

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. DIAZ-BALART addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

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

[Mr. ABERCROMBIE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

PRESIDENT DUTY-BOUND TO BALANCE BUDGET

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

Mr. LONGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I think one of the difficult things that Members of this Congress have to face is how to conceive of the extent of the national debt of this country. Given the budget negotiations that are ongoing, I think it might be prudent to call to the attention of the Members and of the Speaker the fact that as of 3 o'clock this afternoon, the national debt is \$4,988,891,675,281.12. That is the official figure from the Bureau of Public Debt and the Department of the Treasury.

It is next to impossible for many of us to conceive of how large a number that is, and frankly, it was difficult for me even to realize how difficult it was just to mount the number on a piece of wood. It is over 15 characters. In fact, the piece of lumber that Matthew and Lisa are holding in front of me is over 10 feet in length. Just to carry it from the office, I was unable to take it through the revolving door, leaving the Cannon Building. I was unable to use the elevator in this building; we had to work our way up the staircases, get some help from some of the security guards, just to navigate the normal hallways of Congress.

I think that with the negotiations that are ongoing and given the work that has been done in this Congress to attempt to devise a reasonable plan by which we can balance the Federal debt, I would like to urge, Mr. Speaker, that the President has a duty to this country and to this Congress, given the fact that the Republicans have come up with a 7-year plan to balance the Federal budget, a plan that has been certified by the Congressional Budget Office to be fiscally in balance, I feel it is incumbent on the President to give us his view of how he would balance the budget in 7 years.

It is not enough to criticize what we have done; I think the President is duty-bound to step to the plate and tell us what he would do. What are his priorities?

I have to say very frankly, Mr. Speaker, as a Member of this body who is an American first and a member of

his political party second, I would welcome the President's initiative, because I feel that as a Member of Congress I should have the right to choose between two competing points of view; and that is what this great Chamber is dedicated to, and that is what this great Chamber is being deprived of today by the failure of the administration to step forward and honestly tell us how they would balance the budget. Given the size of this debt, I think it is imperative that they do so.

Mr. Speaker, I did some quick calculations with a calculator just before I came on the floor. If I had a business that started at the time of the birth of Christ and spent \$1 million a day, I would still not spend even \$1 trillion. In fact, I would need just about another 11,000 years to even approach the figure that we have accumulated in terms of the national debt today.

Another way of looking at it is that over the next 7 years under a Republican or Democratic version of a budget, this Government could be spending \$12 or \$13 trillion. In effect, our national debt exceeds over 40 percent of every nickel and dime that this Government will spend over the next 7 years.

In tribute to Matthew and Lisa, who represent the youngsters of this country who literally and figuratively are carrying the burden of this debt, I think again it is incumbent upon us as adults and as responsible citizens to do our duty in the democratic process.

Mr. Speaker, I want to end on this note: Our hearts and prayers are all with the American service men and women who are being sent overseas and deployed into harm's way in Bosnia. I noted this morning that there was information from the White House to suggest that the President was planning to visit the troops in Bosnia once they were deployed following the peace treaty.

Again, I applaud and commend that initiative on the part of the President, but I would also suggest to the President that his duties as Commander in Chief and as President of this great country call on him to also come to the Congress and tell us honestly, Mr. Speaker, how he would balance the Nation's budget.

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

[Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

MISPLACED BUDGET PRIORITIES

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the remarks of my col-

league with regard to the national debt, and I certainly agree with him that we need to balance the budget. However, I would suggest that we all agree that the budget needs to be balanced, and in fact, the President has also said many times that he wants the budget balanced. The problem is how do we do it. That is where the priorities come into place.

One of the points that President Clinton has made and that I have made and that many of the Democratic leaders have made is that we have to look at this budget in human terms. What are the impacts? What do the numbers mean in real terms in terms of working American families, students, older Americans, the environment and many of the other priorities that President Clinton has articulated.

The bottom line is that if we look at the Republican budget that passed this House and the Senate and is now on the President's desk, the priorities are misplaced. Too much of the emphasis is on cutting taxes or on giving tax breaks primarily for wealthy Americans and not enough emphasis is being placed on helping the average working person. Many of the cuts are on programs for senior citizens, education, particularly for student loans for students that want to go on to colleges or universities, and for the environment.

One of the things that I keep pointing out is how much of the impact in terms of tax cuts or tax breaks go to wealthy Americans. According to the numbers of the Joint Committee on Taxation, 51 percent of taxpayers with incomes under \$30,000 would, as a group, have a net tax increase under the Republican budget plan and nearly half of the benefits under the Republican tax package or under the budget, 48 percent, that is, go to the top 12 percent of families, those with incomes of \$100,000 or more.

So we certainly want to balance the budget, but we want to do it in a way that does not give tax breaks to the wealthy and does not cut critical programs that are important to seniors, to students, and also to the environment, among other things.

One of the things that received a lot of attention today in this regard was the Medicaid Program. Medicaid was the health care program that the Federal Government and States pay for for low-income people. Nearly 37 million people are currently covered by Medicaid, and about half of them are children.

Well, surprisingly, in a way, but I am not surprised, because I know that doctors do care about health care for low-income people, today the American Medical Association, the main national association of physicians, came out with a statement that was very critical of the Republican Medicaid plan. Basically, they criticized the fact that under the Republican proposal as part of this budget, Medicaid would no longer be guaranteed, no longer be an entitlement, and it would be up to the

States to decide who they were going to cover. So for those 37 million Americans who now receive Medicaid payments or Medicaid benefits, all of a sudden, some of them may not receive it, and it would be up to the States to decide.

President Clinton has asserted that it is crucial to maintain a Federal guarantee for Medicaid for those 37 million people, and that is one of the reasons he is going to or is likely to veto this bill, because it does not guarantee their coverage. Basically, what the doctors are saying, what the AMA is saying, is that they are concerned that States, because of the budget crunch, because they may not have the money to make up for the loss of Federal dollars that are going to come to the States in a block grant under the Republican proposal, will simply cut back on the number of people who are eligible, or on the quality of care. Basically, what they are saying is that because of the budget crisis that States face, they are going to have the same problem and they are not going to be able to actually cover all of these people.

The AMA said today in *The New York Times* that the Federal Government should establish basic national standards of uniform eligibility for Medicaid, and should prescribe the minimum package of benefits that would be available to poor people in all States, basic standards of uniform, minimum, adequate benefits of Medicaid recipients.

So what they are saying is that there should be a Federal standard, there should be a Federal guarantee for who is eligible for Medicaid, who gets the health insurance, and what kind of quality care will be provided for those low-income people.

The trustees of the AMA also said, there needs to be an appropriate balance between States interest in securing increased flexibility in light of fewer Federal funds for Medicaid and the very real needs of the people the Medicaid program is intended to serve, most of whom have no other means of access to health care coverage.

One of the arguments that the Republican leadership have put forth is that Medicaid should be more flexible and that is why it should go back to the States. However, what the doctors are saying is, it is very nice to have flexibility, but we have to make sure that the people who are covered by Medicaid now do have health care coverage. I know that that is going to be an important consideration for the President during these negotiations.

BUDGET REQUIRES GOOD-FAITH NEGOTIATIONS

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from New Jersey

[Mr. PALLONE] just gave some figures, and although I know he is well intentioned, I think some of the information that he gave out is not quite accurate.

I would like to give a few figures to the people who may be paying attention to my colleagues. For instance, the earned income tax credit. In 1995 we are spending almost \$20 billion on the earned income tax credit, and my good friend, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE], the head of the Theme Team, points out that it is going to go up to \$25.4 billion. That is a 28-percent increase.

They keep talking about cuts.

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It is an increase of 28 percent. The School Lunch Program is going from \$4.5 billion to \$6.17 billion. That is a 37-percent increase. Student loans, they keep saying we are cutting student loans. They are going from \$24.5 billion to \$36.5 billion. That is almost a 50-percent increase.

Medicaid, they beat on Medicaid all the time. Medicaid, we are spending \$89 billion, it is going to \$127 billion. That is a 43-percent increase. And Medicare, they are trying to scare the senior citizens to death in this country. Medicare, we are spending in 1995 \$178 billion and it is going up over \$111 billion. That is a 63-percent increase over the next 7 years.

Think about that. All we hear is how we are cutting, and we are increasing all of these programs from 28 percent up to 63 percent. Medicare is going up from \$178 billion to \$290 billion. So do not believe all the baloney you are hearing from my Democrat colleagues.

Let me talk about something that I think is extremely important. On November 19, 2 weeks ago, President Clinton, in writing, agreed to negotiate a 7-year balanced budget using Congressional Budget Office figures. He agreed to that on November 19.

On November 20, the next day, his chief of staff, Leon Panetta, said that maybe we could reach an agreement on 7 or 8 years and he went on to say, "But I don't think the American people ought to read a lot into what was agreed to last night." In other words, he was starting to back away from the agreement the President signed the day before.

Two days later, on Wednesday, Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin began talking to reporters about a 9-year budget. Three days before the President agreed to a 7-year budget and he agreed to use Congressional Budget Office figures. Here we are, 3 days later, his Treasury secretary said, "I think our 9-year budget is every bit as valid as their premise. I've never understood how 7 years got canonized."

But the President already signed the agreement, Mr. Secretary Rubin. He had signed the agreement. Yet 3 days later you are saying, "Well, it's not really that important."

Then on Tuesday, November 28, the Washington Post reported "a senior ad-

ministration official said yesterday" that an outcome without a reconciliation bill, balanced budget act, preserves our priorities and not theirs. Once again they are moving away from it.

The Post went on to say even President Clinton in two interviews this month made the case that operating the government under reduced spending bills and leaving the big budget issues until 1997 would not be a bad outcome. In other words, he is not going to negotiate a 7-year balanced budget agreement as he said he would because he said it would be better to run the government on short-term spending bills through the elections in 1996, I guess for political reasons, because he thinks it would be good for him.

But then let us see what the head of the Federal Reserve said, Alan Greenspan. He testified before Congress in November and he warned that failure to reach a balanced budget agreement would lead to higher interest rates, higher home mortgage rates, and that the economy would go downhill and suffer.

So as the President made this agreement for a balanced budget in 7 years using CBO figures, he and his staff knew that it was just to get over the hump that we had caused by closing down the government. He did not really mean it. That is why they are not negotiating in good faith. They have not sent up anything.

Chairman KASICH of the Committee on the Budget has held up our agreement time and time again on television saying, "Here is our proposed budget. Where is the President's?" And it was a blank hand he held up in conjunction with that.

We need to have a proposal from the President to get to a balanced budget in 7 years, as he agreed to, using CBO figures, and cut out this politics. If we do not do it, according to the Federal Reserve Chairman Greenspan, we are likely to see people buying homes having to pay much higher monthly payments, much higher mortgage rates. Interest rates on everything would go up. As a result, sales and the economy will go downhill.

Mr. Speaker, if the President does not begin negotiating in good faith, the budget talks will break down. This will lead or could lead to another Government shutdown. It could also cause severe economic problems. If this happens, the American people should and I hope will hold President Clinton accountable.

COMPREHENSIVE ANTITERRORISM ACT OF 1995

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

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, today I am, along with my Judiciary Committee colleagues, BILL MCCOLLUM, LAMAR SMITH, and BOB BARR introducing a revised antiterrorism bill.