

been deemed essential as a result of the shutdown of the Justice Department and have been prohibited from using their accumulate leave time.

While it is true that there are procedures in place for these dedicated Federal servants to apply for extra time to use this excess leave because of extraordinary circumstances, why should these individuals be compelled to make extra effort to keep the benefits they have earned and are being prohibited from using?

I firmly believe that in any future legislation to restore benefits to Federal employees affected by the shutdown, that an automatic extension for the use of this excess leave time should be included. We should not make these Justice Department workers or any similarly affected Federal employees fight to keep what they have earned, and what the budget impasse prevents them from using.

CONGRESS TO BLAME FOR FEDERAL SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Ms. BROWN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if we do nothing else, it is our constitutional duty as Members of the U.S. Congress to pass the appropriation bills. Yet it is January 4, and we have only passed 7 of the 13 appropriation bills that are necessary to fund the Federal Government. No one is to blame except Congress; to exact, the extreme Republican Members of the House.

It is hard to me to believe that Republicans want to recess until January 23. If you ask my opinion, they have been in recess since the beginning of the 104th Congress, because in the Constitution we must pass the appropriation bills, and not in the Republicans' contract.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO].

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I will be very, very brief, because I do not want to interrupt the gentlewoman's remarks. But our Republican colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX], who was here earlier, talked about a November 19 agreement, a continuing resolution that was in fact signed by the President and by the Speaker of the House. There were two parties to the agreement.

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And the issue was to talk about a balanced budget in 7 years; but, also, part of that agreement was to reinforce the priorities and values of this Nation that include Medicare, Medicaid, education, the environment, and tax reform for working middle-class families.

I dare say that the President has kept his part of the bargain. It is our Republican colleagues and Republican leadership in this House who have

failed to move on any reduction in their cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, education, or the environment, or to remove their tax break package, which is \$245 billion, to the wealthiest Americans.

When we talk about that agreement, we need to talk about both sides who signed and discussed that agreement. And I thank my colleague for yielding to me.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the gentlewoman one question. Will you clear up for the American people the question as far as the balanced budget? They keep talking about the balanced budget. Yes; we want to balance the budget, but it is a question of priorities, shared sacrifices. What are some of the other factors?

Ms. DELAURO. Well, the issue is, and my colleague is right, there is not a Member of this House who does not want to see the Congress, House and the Senate, and the President put our fiscal house in order. Everyone wants to move in that direction. The question is, as you pointed out so well, the priorities in dealing with this budget, how one gets to a balanced budget.

Now, if we want to talk about \$245 billion in a tax break for the wealthiest Americans, provide them with that, and at the same time we want to cut \$270 billion in Medicare, we want to cut \$163 billion in Medicaid, we want to cut education programs, and the environment, and increase taxes for working middle-class families, then our priorities are wrong in terms of balancing that budget. Take that tax break package off of the table and then let us talk about balancing the budget.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. If the gentlewoman would stay with me, I would ask her, does she think this sounds a little like voodoo economics again?

Ms. DELAURO. It is really a shell game and politics at its worst in this body. The linking of the shutdown of the Government to the balanced budget, as I said, is the worst of politics because we cannot continue the budget negotiations or talk about what the American public wants to talk about in terms of Medicare and Medicaid.

We do not have to keep this Government shut down. This is holding the American public hostage and workers hostage, and it is wrong, and I believe that the public is beginning to understand what is going on. The American public said to the President of the United States, veto this budget that cuts Medicare, Medicaid, and pays for a tax break for the wealthy. Sixty percent encouraged the President to veto this budget.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Well, I have heard three times today that you can fool some of the people some of the time. The American people need to let the Republicans know that they are not being fooled by this talk about balancing the budget while we do reverse Robin Hood, where we are robbing from the working people and poor people to give a tax break to people who do not

need it, do not want it, and do not deserve it.

Ms. DELAURO. The gentlewoman from Florida is absolutely right. I applaud the work she has done on the floor of this House in order to try to bring out precisely what is going on here. Sometimes it is difficult to get the word out and to really have people understand what kind of a shell game is being played on them.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman.

PRESIDENT CLINTON HAS SHRUNK GOVERNMENT AND REDUCED THE DEFICIT

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, we are in a bad situation. We are in a situation that the majority leader of the U.S. Senate, a Republican, I am a Democrat, said I do not see any sense in what we have been doing. That is the Republican leader who said I do not see any sense in what we have been doing.

We are in a bad state. I am a supporter of the constitutional amendment to balance the budget. I was a supporter of the 7-year CBO-scored real balanced budget known as the coalition budget. I believe that we ought to have a balanced budget by the year 2002.

Why are we here? I came to Congress in 1981, and that is when it started, frankly. Under Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan had a Democratic House and a Republican Senate for three-quarters of his term, 6 years out of the 8, and during that period of time he quadrupled the national debt. Why do I say he did it? Well, we both did it, the Congress did it and the President did it.

In point of fact, Ronald Reagan asked for more spending than the Congress gave him. Hear that. Ronald Reagan asked for more spending than the Congress gave him. And, in fact, when he submitted his budgets, he built in large deficits. He projected them. George Bush did the same thing. So, collectively, we ran up a debt of over \$4 trillion, now about \$4.8 trillion.

Now, that is a serious matter, which is why I am for an amendment and why I want to see us balance the budget. But contrary to those who would say it is a crisis requiring the most drastic unsensible steps, this country has been in debt far above what we are in debt now, just after the Second World War, as it relates to our gross domestic product. That is the money we have to pay the debt.

This President, President Bill Clinton, took office and knew we had a problem. He put a bill on this floor in 1993, a tough bill, and for the first time since 1948, that economic program resulted in reducing the deficit each year in the 3 years that President Clinton has been President, unlike Ronald Reagan and unlike George Bush. The