

really do have to remedy in the very near future because lots and lots of people are being hurt, and, as each hour and day passes, more, and more, and more people will be hurt and damaged by the failure of this Congress to come forward with a continuing resolution.

Just on day 1, 28,000 of America's seniors and workers have been unable to apply for Social Security or disability benefits. The Social Security offices are not open because of the furlough that happened today, and that simply means that people who have reached the age of 62 or 65 and wanted to apply today for these benefits were not able to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend, the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. THURMAN].

Mrs. THURMAN. I just thought of a little story that happened just recently in Ocala, FL. This is a very interesting story. It was their 30th anniversary of being there and they asked us to come in and we did, and we talked about all the kinds of things that were going on, and we looked at their new computer systems and how quickly they were able to answer questions. But what they had was an office full of folks out in the front area.

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I said, "What are all those folks doing there?" They said, "Well, they have come here because they have a problem with their Social Security, they did not get their check. We are trying to track it down. They are trying to get on the service themselves," all these different things that these folks come to these Social Security offices for.

Let me tell you what the mayor of the city of Ocala said in the resolution, in recognizing their 30-year anniversary. They bring into that city \$45 million a month, a month, to help. That helps that economy within that city. Those folks are not there today, and they are very, very concerned about what is going to happen to those people and their benefits.

Mr. GEPHARDT. I thank the gentlewoman for that story and contribution. I am sure that as the days roll on here, we are going to have hundreds and hundreds of stories of individuals who have had real problems in their life because of our inability to continue these needed government services.

Two hundred thousand of America's seniors today have tried to get the 1-800 help line for Social Security and have gotten no answer; 7,649 of America's veterans have been unable to file compensation pension and education benefit claims or adjustments.

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, the first thing that happened to me this morning, it was a very sad case. A woman in my district's son who was a police officer in New Orleans, non-related, was killed. She just brought his body home and he has been buried.

The first thing that happened this morning was she was very concerned about her other son, who lives in New Orleans, who is in the Marines. She is concerned about his life. Had we not been there to answer the phones this morning, us, to help this young man get through the system, which we have done, we have told him how to do it, who he has to go talk to, and potentially how to get a hardship case to be brought back or taken and transferred to someplace else, his mother for the first time will probably have some comfort that somebody is working on that.

These are not veterans, but they are military, and they are part of the system of defense of this country that we are ignoring. They have problems that they come to us and to our staffs with all the time.

Mr. GEPHARDT. I thank the gentlewoman again.

What I want to say to the Members tonight, Mr. Speaker, and I do not have enough time left to go through more stories, but what I hope that we can do in the days ahead is two things: One, tomorrow I will be circulating among Members two pieces of legislation and asking for their cosponsorship. One will be a 24-hour continuing resolution, and the other will be a 48-hour continuing resolution. I hope to get as many Members as cosponsors as we can possibly get.

Second, Mr. Speaker, I hope to bring to the floor continuing facts and information on what is happening out in the country as a result of our failure to move forward with this continuing resolution. This is a manufactured crisis. This does not need to happen. I understand we have a dispute about the budget, I understand that both sides feel strongly about their views. I will not take the time tonight to go through the views that are on this side. But I must report that we do not need to manufacture a crisis in order to bring about a solution to that problem. No one needs leverage in this discussion.

The Republican side has all the leverage they need. They have a majority in the Congress. They can pass the legislation that they want to pass. The President has a veto. The President can veto bills or sign bills. Then we have to bring bills back and send them downtown to try to get them signed.

But to make innocent Americans the victims of our inability to solve this disagreement is simply morally wrong. We should not be doing it, there is no excuse for it, there is no reason that in the days ahead we should not be passing at least a 24-hour continuing resolution. If people are then unhappy about the pace of the talks and the negotiations, they can then vote against the next 24-hour continuing resolution, but we ought to give the American people what they have paid for, which is the services that these kinds of veteran's offices and Social Security offices are there to bring.

We will be trying, through the endorsement of these two pieces of legislation, we will try to get on the floor and ask unanimous consent three or four times a day to bring up these pieces of legislation for 24 hours or 48 hours of continuing resolution. We must continue to say to people what is happening, and we must continue to try to bring the situation, which is unexplainable and intolerable and totally morally wrong, to the attention of the American people, so that if people feel strongly about this, they will contact their representatives, we will get the votes to pass one of these bills, and we will get these offices reopened which are so important to the American people.

LET US BALANCE THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. TIAHRT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, we are facing a dilemma here in the United States. It is called the Federal debt. This chart shows the Federal debt, the amount of money that is included. It is just close to \$5 trillion. It is 4 trillion, 985 billion, 3,913 million, and on and on and on. I want to give you an idea just how much money that is. If you had gone in business the day Christ rose from the dead and lost \$1 million that day and every day until today, you would only be one-fifth of the way to losing this much money, one-fifth of the way in almost 2,000 years.

The problem is now the linchpin of the struggle between the President and his liberal supporters and the American people and their Representatives in Congress. The American people want a balanced budget. The House and the Senate have passed provisions to balance the budget and continue Government, but the President, Mr. Speaker, the President has chosen to shut government down.

This is very clear. The President does not want a balanced budget. The American people and Congress do want a balanced budget. Let me show you what the President has offered. His budget that was sent to Congress over the next 10 years never does balance. In fact, when you get out to the last year, 2005, it is \$200 billion in deficit. I have a contrasting chart that shows the difference between what we are doing with the Congress, this is the blue line that starts here and goes down to a balanced budget by the year 2002, and the President's budget, which continues at about a \$200 billion deficit every year. It is kind of like my uncle, John Armstrong, says: "If you don't want to do something, any excuse will do."

Mr. President, we are tired of you looking for excuses. The President says, "Send me a clean continuing resolution, a clean debt limit ceiling, and I will start government up again." But let us look when the liberals controlled

the House of Representatives. Since 1977, there have been 57 continuing resolutions. In the 1980s they hung an entire annual Federal budget on one continuing resolution. This is not uncommon.

But on the same path of inconsistency as the President and his alleged desire to balance the budget, Chief of Staff Panetta says, he said on November 9, "Don't put a gun to the head of the President. It is a form of terrorism." Further on he said, "Republicans are now obviously resorting to a form of blackmail in order to push their agenda onto the country. That is not an acceptable choice. This is blackmail."

But when Mr. Panetta was in Congress, and when the liberals were in charge, he said about the debt ceiling: "This is the only vehicle we have as we close these days before recess to try to bring the American public what I think is a very important issue, and it relates to our ability to control spending and to provide a shared sacrifice in terms of our approach to dealing with the deficits in this country." That was on June 28, 1984.

On the continuing resolution he said, "Having to adopt another continuing resolution in this process, I know the chairman and the Members of the Committee on Appropriations would prefer consideration and passage of separate bills, but I think we have to recognize the reality that we must pass on a regular basis massive continuing resolutions, and whether they like it or not, these continuing resolutions set national priorities, they send signals, they lock us into a future in one way or another." That was September 22, 1982. It was okay for the liberals in the Democrat-controlled Congress, but now, it is "blackmail."

Which way is it, Mr. Panetta? Is it "the only vehicle to bring to the American public a very important issue," or is it a form of terrorism, as you said on November 9? Is it that "We have to recognize the reality and set national priorities," as you said on September 22, 1982, or is it a form of blackmail, like you said on November 9?

I think the American public is tired of the doubletalk, Mr. Panetta. They want to lock us into a future, all right, but it is a future with a balanced budget. It goes well beyond—this double talk goes well beyond the Chief of Staff Panetta and the President's alleged balanced budget. It goes to cuts on Medicare. We are actually increasing the payments of Medicare from \$4,800 per year as an average recipient to \$6,700 per year in 7 years. It is the same on college student loans. They are going up over the next 7 years, almost \$9 billion. It is the same on nutrition programs. Many of us remember that the President went to an elementary school and said, "School children will starve under the Republican Plan." No children have been reported starving in public schools. Nutrition programs are

going up 4 percent each year for 7 years, a total of \$1 billion.

The bottom line is "No more cheap excuses for shutting down the government, no more duplicity, no more doubletalk." Let us balance the budget. It will lower interest rates 2 percent, according to Alan Greenspan, from the Federal Reserve, chairman of the Federal Reserve, and that will affect every American, every household, every family. Balance the budget. Let us not have any excuses. Let us have a bright future for our children and our grandchildren.

THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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, when I was a kid coming up, my favorite television show was "Dragnet." Sergeant Joe Friday used to indicate constantly, "The facts, ma'am, just the facts." That is what I want to discuss here today, how did we get in this mess with this Government shutdown, and just the facts.

You know, instead of doing what we should have been doing, working on the budget and the appropriation bills necessary to keep the Government running, the so-called leadership of this House had us waste over 3 months on the Contract on America, a campaign gimmick that most Americans have never even heard of, or, for those who have, did not really care anything about it.

As a result, it is mid-November, and only 4 of the 13 appropriation bills have been approved by Congress, 1½ months after all appropriation bills were due. Republicans still have not passed only four of them. To me, this is unbelievable, how 800,000 Federal workers have been furloughed, many veterans and seniors will not receive their benefits on time, and the Republicans continue to blame the President.

The question I have is this: How in the world can the President be blamed for this shutdown when only 4 of the 13 appropriation bills have reached his desk? In addition, he does not have a vote in this House or the Senate. The answer is that he cannot be blamed for this. The responsibility lies on the leadership, the Republican leadership in this Congress. They are the ones who have failed to do what they were sent here to do. The Republicans are also the ones who have been threatening to shut down this Government if the President does not cave in to their extremist agenda.

It was the Speaker who said last April that a Government shutdown and default would be political tools he would be likely to use as a leverage to push his extreme agenda. You know, if the Republicans really want to keep the Government up and running, they would have sent the President a clean continuing resolution. Instead, they

forced the President to veto this legislation because of all the riders attached to it. Then, after the President vetoed the CR, the Republicans blamed him for shutting down the Government. But the American people are not buying it, and the American people are beginning to realize just how mean-spirited and extreme the Republican agenda is, and they do not like it.

Along with this extreme agenda, the American people are also against the Republicans blackmailing and refusing to compromise. The Republicans need to stop playing blaming games and get down to business and do what the people sent them here to do. You know, I often say, "You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time," and the American people are waking up to the Republican party.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, let me be first to say that in my concept of new technology, we could install them on both the Democrat and Republican microphones, so that when a Member of either party get off the farm and reality we could have a little beep come on. It was an idea in technology.

I thought my good friend from Texas was going to ask to yield the floor and see if we could set up a study committee for this truthometer on the microphone.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. If the gentleman will yield, Mr. Speaker. I will be glad to talk about the veracity of polygraph tests.

Mr. KINGSTON. If it is polygraphs, the technology is out there, and that is the point. If we could just do this, I think it would be great.

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KINGSTON. I am happy to yield to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman tell me who has control over what is truth and what is false?

Mr. KINGSTON. The American people.

I would also say maybe we can put in some Math-101 classes so when folks say Medicare going from \$4,800 to \$6,700 is a cut, we can work on that, because maybe they can do that without the beep being triggered. There could just be some misunderstanding on what number is greater.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to point out one thing, though. There has been discussion about attaching things to this bill that has put the President in this bad position. In the words of the budget director, the Chief of Staff, and I believe I can quote him without causing any ruckus, the Republicans are now obviously resorting to a form of blackmail in order to push their agenda onto the country. This is unacceptable. This is blackmail.

Those were the words of Leon Panetta in the White House press release November 9. Yet, as a Congressman he said, yet this is the only vehicle we have as we close these days before this recess to try to bring the American