

Address that the era of big government was over.

If only that were true, Mr. Speaker. We can see now that this declaration was nothing more than words. Big government is alive and well, and it is bigger than ever. In fact, the Democrats have come back with still more ways to increase the size and power of government every year since.

While we can say that government is not quite as big as it would have been if the Republicans had not taken control of the Congress in 1995, the truth is that government continues to grow, and any attempts to cut government, no matter how wasteful and counter-productive the program may be, the liberals will immediately attack our resistance to more and bigger government as being extremist or mean-spirited.

It has never occurred to them that it is perhaps mean-spirited on the part of a Federal government to have so little respect for the working men and their labor that Washington takes between one-quarter and one-third of their precious money every month from their paycheck.

So that still leaves us with the very important question, how did we go from \$200 billion deficits, as the President had proposed, as far as the eye can see, only 2½ years ago, to the budget surplus that we now enjoy?

Let me tell the Members, remember, it is true that there have been some reductions in spending, but almost all of them have come out of one place it should not have come out of, Mr. Speaker. That is the Pentagon. Defense spending is now dangerously low, and our military forces are not what they should be.

Mr. Speaker, we know that to be the truth, but our Democrat colleagues, in their boundless faith in human nature, ignore history and simply do not believe in the fundamental precept that America must achieve peace through strength.

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As for other spending, Republicans did manage to limit the number of new spending initiatives of President Clinton and the Democrats over the past few years. But the primary reason why the budget is in surplus today is because revenues are way, way, way up. Liberals will point to the President's 1993 tax increase as a reason why revenues are up, hoping that we will not examine the budget tables ourselves to see if, in fact, this is true.

Revenues are up primarily from the number of people who are taking advantage of low tax rates on capital gains, the part of the economy that is the lifeblood of any dynamic growing economy.

President Reagan cut the tax on capital gains, and the Republicans cut it again just last year. Savers, investors, entrepreneurs, and other job creators are taking advantage of that, and the economy is benefiting from that. Jobs

are being created, and revenues have soared. That, Mr. Speaker, is primarily the reason why the budget is now in surplus when it was in deep red only a few years ago.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time previously allotted to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH).

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

There was no objection.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that, if we go back before the battles that have raged in the last several weeks, there has to be a fundamental question of why we came to Congress.

I grew up in the town of Bozrah, a town about 2,400 people. I knew that, oftentimes, those neighbors of mine could not compete when they were trying to deal with large corporations or an oppressive government. It seemed to me the obligation of an elected representative is to come here and be their voice, to fight for our friends and neighbors when they cannot do it on their own.

What is our answer to what is happening to seniors on Medicaid HMO programs? What is our answer to the average family that lives in fear that the health care program they have paid for will not protect them when it is necessary?

My wife went in for a 4½ hour operation. They removed a disk from her neck. They took a piece of bone from her hip. They put it back into her neck. A 4½ hour operation. She gets back to the hospital room around 5 o'clock.

The doctor comes by 6:30 and says, you know, I would really like to keep you here, but I know the insurance company is not going to pay. But I am going to try. You will probably get stuck with a bill. She was all wired up with all the things that kill pain and what have you that you need after an operation. So she said fine.

The next day, of course, the claim was rejected by the insurance company. That did not shock us, frankly, because we thought that was going to happen. What shocked us is what happened to the doctor. The doctor got a letter from the insurance company saying do not try to do this again. Do not worry about what your patient needs or what the long-term impact is. Just dump them out on the street.

My wife would get along. We have got family. We would find a way to help her. But there is some people that do

not have a lot of family. When we were going back for a checkup, we saw this woman. She could not have been 4-foot tall. She had a piece of metal in the front of her chin and two pieces on the back of her head. She had the marks from that halo when you have a serious neck operation.

My wife said to her, "What happened to you?" She says, "Oh, I came in for a hernia operation. I am 76 years old. It is same-day surgery, you know. As soon as I had the surgery, they sent me home. I walked in the door, passed out, and broke my neck. I spent the last 4 months in the hospital."

Most times, when we are dealing with an issue, it has such a limited impact that we have to seek out those who have been victims. We have to go out and hold hearings. These just come at us from our family and everybody else.

My brother runs the family dairy farm. One night, Ike felt his entire right side of his face losing all muscle control. He is 40-some years old. That kind of thing scares people. I do not know if it would scare a doctor, but it scared the heck out of me.

Ike thought it was serious. He drove down to the emergency room. The insurance company said, "No, no, just because you lost all sensation in the right side of your face, that is not serious."

I am not a doctor. Again, I cannot tell my colleagues what would have happened to my brother's girlfriend had she had a real medical system. She was 38 years old when she died after they refused to look at her tumor, after they refused to test her tumor.

What is this Congress doing? This Congress is sitting around here, and its leaders are fighting about whether you can fire or prevent the hiring of a former Democrat for a job downtown. Is it not wonderful, we have a fight where the Republican leadership is trying to tell public corporations they are not supposed to hire Democrats.

If you have been a Democrat, the rule is you cannot have a job. Do my colleagues know what? If this was organized crime, we would call it a RICO operation. My colleagues are out there trying to deny people health care; and when people want to work here, they want some kind of sign-off from the Republicans.

I am telling my colleagues this country needs health care reform. This is not about good politics, which it is. It is about people's life and death.

The leadership of this Congress is spending more time trying to make sure somebody does not get a job downtown than taking care of the health care of people of this country.

The same goes for education. The same goes in 100 different areas. We have not done the work we ought to do on pensions. In my district, a company closed, and the same day 100 people were notified they had no jobs. They found out their pension had been absconded with, been stolen or lost by the individual who managed it.