

When we ask for a continuation of Government for 1 month, my Republican colleagues want to overload it with things we already find that are unacceptable in the budget reconciliation. Who will be helped and who will be hurt, I ask? Only those who receive the tax break will be helped.

Certainly, the Federal employees who are going to be furloughed tomorrow will not be helped, and certainly those who will see an increase in their Medicare premiums in January will not be helped. Certainly, the students who are going to lose their loans and find that the interest payment is going to be increased are not going to be helped.

Mr. Speaker, what is this all about? Should this not be about bringing Americans together? I say, shame on you, shame on you, Speaker of this House. Shame on you, the leader of this House. Shame on you, the majority in this House who do not find it in their vested interest to govern and to govern well.

Mr. Speaker, we need to come together, Republicans and Democrats both, to understand this is a time of crisis. We need leadership. We need to stop this chicken game of who will flinch first. The American people are annoyed at that arrogance. We need grownups to act like grownups and not act like overspoiled children. I beeseech to my colleagues to come together as persons of responsibility, persons of compassion, and to serve America well.

"LET THEM EAT DOG FOOD"

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

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, about now in the First Congressional District in Denver, CO., Federal workers, thousands of them, are going home after a long day's work and they are wondering if they come back tomorrow. What do they do? Does anybody recognize how hard their work is? What is going on?

Mr. Speaker, 45 days after the fiscal year ran out, they cannot believe this body cannot have a budget together. They also cannot believe we could not even get anything of substance on the President's desk, really; that the fight is with the other body. We cannot even get it down Pennsylvania Ave. So, they are driving home in their cars wondering what kind of career mistake they ever made to go into public service and dedicate their lives to this.

Mr. Speaker, people who live in the First Congressional District are hearing now that this shutdown is going to cost the economy \$10 million to \$15 million a day. It is going to cost taxpayers, and that is outrageous.

Mr. Speaker, people going home in their cars who have been designated "essential," so they can go back tomorrow, and they are realizing how inefficient it is going to be without sup-

port staff. People are going to phone in and not get an answer, and they are going to phone in to this body and not get an answer.

What is all of this about? Last night we got a little window into this, because the GOPAC people had a gala. They had a gala. GOPAC is the group that the Speaker put together that brought all the new Members of Congress is here on the other side of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, they had address this great gala the person who they have designated as an honorary member of their class, Rush Limbaugh. Rush Limbaugh stood up to talk about what a great night it was. He said he greeted his fellow extremists and he hailed the new Republican budget, because he said it would starve the poor and it would take those on Medicare, like his mother, he said, and force them on dog food. But, he said, his mother was probably watching C-SPAN and he wanted her to know he was sending her a new can opener.

We have all heard of Marie Antoinette who said, "Let them eat cake." Apparently the new cry of this group is, "Let them eat dog food." Take a sock for Christmas and take cans of dog food and insert them for people who are on Medicare, because if the President is to be able to stop this tonight, he has got to agree to \$13 more in premiums for the people on Medicare. That is why Rush Limbaugh is so happy that his mother is going to be on dog food.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am not. My mother is not going to eat dog food, and I do not think we ought to have Federal employees going to dog food. I think for the great Nation that this Nation is, that kind of talk is absolutely outrageous.

Mr. Speaker, if we condemn, and we have as a nation, the Marie Antoinettes who were so out of touch, who said, "Let them eat cake," we ought to be condemning just as insensitive a statement as, "Let them eat dog food."

Mr. Speaker, we should not be attaching mandatory increases to Medicare to keeping the Government going. None of it makes any sense. This is about a dysfunctional part of the Government right now, the legislative branch.

Mr. Speaker, we ought to come in here, reconvene, and we ought to pass a clean continuing resolution so Government goes on. We ought to increase the debt ceiling, so Government goes on and the full faith and credit of this country is not run to the cliff. And then we ought to go back and work out that budget that was due 45 days ago. Mr. Speaker, 85 percent of it has not been finalized. Work that out. Bring it here in the regular process.

No wonder the American people are disgusted. The haughtiness and the arrogance of laughing about one's mother and laughing about how the poor are going to suffer and, "Isn't that a great day?"

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If you really think the problem of America is that the real needy are the greedy and that the real greedy are needy, are not greedy, they are too greedy, then you are going to love what is going on. But I think most Americans do not think that the greedy are real needy.

If you have got hundreds of dollars to go to these great galas and fundraisers, you are not exactly suffering. And you may think it is funny for those who are suffering but I do not. I think it is tragic for Federal employees who have families, who have mortgages, who have school tuition. I hope Members of this body try and write notes to all of them, see if they can get some kind of an extension on their mortgage. See what they can do. They cannot. We should not do this. We should convene. We should have a clean continuing resolution. We should have a clean debt resolution. We should get on with business as usual and let us knock off this talk about dog food.

I am not from the heritage of Marie Antoinette. I am from the heritage of the great leaders of this country who believed every American counted and you did not make fun of them, of their social status or their economic status. Let us move forward in that tradition.

MEDICARE AND STUDENT LOANS

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, for months Speaker GINGRICH promised to shut the Government down so he could score political points. The Washington Times earlier this year said, "House Speaker NEWT GINGRICH vowed yesterday to create a titanic legislative standoff with President Clinton by adding vetoed bills to must-pass legislation increasing the national debt ceiling."

The Washington Times, in April of 1995, said the President will veto a number of things and will then put them all in the debt ceiling and then he will decide how big a crises he wants.

Five months later leading up to this budget problem we are in now and this close-down-the-government threat, Speaker GINGRICH said, "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."

An Ohio Congressman, Ohio Republican Congressman said, If we close down, people will listen. An Ohio Congressman also said, I do not see the Government shutdown as a negative; I see it as a positive, if things get righted. A Nebraska Republican Congressman said, If we have to temporarily shut down the Government to get people's attention, then so be it. The question, Mr. Speaker, is, why are they doing this? What is the point of this? The answer is, the Gingrich plan

cuts \$270 billion from Medicare and billions of dollars more from student loans in order to pay for a tax break for the wealthiest people in this country. Say it again, the Gingrich plan cuts \$270 billion in Medicare and billions more in student loans aimed at middle-class families in order to give a tax break for the wealthiest people in this country.

Mr. Speaker, no Congress in our history, in the history of this country, has ever demanded an increase in Medicare premiums as a condition of keeping the Government open. What I do not understand is the feelings that some Members in this body have, notably the Speaker, toward Medicare.

Medicare, Mr. Speaker, has been in effect for 30 years and a few months. It was created in 1965 when Lyndon Johnson signed the Medicare Act in July of that year. At that time 50 percent of America's elderly had no health insurance. Today between 1 and 2 percent of America's elderly have no health insurance. This is a successful program. It is expensive, but it has helped people live better and helped people live longer. It is a Government program that works. It is probably, very possibly, probably the Government program that has done the best things for the people of this country, perhaps of any program in the history of this country.

Yet Speaker GINGRICH said, speaking to a bunch of insurance executives who will benefit monetarily in a big, big way from the Gingrich Medicare plan, he said, "Now, we don't want to get rid of Medicare in round one because we don't think that is politically smart. We don't think that is the right way to go through our revolutionary transition. But we believe that Medicare is going to wither on the vine."

This is a man that took the oath of office to the people of this country. Yet all of us, I think, have an obligation to the people of this country to make sure that we honor the trust, the agreement between the American people and this Government that Medicare be there and work for people.

Medicare works. It is a program that works. It has insured a huge number of elderly people in this country and made a difference in keeping their lives healthier and helping them live longer.

The other attack from this Government, from the Gingrich budget and the Gingrich plan, is an attack on student loans and middle-class families. How can we look to the future when we are cutting, taking away the ability, reducing the ability of middle-class families in this country to send their kids to college. Whether it is Ohio State, whether it is a private school, whether it is Lorain County Community College, students have needed those student loans, they have two parents working oftentimes. Often the student himself or herself is working but they need those student loans in order to go to college, in order to get the kind of degree to compete with people around the world.

Employers around Lorain County in my district, in and around Toledo and my friend from Lucas County's district and around Ohio and around this country, employers tell us over and over that they have got \$8- and \$12- and \$15-an-hour jobs out there and sometimes they cannot find people qualified to fill them. We have got to continue to put, to move forward in global competition. We have got to ensure that students get loans. This Gingrich budget goes right at the heart of middle-class America in cutting and reducing and eliminating student loan programs. It simply does not make sense, Mr. Speaker.

I ask again this House for a clean continuing resolution, a clean debt ceiling resolution. It is absolutely senseless to hold up the Government in order to cut Medicare and in order to cut student loans. Let us move forward on these clean resolutions. Let us debate Medicare. Let us debate student loans and see what the country thinks and make those decisions separately and move forward the way we were elected to do.

NAFTA ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and wish to state that I think this is a sad night for America, for our country and this Congress, as we are held hostage by a few extremists who want to take actions like raising premiums on Medicare part B for our senior citizens and rolling back environmental standards across this country, under the guise of a bill that is supposed to be about running our country and conducting the people's business.

One of the reasons that the Government is short on funds and our families are working harder and showing less for it in their pocketbooks and their wallets is because of the dry rot inside the economy of the United States. It is that that I want to focus on, and it is that subject I wish that we as a Congress would be focusing on.

This week represents the second anniversary of NAFTA's passage on November 17, 1993. Each day this week, several of my colleagues and I will be here on this floor discussing various aspects of that agreement. We will be calling attention to its performance to date which can be properly characterized as truly dismal and devastating for thousands of Americans as well as Mexican workers and their families. But it has been truly rewarding for speculators on Wall Street and Mexico's Wall Street at the Bolsa in Mexico City.

Promises, promises, we were given lots of promises. During the NAFTA debate we were promised it would create 200,000 jobs just this year; good jobs, they told us, jobs that could help

people pay taxes, jobs that could help people increase their incomes. However, as the Wall Street Journal recently reported, the reality is, and I quote: "There has been no evidence of any overall gain in jobs as a result of this agreement with Mexico."

In fact, by the end of this year, 800,000 people in our country and several million in Mexico will have had their jobs put on the chopping block because of this agreement.

Think about the toll of human lives in our country just in the last 2 weeks. Fruit of the Loom announced 3,200 jobs being shut down in this country in Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, the Carolinas, moving to Mexico. And 479 workers out of work in St. Joseph, Missouri. They made Lee jeans. They earned \$8.35 an hour. And chocolate workers in Hershey, Pennsylvania who were told that they are going to be laid off, get their pink slips because Hershey has decided to move its production of Giant Kisses to Guadalajara, Mexico. So I guess we could say NAFTA has become a giant kiss of death for many workers in our country.

I want to pause here for a moment and say that NAFTA did not really grow out of a vacuum. It is merely one agreement within the larger context of our Nation's extremely flawed and ill-advised trade agreements which purposely ignore consequences on large segments of our people. These policies and trade agreements have spawned and destroyed both jobs and wealth in our country by providing incentives to export our jobs someplace else, exporting income from our people, increasing frustration in our electorate and causing a kind of doubt about the ability of this Government to deliver.

There is economic dry rot out there in our country. Think about the last 20 years. The average American family has not had an increase in their purchasing power. In fact, the high school graduate today makes 27 percent less in real wages on what they can actually buy with their check than their counterparts did 20 years ago, but the chief executive officers of our country are earning just in the last year 12 percent more real wages than they did in the prior year.

Now, what exactly are those CEO's being rewarded for? Fortune 500 companies have not created a single job in this country for a decade. Virtually all their investment in production has been abroad. American workers are being asked to compete against capital that can move anywhere in the world, foreign cartels that block our access into their markets and millions of low-wage workers in the world who live under undemocratic regimes.

The resultant pulldown in wages in our country has been verified by economists like the University of California's Professor George Borjas, who maintains at least 25 percent of the loss in wages in this country is due to the type of trade agreement that we