

freshmen colleagues, he is keeping us from keeping our promises.

It is unfortunate that this impasse has been reached and that nonessential Federal employees are being sent home, but it would be a tragedy of historic proportions if we were to back down now on our commitment to keep the promises that we made and to keep the promises that he made.

Madam Speaker, we must not turn back now. I think the American people are counting on us to keep our promises, to do what we said, to change the way Government does business and to make the Government live within its means.

CONGRATULATIONS TO PRESIDENT CLINTON FOR VETOING CR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized during morning business for 4 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I learned this morning that the President had exercised his veto to prevent an increase in Medicare premiums for our Nation's elderly by vetoing the continuing resolution early this morning. Again, Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the President on doing that, because if he were to allow the Medicare premiums to rise, it would be the beginning of this whole process that the Republican leadership is trying to impose on the American people where Medicare premiums and costs rise, the program is cut back, and Medicare ceases to be the effective health care program for the elderly that it has been in the past.

I think also it was significant because last night there was a private meeting where Republicans heard the details of the much-awaited budget compromise bill. I was appointed by the Democrats as a conferee on the budget reconciliation. As has been the case with all budget matters this year, as well as with the Medicare issue, the Republicans meet in secret and do not have meetings with the Democrats and the Republicans together to try to resolve their differences on the budget.

Madam Speaker, it has characterized the Medicare debate from the very beginning, when there were not hearings, when we were asked to vote on bills in committee within 24 hours or even the very morning when the bills were sent to us, and there was no serious debate, there was no effort to have a hearing; and now, in dealing with the budget and hammering out a bill that will come to the floor probably today or tomorrow or Thursday, once again, the Republican leadership has excluded the Democrats.

Why do they do that? Well, they do it because they do not want the public to know what is happening with Medicare and Medicaid. They know what they are doing is taking money from Medicare and from Medicaid in order to pay for tax cuts, primarily for wealthy

Americans and large corporations, and they know that if there are actual meetings or conferences with the Democrats on some of these issues, that we will hammer the point home, that they need to eliminate some of these cuts in Medicare, that they need to eliminate these increased premiums in Medicare if they want to have a budget, and if they want to balance the budget over 7 years in a way that does not hurt seniors, that does not hurt the average American.

Unfortunately, that is not what is happening, and once again, we are faced with the reality that today the Government is partially shut down because the Republicans want to make an issue over Medicare.

Madam Speaker, I want to read this quote again which I carry around with me from Speaker GINGRICH where he says, "Now, we didn't get rid of Medicare in round one because we don't think that is politically smart and we don't think that that is the right way to go through a transition, but we believe it is going to wither on the vine because we think people are voluntarily going to leave it."

That is what this is all about, and it is to the credit of President Clinton that he does not allow us to go down that slippery slope and that he vetoed these increases in the Medicare premiums, because if he allows that to happen, if he allowed those premiums to go upon January 1, it would be the beginning of this Republican effort to cut Medicare in order to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and the beginning of the end for the Medicare Program.

PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS AT AN IMPASSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. NORWOOD] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORWOOD. Madam Speaker, today the Federal Government will shut down, and later this week, the Federal Government will reach its debt limit. Congress has passed bills to continue spending and to raise the debt limit, but the President has vetoed them. So here we are at an impasse.

Madam Speaker, I am not at all happy it has come to this. I am concerned for the people who will be inconvenienced by the Government shut-down. I am very concerned that some Americans may lose faith in the way we do business here in Washington. I sincerely wish it had not come to this.

But, Madam Speaker, we have no choice. The Federal Government is \$4.9 trillion in debt. It is immoral for us to continue to borrow from the future of our children. We must take the steps necessary to balance the budget. We Republicans have laid out a plan to reach a balanced budget by the year 2002. We have done so by cutting spending. We have done so while cutting taxes, not raising them. We have done

so while making the hard choices necessary to save Medicare from bankruptcy. We have done so with no help whatsoever from the liberal Democrats in Congress or the President.

Yet here we are Madam Speaker, out of money and at the limit of our debt. Why has the President vetoed both of our efforts to avoid this crisis? I have been listening to his remarks with great interest.

The President said he vetoed the debt limit extension because he did not want to be constrained by our budget priorities. For those of you who do not understand political gobbledygook that means the President does not want to balance the budget in 7 years using CBO scoring.

The President vetoed the continuing resolution because he does not want to raise Medicare part B premiums; he wants to see them lowered. Perhaps the President has forgotten his trustees report. Medicare is going bankrupt. Lowering part B premiums does not make Medicare more solvent. Arguing over Medicare premiums is simply political posturing; it has nothing to do with governing. If you really want to save Medicare, you have to be prepared to make hard choices. The President is apparently not ready.

Madam Speaker, I have heard the network newscast constantly refer to this budget crisis as some form of game. Nothing could be further from the truth. We are fighting to save the future of this country. This is no game. We Republicans simply refuse to proceed any further with politics as usual. We will not continue the mindless spending and borrowing that is bankrupting our children's future and destroying any hope they have of achieving the American Dream. We will not vote to extend the debt limit or continue the spending of the Federal Government with a commitment from the President to balance the budget.

Madam Speaker as of today, we have no such commitment from the President. He continues to play politics with Medicare while the system goes bankrupt. He refuses to accept CBO scoring, even though CBO scoring was good enough for him when the Democrats controlled Congress. He refuses to discuss specific cuts he will consider, instead he just snipes at Congress for being too harsh on education and the environment. What is it we are doing that he refuses to accept? Is the President against risk-assessment to make regulations more reasonable? Is the President against habeas corpus reforms that will halt the endless death row appeals? It is time for the President to quit campaigning and start governing.

Madam Speaker, I take no joy in seeing the Government closed down today. But this is a step we must take if we are to reach a balanced budget and save our children's future.

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CALLING THE CRISIS FOR WHAT IT IS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. PRYCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized during morning business for 4 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Madam Speaker, this is indeed I think a very dark day. The institution is basically dysfunctional today and we ought to call it for what it is. This great Nation is being held hostage by some extremists who came to this institution and have not been able to get their way through the normal process that served this Republic for over 200 years, and so we are now seeing the equivalent of 2-year-old tantrums that we see out on the playground. No one should be surprised as to where we are. The Speaker made it very clear from day one where he was going.

If we look at these quotes, in April he said, "The President will veto a number of things, and we'll put them all on the debt ceiling and then he'll decide how big a crisis he wants."

Oh, they could not wait for the crisis.

Then again in September he said, "I don't care what the price is. I don't care if we have no executive offices and I don't care if there are no bonds for 30 days, not at this time."

He has been very clear what his strategy was, create a crisis for this great, great Republic like it has never seen before. Oh, will that not be historic?

Let us not look at politicians' words. Let us look at what the Standard & Poor's people say. They do not think a lot of this crisis. They do not think that this is real funny. They do not appreciate our tantrum. Look what they said in the New York Times this weekend.

They warn Government of the threat of default. If they lower the Nation's credit rating, we are going to see an increase in interest rates, which our children are going to pay forever and ever and they are also going to see interest rates increased on the average American the average American businessowner, the average American mortgageowner and so forth.

So, Americans, you are paying a very high price for this political theater, for this 2-year-old temper tantrum, because people do not want to play by the rules that Jefferson and everyone else thought was fine for over 200 years.

We continue to see other things. We see them saying that it is perfectly all right that we cut loose on the safety net that has been there for America's children and for people who are relying on Medicare. We see them having their favorite comedian come and talk, about, "Oh, this is great, my mother will be on dog food, the poor will starve, but we'll get them new can openers."

Is that not wonderful? I do not really think that is too funny. I do not think

that is funny at all. It is not the America I knew. The America I knew said every child has a right to a college education, we all should have a clean environment and breathe fresh air, we all ought to be respectful of the elderly and we should not take great joy if we can squeeze some more money out of them or find some way for them to be a little more miserable. I do not think anybody wants to see us jeopardize the full faith and credit of this Government.

I was shocked when I heard Last night this other side was offered a 1-day clean continuing resolution to avoid this crisis and turned it down. Not even 1 day, Not even 1 day would they give it.

This is outrageous, and we really ought to call it for what it is. Do not be surprised. Just get on the phones and tell people you do not like people playing these kind of political games with the full faith and credit of this great Nation.

RESOLVING THE IMPASSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SCHIFF] is recognized during morning business for 4 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, we are now at the impasse and I would like to review how I believe we got here and how I believe we can get out of it.

I think that this impasse is due in part to both sides, Republicans and the administration, wanting to get some short-term advantages in the polls over the other. I think that the congressional leadership has put measures into these budget resolutions concerning the death penalty, concerning regulatory reform because we know that these are popular with the American people. However, these are not issues which should be mixed at this time with the budget issue. We should stay focused on the budget goals.

I recommend that those issues dealing with death penalty, regulatory reform, anything that is not budget, be taken off the table and addressed at another time. At the same time, the administration made its biggest argument that it was vetoing the bills to protect Medicare. The details of the Medicare provision, I respectfully suggest, were not of great interest to the administration. Their pollster simply told them if the President is seen fighting for Medicare, the President will go up in the polls at least on a short-term basis.

What is that fight about? Right now the Government, that is, the taxpayers, pay 68.5 percent of part B premiums of Medicare. On January 1, the law is scheduled to raise that to 75 percent of the payment coming out of the treasury. The administration knows full well that we do not know where the money is going to come from out of the treasury to pay that increased percentage and that the Republican con-

gressional proposal is to freeze the percentage, not to raise the percentage on senior citizens but just to freeze it where it is. Nevertheless, they are fighting to save Medicare and they think that helps them in the polls.

What, therefore, is the solution? I think that what is called a clean bill is not a solution. A clean bill means a spending authorization with no conditions attached, a borrowing authorization with no conditions attached. That is how we got into this mess. We have had business as usual for 25 years, where there was no restriction on borrow, borrow, borrow, and spend, spend, spend, and that is why we have a national debt of almost \$5 trillion.

I respectfully suggest that the solution is to offer the President a continuing resolution today with one condition, and, that is, we agree on the common goal of reaching a balanced budget in 7 years using Congressional Budget Office figures. We would take all of the details off of the table at this time. I thought Senator DOMENICI made a good suggestion with respect to a Medicare compromise. But if necessary, I would take all that off the table for the moment and concentrate on the goal, and to say that to keep the Government operating, the President must agree with the Congress that we will balance the budget in 7 years and use the common numbers provided by the Congressional Budget Office to match our comparative budgets.

Both of these provisions the President has previously agreed to. During the campaign, the President said the budget could be balanced in 5 years. So presumably the President would have no objection to balancing the budget in 7 years. Second of all, the President lectured Congress 2½ years ago, telling us that the Congressional Budget Office had consistently the best figures for budget analysis. So the President has previously agreed to these provisions.

It seems to me, Madam Speaker, that if the Congress passes a continuing resolution to keep the Government going, break the impasse, allow Federal employees to do their jobs, with only the condition that we agree to a balanced budget in 7 years with the same method of getting there and that all the details can be discussed and if necessary argued out in another forum, we will know for certain whether the President of the United States really wants to balance the budget or was using Medicare as a screen for not doing so.

A WAY OUT OF THE QUANDARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. LEVIN] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, this is indeed an unhappy day, and I think to get out of this quandary it might be useful to note how the Government got to this point.