

been that there was not the stench of mendacity in the air as I very sadly detect now.

The plain, simple fact of the matter is that in the budget as presented by the Republican Party, we are going to take in the neighborhood of \$636 billion out of a so-called surplus in the Social Security fund in order to balance the budget in the year 2002. We start in 1996 with \$63 billion. There is \$115 billion scheduled to be taken in the year 2002 in order to achieve a balanced budget.

Now, this is supposed to be coming from surplus funds. So I put the challenge to those who will say that this is truly going to be a balanced budget as presented by the Republican Party in this House in 2002. If that is a surplus, then give it back. If you do not need to have an IOU to the Social Security trust fund in the year 2002 of \$630 plus billion, let us hear it on this floor. I can come down here for special orders any night; I invite anybody to come down now and say that what I am saying is not true.

I see a smile on the face of the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STENHOLM]. He knows that this is the case. My good friend from Indiana is not smiling, he is grimacing at the moment. But the plain fact is that while there are people in this body who are serious about balancing the budget, they are serious in a way that says that they will not try to fool the American people into thinking, because we have done a book-keeping trick, namely putting it off budget, that phraseology, a phrase of art with respect to accounting, that we will not owe that money to the Social Security trust fund.

There will be no balanced budget in 2002, and I would hope that the next Republican Member who gets up and recites this mantra will at least have the common decency to respect the intelligence of the American people who can add and subtract and read and write the numbers just as well as anybody else and admit that in the year 2002 when they claim, providing nothing goes wrong whatsoever with the projections, when they claim that there will be a balanced budget, on that day, at that moment, they will owe \$630 plus billion to the Social Security trust fund.

If we are going to balance the budget, I welcome the debate. Let us get to it, let us try and figure out how to do it, but let us be honest about it. Let us not start accusing anybody in this body, particularly on our side of the aisle, of being less than true to their faith, the faith that they have in what they want to do, and come forward with sensible, reasonable, honest figures with respect to the balanced budget.

MAINTAINING THE CURRENT MEDICARE RATIO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from California [Mr. KIM] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that having a continuing resolution which would leave the government open is in jeopardy because of this premium part B on Medicare Program. I wish the people in California would listen to me tonight. I want to tell you exactly what the part B in Medicare plan is all about so you can make your own judgment of who is right and who is wrong.

I do not think we, the Republican Party, is doing such a good job to communicate with the people. I am going to do my best tonight.

Let us take a look at this chart here. Right now beneficiaries, senior citizens, only pay one-third of the total cost of the part B, which is to pay for the doctor's fee. Two-thirds, a little more than two-thirds is paid by the other taxpayers, roughly 68.5 percent. Many people did not know that. My district people did not know it. I did not know we had been subsidizing it. They are so busy working every day, they did not pay attention to exactly what the part B premium is about.

Mr. Speaker, it used to be 50-50. Half of it paid by the beneficiary and the other half is subsidized by the other taxpayers.

Now what has happened? One-third is paid by the beneficiary; two-thirds is being subsidized by the other taxpayers, the working people. Who are those people? Some of those people cannot even afford to buy their own insurance, but they have to subsidize senior citizens by two-thirds. Under the current system starting January 1, it is going to change even greater: 25 percent by the beneficiary and 75 percent by the other taxpayers' subsidy. That is not fair. That is what we are saying.

We are saying that we have to keep this ratio, one-third, two-third ratio. That does not increase anyone; that is all. For that we have been criticized unfairly.

Is it wrong that we would like to maintain this one-third/two-third ratio? A senior citizen only pay one-third of the premium and two-thirds subsidized by the younger people? Is that unfair, keeping this ratio? Why does it have to go to 25 and 75 percent relationship? How can you balance the budget when you have to spend this kind of money, additional spending, to subsidize beneficiaries? How can you possibly balance the budget?

We are not cutting anything, we are trying to maintain the same ratio. By doing this, as you know, medical costs keep going up. By doing this, everybody has to pay a little more, a few bucks a month, just to maintain this relationship. We are not increasing anything, just maintaining one-third/two-thirds relationship.

Mr. Speaker, it is not right that we are asking those people out there working every day making \$50,000 a year, trying to support the family, try-

ing to send the kids to school, trying to make the mortgage payment, let them at the same time subsidize senior citizens by more than two-thirds.

Now, when our country is in this shape financially, yes, let us increase that, maybe 100 percent, but right now we are in financial crisis. Our debt is \$4.9 trillion. Our interest payment alone last year was \$230 billion, about the same as our national defense budget. Under that kind of circumstances, we are going to ask them to pay more?

I have to set the record straight. People can see me. I apologize that the chart is kind of messy, but I have to speak to you tonight to get the facts straight. If you do not think that that is fair, then let us know. That is all we are trying to do, maintain this current ratio. For that, our President is going to veto the entire continuing resolution I think is very unfair.

CRUCIAL DEBATE ABOUT THE SURVIVAL OF SENIOR CITIZENS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, I was in my office working and many of the staff members were there with me, because obviously, we are preparing for the onslaught of questions that will probably be coming from many of our constituents in the 18th Congressional District.

I listened to the debate, particularly by the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. HEFNER], and I would like to yield to him, because I do not know about the plain facts that our colleague on the other side of the aisle was mentioning about Medicare part B.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know about the gentleman from North Carolina, but I know the plain facts that today my senior citizens pay \$43, and under the Republican plan in a few months, maybe just about 30 days, they will be paying \$53.

I have had my senior citizens tell me, I do not know where I am going to get the money from. This is not a battle of who is chicken and who is not, this is not a battle of who has one-upmanship; this is a crucial debate about the survival of my senior citizens and citizens across this Nation and the Medicare system.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, people making \$50,000 a year, which is certainly not rich, but people living in my district on a fixed income for an increased of \$10 or \$12 a month, many times depend on where they are going to buy their groceries or get their prescriptions filled and what have you, it is a tremendous burden.

Also, I would like to have asked the gentleman the question that if we are going to put \$270 billion, and make no mistake about it, it is a cut, \$270 billion, then you cannot have the \$240 billion tax cut unless that is scored by

CBO. You have to have the Medicare cuts before you can have the tax cuts. Everybody acknowledges that.

So if you are going to make the \$270 billion cuts in Medicare, why not apply them to make the Medicare fund more secure; either that, or reduce the deficit. This does not make any sense to burden our senior citizens with an increase in premiums simply to have a tax cut almost corresponding to the same dollar amounts, from the \$270 billion you are going to make in Medicare to give a \$240 billion tax cut.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman can talk about it all he wants, but there are going to be cuts and there are going to be cuts to supply the funds for a tax cut. It does not make any sense to put that burden on our senior citizens.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I think that is an excellent explanation, and that is why I came over, because it concerns me when many of my constituents are raising the question of what is happening here in the U.S. Congress.

I would like to just briefly relate to them the lack of progress that we have made. Frankly, under the Republican majority, they have not done their job. These appropriations bills were supposed to be passed in early September, and if they had been passed at that time period, we would not have reached this point, this time, this day.

All that we are asking as a Congress, and particularly those of us on the Democratic side of the aisle, is that let us just deal with the issue at hand. The issue at hand simply allows us to have one, a continuing resolution to allow this discussion to go forth and the doors of the Government to stay open; and then second, allows the debt ceiling to increase so that this country does not default on its obligations.

We have a philosophical difference, and that is understandable, but I do not think the American people should be misdirected and misrepresented that there is some reason that we have come to this, other than the fact that the appropriations bills that should have been passed in September were not passed. Why is that? Because there is some magic number to the number seven in terms of balancing the budget, when in actuality, we have looked at the President's budget, we may have wanted to improve that budget, but that is a 9-year budget. Is there some difference, something magic between 7 and 9?

When you begin to look at the direction that the Republicans' 7-year budget takes, cuts in school lunches, cuts in Medicaid, children's programs, cuts in student loans, ending nursing home regulations where many of your parents are staying; a lack of worker safety regulations, curbing food and drug standards, forgetting the environment, criminalizing various procedures dealing with the question, the very private question of women to choose; ending

the national service group, and of course, cutting science and research. All of these issues were part of the appropriations bills when we should have been able to discuss these separate and apart from that process.

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Do you want nursing home regulations to be eliminated? Do you want to eliminate the progress we have made with respect to environmental protection? These debates should be separate and apart from the question of whether the doors of this Government stay open.

Just this past weekend, I spent Veterans Day acknowledging the many veterans in our community and saluting them for the service they have given. In addition to saluting my veterans, many of them asked the questions, not only about themselves but about those who would come after them that would be denied benefits.

I had Federal workers working with me on their day off to give constituency service in my congressional office, meaning those in Social Security and those working in other agencies. Those are the ones that are going to be counted out.

Mr. Speaker, I would simply ask, let us be reasonable. Deal with the issue at hand so the American people can have faith in their Congress again, get back to the business that we have, and that is the business of running this Government properly, making sure that a budget is balanced but is not balanced on the least of those that we have in this country. Let us be realistic, both Republicans and Democrats. Keep doors open so that we can face this together, and make sure that we are having a budget that answers the concerns of all Americans, and not cut it on the backs of children and senior citizens.

RHETORICAL AND SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Barr). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I got a call from a good friend of mine tonight. His question was, what is this big difference of opinion between the White House and the Congress? What is it all about, and what can we do about it in the short time that remains?

As we discussed it, it occurred to me that maybe the differences are not as wide as we think they are, at least in rhetoric, and maybe they are wider than we would like them to be perhaps in substance.

In rhetoric, the President of the United States in 1993 appeared on "Larry King Live" and promised a 5-year plan to balance the budget, not a 10-year plan like he came out with in 1995. A 5-year plan. This year, just recently he said, "Well, maybe I could go along with a 7-year plan. Maybe I

could, if I liked the way it was done." But in 1993 he promised a 5-year plan. You would think we could come together tonight.

Also in 1993, the President spoke out very forcefully and I think very courageously on the question of Medicare and Medicaid. His words then were that we cannot let these two programs grow at three times the rate of inflation without them going bankrupt or bankrupting our future. He called for a reduction in growth.

In fact, in his 10-year budget plan this year he called for a \$192 billion reduction in the growth of Medicare. That is on the same baseline we use here in Congress. He called for a \$120 billion reduction in the growth in Medicaid according to our congressional baseline. That is some pretty severe reductions in growth.

Our Democratic leadership would call that cuts. The President said, "Don't call that a cut." He said, "I'm talking about reducing the growth of the spending out of these programs, the excessive amount they spend, because they are driving the programs and our future into bankruptcy." At least the President said that.

You would think perhaps we are closer than we think tonight, because if we are talking about reducing the growth in Medicare and Medicaid, the President himself has conceded that that has to get done and he has recommended some pretty healthy reductions in the growth in Medicare and Medicaid.

Finally, the President in 1992 when he ran for election, when he asked us all to vote for him, promised a middle-class tax cut. He did not give us one. What he did last year was to raise taxes.

Just recently he appeared before a group of supporters and said, "I know you think I raised your taxes too much, and guess what, I think I did, too." You would think the President would be supporting a balanced budget plan that included some tax relief for Americans.

You could think we would be a lot closer than we are tonight. In fact, we are not. The reason we are not closer than we think tonight is that those who want a clean CR, those who want no changes in the way this Government operates and spends money, those who want us to send the President a clean CR, a clean extension of the debt, simply want to keep on going like we are going. That is wrong.

The President knows that is wrong, you know that is wrong, I know that is wrong. The President has said he believes we ought to balance this budget in at least 5 years, or 7, or 10. He believes that Americans deserve a tax cut, he taxed them too much last year, and he believes we need to reduce the growth in Medicare and Medicaid spending.

One would think we could come to terms tonight. What holds us apart? One, we have a majority in this House