

not be attached to a basic, simple, continuation of Government services for 2 to 3 weeks.

Now, some have asked, is this not the way things have always been done, you have attached riders? First of all, never with this magnitude. Second, we have a unique situation here. In my time in Congress, I have never seen the day when two major items happen at the same time. You are faced with a shutdown of the Federal Government, that is tough enough, but the second is even more sweeping, you are faced with a default on the national debt, the first time in over 200 years that that happened. Both of those come to happen this week.

So that is why these votes are so significant. My hope is that this Congress stays in tonight, does its job, and passes a simple continuing resolution to keep the Government and a simple extension so that the Government can borrow money to pay back debts and the Government keeps functioning.

PLACING THE BLAME FOR A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, it is going to be a sad situation across the Nation tomorrow—800,000 Federal employees will be sent home. It is a crisis in our Government that is totally unnecessary. It is a political crisis that was created here in this Chamber. You have to really recount the history of how we reached this point to understand how it was totally avoidable.

You see, the Republicans took control of the House of Representatives this year and announced they were going to do things differently. The first announcement they had was they would pass something called the Contract With America, something that Speaker GINGRICH had published in TV Guide and believed that since it appeared in TV Guide, he had a mandate from the American people. So he brought 31 bills to the floor of the House of Representatives. The Speaker, Mr. GINGRICH, and his Republican majority, considered those 31 bills and passed many of them and sent them over to the other body.

The net result of 100 days of deliberation and debate on those 31 bills on the Contract with America was to have signed into law three bills. Three bills, out of 31. So 100 days were wasted at the beginning of the session, and it cost us dearly. The Committee on the Budget, which had a big job already, was delayed in its deliberations because of all the time eaten up by this TV Guide strategy for the Contract With America, this so-called PR extravaganza. So the Committee on the Budget came in with their report exactly 1 month later.

The Committee on the Budget has to do its work and pass its resolution be-

fore the appropriations committees that come up with the spending bills can do theirs. So the appropriations committees were slowed down.

The net result was a traffic jam, the end of it on October 1, when the Republican majority in the House and Senate were required to present to the President 13 appropriations bills to keep government running. Six weeks ago, on October 1, they presented three bills. Three out of 13.

You cannot blame the Democrats for that. Republicans are in the majority. The Republicans are in control. One of the big problems they had was that the special interest groups all wanted to put an amendment on each of those appropriations bills. Some of the amendments were virtually outrageous. They had one 28 page amendment that they put on the Veterans Administration and HUD bill. This 28 page amendment abolished 14 environmental protection laws.

The lobby out here, the corridor, was lined with special interest groups and lobbyists in pretty shoes trying to get their amendments on the bills so that they could be somehow absolved from responsibility of clean water and clean air.

Well, they managed to do it the first two times. Finally, the third time, 54 Republicans bolted from Speaker GINGRICH and said "We cannot stand this anymore. We are going to vote with the Democrats." And they took that amendment off. That is just one bill. It is one explanation why only three of the 13 appropriations bills ever made it down to the White House.

So now we come to this situation where the government cannot continue to run because Speaker GINGRICH and the Republicans could not produce appropriations bills. So we passed something called a continuing resolution, keeping the government continuing in operation while we figure out how to solve the big questions.

The continuing resolution has been a time honored tradition around here. We sent them down to the President, they sign them, the government keeps going on for a few weeks while we resolve our differences. This time Speaker GINGRICH had a little tricky one to put in there, 9 lines out of a 53-page bill. And in those nine lines, he increased Medicare premiums on senior citizens as of January 1 by 25 percent. The Speaker knew better. The President said he would never sign it. The Democrats opposed it. We do not want senior citizens on Medicare paying 25 percent more in their premiums.

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And so the President has said he will veto it. And now we face the prospect that the Federal Government will shut down.

Mr. Speaker, it is a sad situation. It does not reflect well on either party. It does not reflect well on the President or on Congress, but I think the President was right. The President was

right in vetoing that bill. There is no reason why we should demand Medicare premiums increases as a price for keeping the Federal Government in operation.

As a matter of fact, the gentleman from New Mexico, Senator DOMENICI, a Republican Senator, today came up with a reasonable compromise, and he is a reasonable man. He said let us freeze that Medicare rate and keep government in operation while we work toward a balanced budget, which we all want to see. That is a reasonable thing. Unfortunately, many of the Republican leaders said to him, sit down and be quiet, we have another strategy.

Their strategy, Mr. Speaker, involves not just shutting down the Federal Government but also, for the first time in the history of the United States of America, we run the potential of defaulting on our national debt. Now, none of us like the fact that America is in debt, but we are all proud of the fact that when we say the full faith and credit of the United States of America it means something. Not just here but around the world. That is our integrity. That is our reputation. That is our credit rating.

The Republicans, because they will not pass a debt extension limit, are jeopardizing that credit rating for the United States of America. That goes far beyond what is necessary. What we need is a bipartisan commonsense approach. Stop the political gamesmanship and do it immediately.

AMERICAN PEOPLE OPPOSE EXTREME REPUBLICAN BUDGET

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, we all know that Speaker GINGRICH holds a doctorate in history, but over the weekend he may have earned a doctorate in revisionist history as well.

Mr. GINGRICH spend the weekend trying to blame President Clinton for this budget impasse. If we take a quick review of history, however, recent history, it reveals the true culprit is NEWT GINGRICH himself. Since April Speaker GINGRICH has been threatening to shut down the government and throw the country into default. Quite frankly, he is the only person that has talked about shutting the government down.

But now the day of reckoning has arrived and the Speaker has developed a very serious case of cold feet, so he is desperately trying to blame the President. The fact remains that it is the Speaker who put this blackmail scheme into motion months ago.

Take a look at what Speaker GINGRICH was saying in April. He said the President will veto a number of things and we will then put them all on this debt ceiling that everyone is talking about, and then we will decide how big a crisis that he wants, quoting the Washington Times April 3, 1995.

In September it was reported that Speaker GINGRICH was at it again, continuing his threats. And he says, and I quote, "I don't care what the price is. I don't care if we have no executive offices and no bonds for 30 days, not at this time."

Again the quote. "I don't care what the price is." That says it all, does it not?

Well, Speaker GINGRICH may not care what the price is because he is not the one who is going to be asked to pay. The price of a government shutdown and government default will fall squarely on the shoulders of middle class families in this Nation. When the Speaker gets his wish and the government shuts down, the Speaker will keep his job, he will keep his pay, but over 800,000 Federal workers will not.

When the government defaults on its financial obligations, again the Speaker will have his book royalties to cushion that blow, but millions of middle class families will pay the price in higher mortgage payments, in higher car payments, and in higher credit card payments. The blame for this manufactured crisis should fall squarely on the shoulders of NEWT GINGRICH and not on the shoulders of middle class families in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the President is right to say no to a budget that calls for higher Medicare payments for seniors. As a matter of fact, on January 1, it will be a 25 percent increase for this Nation's seniors, higher college tuitions for students and their parents, and higher taxes for working middle-class families. This is not an agenda that the American people support; and, in fact, it appears the public never did support this kind of agenda.

Mr. Speaker, for months Republicans have been promoting their Contract With America by saying that more than 60 percent of the American public supported its policies. However, we find out from last Friday that they had a political consultant whose name is Frank Luntz, and he claimed he tested all of these policies. In fact, what he did, and he was forced to admit this last week, that he actually only polled and talked to the American public about slogans. About 10 slogans.

So it turns out that the Gingrich revolution is built on the 10 most popular slogans that the Republicans could find. It had nothing to do with programs. There was no testing of how Americans would feel about cutting \$270 billion from Medicare, of increasing the payments for senior citizens and cutting student loans. It is no wonder that the bumper sticker government of the new majority has worn thin with the American public.

All the sloganeering will not hide the devastating cuts to seniors, to students and to middle class families in this country. And, in fact, what is happening today is the more that the American public understands the nature of this program, the more they did like the Gingrich revolution. As a matter of

fact, on Friday, in USA Today, public opposition to the Contract With America was affirmed. Sixty percent of those polled want President Clinton to veto the Republican budget as it stands. More specifically, 75 percent oppose the GOP's Medicare cuts and 74 percent oppose the GOP's student loan cuts.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say that the Republicans have lost public support for these policies, so now what they have done is resorted to blackmailing the President to get him to sign this extreme budget. That is what this is all about. But I will tell my colleagues that the President is standing with the American people in opposition to these policies.

To my Republican colleagues I say, if they want the President to sign their budget, make changes, do not make threats. If they want him to sign the budget, lessen the blow to senior citizens, to our children and to middle class families. The President wants to work with the Republicans, Democrats in this House want to work with them, but we will not be blackmailed into accepting a budget that the American people oppose.

Instead of rewriting history, please, I say to my Republican colleagues, rewrite your budget, do not hold a gun to the President's head, particularly do not hold a gun and do not hold the American people hostage in this next 24 hours.

CONGRESS HAS FAILED IN ITS BUDGETARY MANDATE

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

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, joining me for my 5 minutes is the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON.

Mr. Speaker, I received a telephone call Thursday from one of my constituents, one of my veterans, a disabled veteran, and he was very concerned as to whether or not his benefits would be cut or whether or not he would receive them on time.

I am very upset that the Republican leadership in this House is upsetting my constituents. Can we discuss how we got to this point with this 104th Congress?

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me say to the gentlewoman from Florida that this is a plan that has been of long standing and of long coming. If we check back through the papers, on April 3, in the Washington Times, Mr. GINGRICH boasted that the President will veto a number of things and then we will put them all on the debt ceiling, and then he will decide how big a crisis he wants.

Now, that is April 3, back when he stated that the strategy was to create a titanic legislative standoff with President Clinton by adding vetoed

bills to a must-pass legislation, increasing the national debt ceiling.

I am not sure that that is anything that just started today or the last 24 or 48 hours. That has been the plan for a long time.

Then June 5, in Time magazine, Mr. GINGRICH was quoted as saying, "He can run the parts of the government," speaking of the President, "that are left after the Republican budget cuts or he can run no government. Which of the two of us do you think worries more about government not showing up?"

Now, that is the message that Mr. GINGRICH was sending to a number of senior citizens and to a number of children and working families, and that was in Time magazine June 5.

Then, in the Washington Post on September 22, the stated, "I do not care what the price is, I do not care if we have no Executive offices and no bonds for 30 days. Not this time."

I do not think that is responsible, but I am quoting that directly from these publications.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentlewoman from Texas that in August I conducted a series of town meetings, and in one of my meetings we had a joint discussion with another Member from Florida, and he indicated in the August meeting that they were prepared to shut this Government down if the President did not go along with their extreme agenda.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Well, I do think it is extreme when we decide that our senior citizens must pay, even against the American people's will, much more now for their premiums when it really is not necessary except to give that tax break that has been promised for the most wealthy people of the Nation.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. If we look at our history, the Congress has one duty, my understanding, and that is to pass the appropriation bills. Does the gentlewoman know when those bills are due?

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Well, of course the bills are due by midnight September 30, because the new fiscal year starts October 1. Clearly, that has not been done. Yet, the votes are here in this body for the Speaker to get his will, but they have not passed.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Does the gentlewoman recall that we had that hundred days and all that charade? And how many bills have we passed in the 104th as compared to our class, the 103d?

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. I do not know, but I can tell my colleague there has been a lot of them. And we have had a lot more votes. We have worked a whole lot more hours and a lot longer days than we worked the session before, but we were completed with our business on time.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. I think that this Congress has passed two appropriation bills, and my understanding is