

You can argue that this plan does not go far enough. You could argue that it could have been better. But I do not think that anybody can argue that this plan moves us in the direction that we have been going over the last two and a half years, that this plan does in fact balance the budget over 5 years honestly, no gimmicks, no smoke and mirrors, that it does provide permanent tax relief, and over the next 5 years will reduce the growth of spending in entitlement programs by some \$200 billion, some \$600 billion of entitlement reductions over the next 10 years.

Without this plan, the Federal Government over the next 10 years would spend \$1.1 trillion more than what will be spent once this plan is enacted into law. So I do not think there is any question that this is a good plan.

Yes, I would like to have balanced the budget sooner. I would like to have lower taxes. But the fact is that we have learned over the last 2 years that there are two ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. Republicans control one here on Capitol Hill, but Bill Clinton is in the White House. If we are going to do anything on behalf of the American people, we have got to get both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue to work together and talk to one another.

Mr. DELAY. The gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BOEHNER] is absolutely right. I sort of describe it as the Republicans in the House and the Senate are like a sailboat and we are sailing against the wind and we are sailing down Pennsylvania Avenue and the wind is coming from the White House, a very strong wind is blowing in our direction.

In a sailboat, you can either turn it around and go with the wind, and that is something we absolutely refuse to do, or you can tack toward the wind, always moving forward, but in some cases you have to make an agreement with the wind. Sometimes you have to make an agreement with someone else, but always keeping your eye on the future and the forward. And that is where we are moving.

If you put it in perspective, this is an incredible budget compared to, say, the big budget of 1990, when George Bush was President. There were huge tax cuts, huge spending increases.

Mr. BOEHNER. Tax increases.

Mr. DELAY. Tax increases. I thank the gentleman very much for the correction, tax increases. Tax increases is not even in the jargon of this place anymore. It is hard to even say.

But tax increases, spending increases. Look at the budget that the President passed with the Democrat Congress in 1993 that they are so proud of, huge tax increases, once more taking more money out of the middle-income America's pocket and spending it on Government programs that we all know 9 times out of 10 are very wasteful.

That is the kind of thing that we have been going for. Even when we did not get the President signing our balanced budget in 1995, the things we are

able to do in tacking back and forth, moving forward, in eliminating over 270 programs, in cutting over \$53 billion in real Washington spending, in moving forward and making sure that we are bringing this country into fiscal responsibility is very, very important that the people realize that, sure, if the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BOEHNER], and I were writing this legislation, it would appear to be much different. But on balance, we are getting more than we are giving up, and I am very proud of that.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, there has been a lot of discussion about who wins and who loses in this. I really do not think there are any losers in this, but the real winners in this agreement are not Republicans or Democrats, it is the American people who are the big winners.

We all know that we have accumulated some \$5½ trillion worth of national debt. I went to the fifth grade class of Liberty Elementary School in my district on Monday and explained to each of these fifth-graders and asked them, how much do you think your share of the national debt is? How much do you think you owe Washington? Some thought it was a dollar. Some thought it was \$10. One even thought it was \$300. I had to explain to them that their share of the national debt was \$22,000 that every man, woman and child today owes to those who have lent this money to the Federal Government.

If we do not do something about stopping any additional debt from growing, we are imprisoning our children and theirs. We know that a child born today will pay almost \$200,000 in taxes over the course of their lifetime just to pay the interest on the national debt. That is no money for education or the environment or roads or anything else that the Federal Government does.

So the American people win with this agreement. Do we have to do more? I think we all understand we do. We have got to balance the Federal budget so we are not adding any more debt there. In the year 2002, or hopefully sooner, we ought to begin to pay off the national debt.

If we want to give our children and theirs the shot at the American dream that all of us grew up having, we need to make sure that they do not have this debt on their back, or their chances of succeeding, their chances of having the American dream available to them just is not going to be there.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BOEHNER] is so right. I just want to expand on what he is talking about, what the children of tomorrow will owe.

It is really interesting, when the President was running for reelection, he made in his State of the Union that famous statement, "The Arabic government is over." And then when he came back and got reelected this year and made his State of the Union Mes-

sage, his penchant for big spending was back, because in his State of the Union, he talked about all these new spending programs; and he said something at the end of that speech that I do not think I will ever forget. Not many people picked up on it. Certainly the press did not pick up on it. But the President said, "You know, a child born tonight will not long remember this century."

Once again, the President was wrong, because a child born that night will never forget this century because that child, as the gentleman has said owes so much money, not just in paying off the debt but in paying off the interest on the debt, that it is immoral. We are committed, with this President or without this President, to bring fiscal sanity to this Government for those children that were born that night.

I would be glad to yield to the distinguished leader of the freshman class from North Dakota, who has been working very, very hard on seeing that the supplemental appropriations bill becomes law so that his disaster relief, much needed disaster relief, goes to North Dakota. I appreciate the gentleman for showing up.

Mr. THUNE. I want to thank the gentleman from Texas, but will remind him that it is South Dakota.

Mr. DELAY. South Dakota, I apologize.

Mr. THUNE. And in Dakota territory, that is an important distinction to make because we have had our share throughout this last year, the most disastrous winter in our State's history and in North Dakota's history, as well, and we are in the process now of trying to come up with the assistance that we need. Hopefully, in very short order, tomorrow, we will have that bill on the floor, in hopes that we can get the assistance to those who are in such desperate need of it in my State, in North Dakota, and Minnesota and many other States like it.

But I do want to comment this evening, if I might, on the subject at hand, and that is the discussion that you and our friend from Ohio [Mr. BOEHNER] were having about the budget agreement that has been reached.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, before the gentleman gets started, if I could, I would like to ask unanimous consent that the gentleman be given my time.

BALANCED BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] is recognized for the remainder of the time as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I too want to this evening touch, if I might, on what I believe is an historic event in this country; and that is what we have seen and witnessed in the last few weeks, the agreement between a divided Government, a White House that is in control of the Democrats, the

Congress that is in control of the Republicans, on a balanced budget, something that has not happened since 1969.

If I can take you back just a little bit to 1969 for those who perhaps were not around and I was a small child in a little town of 600 people in western South Dakota at that time, but in 1969, the last time we balanced the budget, believe it or not, the Mets won the World Series. And it was at that time on my grandmother's black and white screen that I was watching Neal Armstrong take a giant step forward for mankind on the Moon.

Yet, since that time, we, as a country and as a Congress and as those who are guardians of the public trust and guardians of the next generation, the future of our kids and grandkids, have been taking a step backward in the way that we manage our fiscal affairs. I would suggest that it is high time that we took a step forward. I believe that the agreement that has been reached, the plan that has been presented, does just that.

Most of us would agree that this is not a perfect thing. I think that if you look at the plan, and all of us are going to find its flaws, but I think you have to look on it on balance. As I walked up and down the main streets of my home State of South Dakota last year campaigning for this office, for this position, I heard repeatedly, "Why cannot you in Washington, DC, why cannot the Republicans and Democrats, the White House and the Congress, work together in a fashion that will benefit the future of this country?"

As I listened and commented, it was my observation at the time that this is really true. As I campaigned last fall, I think that, in spite of the fact that the people of this country elected a divided Government, they essentially elected the same message, because I think many of the things that the President campaigned on and many of the things that those of us who were campaigning for Congress were talking about were essentially the same issue.

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I maintained at that time that, if we were willing to govern like we campaigned, we had some enormous opportunities to accomplish some good things for the future of this country. I think it is a testament as well to the way that the debate has moved in the past few years. Bob Dole reminded us last evening of something that was said sometime back by former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. That is that the measure of success of a political party is how much you change the opposing party.

Today we are here talking about things that I think we have had a part in bringing about a dialog on issues that previously were not a part of this debate. Today when we talk about a balanced budget, when we talk about tax relief for American families and individuals, businesses, we talk about a smaller government that is more effi-

cient, that works better and costs less. Those are all themes that I believe in the course of the debate of the last several years we have moved that discussion.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this budget is a product of that movement. Granted, it may not be everything and we have to make steps a little at a time, but it certainly is a step forward for the future of this country. For those who would argue that it does not do enough in one area or another, and I recognize full well that there are things, if this were a dictatorship, there are things in that budget that I would change. There are things that I would like to do differently. But we have to accept on balance the fact that we are working in a process that constitutionally provides for a White House, executive branch, and a legislative branch. And whether they are in control of different political parties, those two parties and those two branches of government have to work together in a way that is constructive and that benefits the future of this country.

So as I have listened to the discussion and those who would say that this is not good enough, it probably is not good enough by a lot of people's standards, but it is, I believe, a step in the right direction. It takes us down the road to addressing many of the issues that certainly I campaigned for, many of those who came in with me as freshman Members of this body campaigned in favor of, one being a balanced budget, two being a smaller government, three being lower taxes. And then finally, something that I think we are all very concerned about, and that is the future of programs that are important in this country, programs like Social Security and Medicare. And in agreement we have for the first time, I think, addressed what is going to be a shortfall in the Medicare trust fund, something that we are consistently reminded by the trustees is in desperate need of attention.

So I think that this balanced budget agreement, the plan that has been laid out and is now in the process of hopefully in the course of the next few weeks and months we will be implementing that in the form of legislation, but I do believe that it takes us in the right direction. I think the effect, we have to remember that this discussion really is not about the Republicans or the Democrats, the Congress or the White House or any one personality. It is really about the future of this country. It is about our kids and our grandkids, what are we doing to make this a better place for the next generation.

As I think about how this balanced budget agreement applies to those whom we are responsible for in making this a better place for them, I think about my children first and foremost. The fact, as has been alluded to earlier, that we in this country over the course of the last 30 years, since we last bal-

anced our budget, have accumulated a debt of over \$5 trillion, which amounts, as was mentioned earlier by the gentleman from Ohio, to \$20,000 for every man, woman, and child in America.

Mr. Speaker, I can give a perfect example of why we have to do something and we have to do it now that gets us moving in the right direction with respect to balancing this budget. That is \$250 billion annually in interest on the debt, 250 billion that cannot be used for any other good purpose like roads or bridges or education or any other national priority. It simply goes to pay the interest on the amount of money that we have borrowed and that someday has to be repaid. Every year we put off, and I think it is important, too, because sometimes we do not make a distinction between the deficit and the debt. A lot of people think that they are one and the same, and they really are not.

Inasmuch as we are making progress on reducing the deficit, every year that we spend more than we take in, we add to the national debt. So every year our debt continues to grow. As it continues to grow, the amount of interest that we have to pay to service that debt continues to grow.

At \$250 billion today I would argue over the course of the next few years, if nothing is done it will continue to go up to \$300 billion and \$250 billion today, just to put it in terms everybody can understand, is the amount of tax dollars that are generated to the personal income tax by every taxpayer west of the Mississippi River. That is an enormous amount of money that goes toward no good purpose other than to pay interest on the debt.

Now, it is somewhat important, I believe, too, in the context of what we have seen this last week, because last week we recognized, as we do annually in this country, tax freedom day. May 9 was tax freedom day in America. That is the average in this country today on which people quit paying Federal taxes, local taxes, State taxes; and actually start paying themselves in the jobs, in the income that they generate in those jobs.

In my State of South Dakota, for example, we are a little bit better off because we have a low tax structure at the State level. Our tax freedom day comes on April 30. But if we look at the average, across this country, May 9, or 129 days into the year, before the average individual, the average family actually starts working for themselves and quits working for different levels of government.

That is a staggering, staggering thought, when we think about how much time in this country each on a daily, you reduce that to the per day, the per week, and then the number of days in the year that we actually spend just to pay the Government. I think it is a staggering fact that something that should alarm us and hopefully that we will become more cognizant of as we evaluate the kind of return that

we are getting on our tax dollar in this country. So 129 days into the year this year.

It might interest my colleagues to note that since 1939 that has increased by about 6 days. The last time that we raised taxes in this country in 1993, we saw the tax burden go up, taxpayers in this country and the tax freedom day continues to move further and further out. So it is very important that we address that issue and that we address the uncontrollable rate at which Government in this country continues to grow.

Now, just a final thought, if I might, and I see my distinguished friend here, I believe, has some comments to make, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HASTERT]. But I would say in closing that as we evaluate this plan and we listen to all the rhetoric that is out there, it is important to remember, I think, to try and personalize the effect that it has not only on each individual taxpayer in this country but on their families, grandparents, on their grandkids. And as I look at it myself, I think about my kids and the fact that for the first time we are doing something that will help make this a better place for them, will give them a brighter future where they are not saddled with and burdened with a debt that will deprive them of access to the American dream, something for which my grandfather moved to this country back around the turn of the century from Norway.

If we can get to where we have done something that is meaningful and significant for their future, we will have accomplished something in this debate and in this process. Think of yourself, if you are like I am and you are raising kids, trying to think about how to pay the bills, and the average person in this, in America, who is trying to put aside a little bit for retirement, thinking about college education, a lower tax burden. The fact that there is incorporated in this plan a per child tax credit will put more money in the pockets of working men and women in America who are trying to make ends meet for their families.

If you think about our parents, and my parents happen to be in their late seventies, approaching 80 years old, they depend very heavily upon programs like Social Security and Medicare. This plan will in fact add 10 years to the lifespan of Medicare, and it gets us into a position where we start making the structural changes, the adjustments in these entitlement programs that will put us on a track to fiscal responsibility in this country and to making those programs workable, not just for those who are currently depending upon them like my parents are but also for those in the next generation, for our kids and grandkids.

I would suggest as well that for those who would say that, again, it does not incorporate everything we would like to have in it, that, and I heard this statement the other day and I think it

is very significant, that change is not an event, it is a process. We are making progress in this body by working in a bipartisan way to arrive at an agreement which is historic in terms that we have not done something like this since 1969 that brings about profound and fundamental changes in the way that we do business, that shrinks the size of the Federal Government, that saves Medicare, and that lowers the tax burden on American families and individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I would close by saying, and I will yield the balance of my time, whatever that might be, by simply saying again that I believe that we need to get behind this. We need to have the support of the Members of this body and the American public. For those who are interested and have been following this debate, this is something that is definitely a step forward. And in going back 30 years to 1969, when we took a giant step forward for mankind, this, again, is a step forward for mankind and for the next generation.

BUDGET AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HASTERT] is recognized for the balance of the time as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Dakota, who has made a great impact in his freshman year here in this Congress, and we certainly appreciate the good work he has done.

The gentleman is right, this Congress is making history. I think the 104th Congress made history when we had the contract, and we started to do the things that people said, there is some commonsense things that Congress ought to do. We ought to make government a little bit smaller and smarter. We need to start cutting our cost of government.

And, of course, the 104th Congress was the first Congress that spent less than any other Congress before it, I think which goes back 40 years. As a matter of fact, we saved \$53 billion, but we could not pass a balanced budget amendment in that Congress, did not get it through the Senate and may not get a balanced budget amendment through this Congress. We certainly hope so, and we will come back and work at it again.

But one of the things we need to do is balance the budget. That is what it is all about. And we have worked hard to do that. That is one of our goals.

I think the American people, first of all, expect Congress to balance the budget. They also expect us to do the job and, if we cannot pass an amendment, then we will have to do it the hard way; that is, get down.

And, of course, one of the things that we have had problems over the years is that the amount of money that Congress actually appropriates is just a

fraction of what the amount of money that Congress actually spends. What Congress spends are the entitlements.

Over the last 50 years, entitlements, that is money that never passes through the Committee on Appropriations, that is money that is never actually voted on by the Congress, it just is spent. It is the debt. It is farm programs. It is Medicaid and Medicare and other things out there. Those are the entitlements that have gone awry. They have had an increased inflation rate of about 15 percent per year.

Any time that you have a 15 percent per year inflation rate, we find out that all of a sudden the money we have spent every 5 or 6 years doubles and that is what has happened to the debt. We find ourselves with a debt of over \$5 trillion, a huge debt out there, and, as a matter of fact, \$1 out of every \$4 that the Federal Government brings in just goes to interest on the debt.

One of the things we have also found out is that what we have done is saddle our children, the gentleman talked about his kids and he worries about his kids, we have saddled our children with a debt that they are going to have to pay off unless we do something now. And now is the time. We cannot pass it off for another year or another decade or into the next century. We have to do it now, if we are going to affect the future for our children.

As a matter of fact, a child that is born today will have to go out and earn \$168,000 or some huge number like that just to pay his or her share of the interest on the debt.

So what has Congress decided to do? What have we tried to lay out? What are our parameters here? Well, we want to balance the budget of this year, 1997, in a bipartisan blueprint. And we have. We have worked with the other side of the aisle. That is what the American people want us to do. They elected the President and they elected this Congress. So we need to come out together and find a way to work together. And we have.

So we have a bipartisan blueprint for the future in order to get Washington's fiscal house in order in the next 5 years. So by the year 2002, we have balanced that budget.

So the four principles that I think that we talk about when we have tried to work on that budget agreement, budget plan, is that we are balancing that budget by the year 2002, and we have to keep it in balance. We cannot just balance it once and say we have done that. We need to keep it in balance. And if we have any kind of growth at all, if we have the kind of growth that we had in JFK's term of office, economic growth, we have certainly seen the stock market go up, we have seen job expansion, we see the lowest unemployment rate in this country that we have seen in decades, so the economy is expanding.

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If we have the kind of expansion that JFK had, we could balance the budget