it is very difficult. One thing that is bothersome is, whether it is the Republicans or whether it is Democrats, there is this blame game that goes on in this town. And when we feel the heat back home by our constituents or Federal workers or someone who cannot get a passport or visa, it is easy to quickly blame someone else. Or if, in fact, someone is working in a Veterans Administration and someone calls to have a need and they say, well, just call your Congressman. They would like to blame the Congress, and that is an easy thing to do.

There is something that confronts us, though, and that is the Federal Government cannot sustain its current fiscal policies. I do not care who we are or what our background is or our partisanship, that is a fact. The spending commitments will far exceed the revenues available to meet the Federal Government's obligations. That is a fact. So we cannot deal on assumptions. Assumptions carry great liability.

Facts are stubborn things. It is a condition, not a theory, which presently confronts us. Look at this chart here for a moment. This is what confronts us. We have a national debt. Look at this national debt and the explosion. There is a great blame game when they say this national debt. They blame it on the 12 years of the Reagan-Bush era, as if Congress did not pass spending bills. So when they cut taxes, they did not cut spending, and we got a mushroom in the national debt.

I came to Congress in 1992. I am not interested in a blame game here. I know what confronts us. Fact is what confronts us.

If my colleagues would time travel with me and we say, now in the year 2002 we balance the budget, well, this bothers me. I am not satisfied. I am not satisfied because I know the national debt will continue to grow from its \$4.9 trillion today to around \$6.8 or \$6.9 trillion. This national debt, this will take us up to about 2030 to 2035 to bring it back into better balance. I will not even be alive.

So people say, STEVE, why are you doing this? It is very easy to come here to the floor and say all of these things. Oh, my gosh, we have Federal workers not being paid. Here are some of the impacts. Here is someone that needs a visa to come back to school from whatever country they are from. Or here is someone that needs to go overseas for a particular job, or whatever is going on.

There are numerous examples, and we can go on and on and on. Do we give in to the moment or do we permit the eyes of our minds to see the greater vision? And the greater vision is saving the country. Save the country. Because if we permit the national debt to just

mushroom and balloon like it is, I know what countries do whose debts become unmanageable. They devalue their currency.

I will submit this to the American people. If they see Members of Congress leaving this institution and they are starting to buy gold, Americans better buy gold, because we can see what is about to happen.

So it is easy to come here and wrap ourselves around whatever issue. There is no ownership on the issues of compassion. Some like to believe there are, but there are not. I neither believe that the milk of human kindness has soured, nor will I give in to the tears of vexation.

Mr. Speaker, I look at this chart and I think what a luxury President John Kennedy must have had when he came to this town in the early 1960's. Because at that time he had 70 percent of the budget that was discretionary spending. Seventy percent. Twenty-three percent was entitlement, 7 percent was interest on the debt. By 2002, the discretionary spending will have gone from the 70 percent all the way to only 28 percent.

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So when we subtract 16 percent of the 28 percent for the military budget, we are not arguing over much anymore, because the mandatory spending side, entitlements and interest, they overtake itself. It is wrong and we have to balance the budget. Let us not give in to the rhetoric today.

#### CLEAN CONTINUING RESOLUTION WILL PUT FEDERAL EMPLOYEES BACK TO WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. VOLKMER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BUYER], who just spoke, for his steadfastness for an effort to balance the budget, but I must disagree with him to the extent as far as he will go by saying that we must have a vision, and the vision is that we balance the budget in 7 years, and in the meantime, we make people suffer unendlessly. Those people who are suffering are innocent victims, not only Federal employees but contractors, private businesses, et cetera, in order to reach that goal, and it is not necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I tell the gentleman from Indiana, he and others on his side had an opportunity to vote for the coalition balanced budget amendment that many of us supported, and they did not, for the sole reason that it did not include a big tax cut for the wealthy. That is the only reason.

So, it tells me that what they really want is a big tax cut for the wealthy at the same time they want to cut back on Medicare, et cetera. But that is not