

absolutely in a quiet room, no one there, no one there, because there were very few employees in the building. Now, that person works for a private contractor. They were there, but others have been laid off, as many, many employees of private contractors have been laid off all over the country.

There is no provision for addressing these people. They are simply out of luck.

Then we get to another very important category, veterans' health care. Imagine if you were lying in a hospital bed critically needing medical care, but also acutely aware that those providing the care were not being paid.

Now, my office checked with the Director of the VA center in Fargo, ND, and he told us that the sick count is going up; fewer and fewer employees actually coming in under these circumstances. He said they are calling in sick, and he is worrying about filling his rotations.

Imagine the concern for the veteran, the hospitalized veterans in our VA system watching this inactivity in the House today and wondering what kind of health care they will get tomorrow, whether the person providing the medical services they so desperately require, doing it without pay, will even show up tomorrow to give the care that is critically needed.

Another major area is housing. You know, many, many housing loans are supported by an FHA guarantee or a VA guarantee. These programs process every single day 2,500 mortgages for FHA and an additional 1,000 for the VA system all over the country. You have got people who have counted on moving, counted on closing real estate deals and getting into their new locations, maybe some of them have even abandoned or made plans to abandon the apartments in which they are presently residing, contemplating timely loan closure, and guess what, the Federal Government is shut down because House Republicans do not agree with BOB DOLE that we need to reopen this Government, and they are out of luck.

Another dimension, there are people struggling with bills, veterans qualifying for these low-interest veterans' loans they want to refinance. There has been a favorable turn in interest rates. They want to refinance. They are up against the wall in terms of monthly cash flow, but guess what, Government shutdown, applications stacking up, nothing being processed, no refinancing, stick with that high interest rate.

The passport dimension of this has raised heck all over the country; unemployment applications; SBA loans. The list goes on and on and on, and that is why Senator DOLE told his colleagues in the Senate, "Enough is enough."

I say to my colleagues in the House, enough is enough. Let us reopen this Government.

A BALANCED BUDGET IS MOST IMPORTANT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas [Mrs. MEYERS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I think the fact that we have closed Government down is difficult. It is very important for a number of people, but I also would like to say that the importance of getting a balanced budget in this country is even more important.

The budget that we have produced puts money back into people's pockets. It leaves choices to governments, to State and local governments and to individuals. It reduces spending and ceases the mortgaging of our children's future. It ends a number of programs that have absolutely crippled this country. It ends entitlement to programs where funding just continues to go on and on and on.

I do not know if everybody knows what an entitlement is. But an entitlement is a program where we define certain parameters in the law and then if you fit into those parameters, you are entitled to money. And we have a number of these entitlements.

We do not even appropriate specific amount of money. We just say such sums as may be necessary, and we have said to young women that we will give them \$18,000 a year if all they will do is just have two children out of wedlock, and then we have promised them they are entitled to that \$18,000 a year.

Some of these entitlements absolutely demand that we change them, and it is tremendously important that we do this. The President has simply not cooperated and not followed through with what he said he would do.

At this point in time, I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON].

Mr. KINGSTON. I thank the gentleman for yielding and wanted to make some points that we have heard a lot of speeches about let us reopen the Government.

I want to say to my friends on that side of the aisle, I think there is certainly a good argument for it. We are talking real people, real paychecks, real mortgages, and so forth. I think we need to address that.

I wish they would also have equal ferocity to the debt they are passing on to children. If a baby is born today, he or she owes \$187,000 as his or her part of the interest on the national debt, \$187,000 above and beyond local, State, and Federal taxes.

Now, you know, you talk about compassion. What about the legacy of debt which people do not seem to be worried about passing on to kids? What we are hearing is, of course, "I supported a balanced budget." Well, they do, but not every one of them voted for it. You know, here is, we had the "yes" votes from GEREN, HALL, MONTGOMERY, and PARKER when we had the Balanced Budget Act, so from the side over there we only had four "yes" votes. That is fine.

A lot of them are saying, "Well, I support the coalition budget." I would say, if you support the coalition budget, then that is very good, too, and that is progress. But there is still a lot who do not support the Republican budget or the coalition budget and are coming down here saying, "Of course, I support a budget." Well, where is it? Hello? The budget negotiations are going on. Go ahead and put your budget in any time now.

We want to get the Government working again. We want to reopen it. But you cannot do it when you have got one side who will not come to the table. So I think it is very, very important to say, OK, you know, let us try to get beyond the Federal Government, you know, and the shutdown, and let us get back to the balancing of the budget.

We have a debt right now that is almost \$5 trillion. We spend \$20 billion each month in interest on the debt, and I hope that we see some of the urgency that we are seeing on, you know, reopening the Government, I hope we see the equal urgency on let us balance the budget. I think we should have both. I think we should get the Government reopened. But I think we should rush most importantly to balance the budget. I hope our friends would see that.

I know the gentleman from Texas wanted us to yield some time. I do not control the time, but if the gentleman would yield, what I would say is we often yield to you but do not get yielded back. So if we do, if the gentleman decides to yield to you, I would appreciate it if you would reciprocate back and let me have some of your time so that we can have a dialogue if that is what the gentleman desires.

Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would just say for a moment that I think a lot of people out there are thinking we could get the Government open again, we could get the people back to work, it is just a matter of numbers, why do they not just split the difference in what they want to do with Medicare or Medicaid?

The point that I am trying to make is that it is not just a matter of numbers. It is a fundamental, a totally fundamental difference in the way we view Government, and essentially it does not mean that either are wrong. It means that the Democrats believe in rather a larger role for the Federal Government. The Republicans believe in a more limited role for the Federal Government, and you cannot get there with all of the entitlements.

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TIME TO PUT AMERICA BACK TO WORK

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

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, if I could yield for 30 seconds to the gentleman from North Carolina.