

care under whatever comes out of these budget negotiations.

There has been a lot of talk about flexibility on the Republican side, and specifically today a number of Republican Governors came down to the capital and stressed that they would like to have flexibility in the Medicaid Program and how it is administered, and I agree with that concept of flexibility. But the flexibility should not go so far that they can declare certain people ineligible for Medicaid and, therefore, have no health insurance, or set the standards and the coverage for the Medicaid Program so low or so slim, so to speak, that the type of coverage that is now provided where certain services, certain health care services, are provided, would not be provided or the quality of care would be diminished.

So I am hopeful that we will not only see in these negotiations a Medicaid Program that guarantees coverage for those who are not eligible for Medicaid, but also that certain minimum standards be put in place as to what a health care coverage or what a policy would include for low-income people, and lastly that sufficient funding be put back into the budget bill for the Medicaid Program so that we do not see a decline in quality for the program.

□ 1530

The President mentioned in his veto message five concerns that he had about the Republican budget when it dealt with Medicaid. I would like to go through those briefly.

First, he said that the Republican budget cuts Federal Medicaid payments to States by \$163 billion over 7 years, a 28 percent cut by the year 2002 below what the Congressional Budget Office estimates is necessary for Medicaid spending. So the concern here is that if you cut Medicaid by 20 percent over what we estimate we need for those who are currently eligible for Medicaid, that by the year 2002 States with the lesser funds would have to eliminate that many people from the Medicaid Program.

Second, the President mentioned that the Republican bill converts Medicaid into a block grant with drastically less spending, eliminating guaranteed coverage to millions of Americans and perhaps forcing States to drop coverage for millions of the most vulnerable citizens, including children and the disabled. This is really the key during the budget negotiations. We do not want to eliminate what we call the entitlement status of Medicaid, so that certain people are not eligible because States decide that they do not have enough money and will not cover them.

Third, the President said that the Republican budget purports to guarantee coverage to certain groups but does not define a minimum level of benefits. There again, it is not only important that a eligible Medicaid recipients continue to be eligible, but that whatever package is put together of coverage for

them, that those same minimum level of services be included for a national standard so that individual States can change it.

Fourth, the President said that the Republican budget purports to protect certain vulnerable populations with set-asides, but would cover less than half of the estimated needs of senior citizens and people with disabilities in the year 2002. The best example of this are those particularly vulnerable seniors who are low income, who now have their Medicare part B coverage paid, but would not necessarily have it under this proposal. As I said again, Mr. Speaker, we will be talking about this a lot more. It is most important that Medicaid be guaranteed for those low-income people.

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

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

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S VETO OF THE BALANCED BUDGET ACT PURELY A PUBLIC RELATIONS STUNT

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

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the President vetoed the Balanced Budget Act of 1995. I am not surprised, but I am disappointed. I want to talk about why I believe the President vetoed what I think was a very good budget for this country. It was a bad veto for all of us. First of all, it was purely a public relations stunt, as full of irony as hypocrisy. The President had the pen Lyndon Johnson used to sign Great Society into law flown into Washington, DC from Texas.

After his speech, the President quickly left the room before he had to answer questions about his balanced budget, but there were plenty of questions Mr. Clinton should have answered for the American people. The President criticized the House-Senate plan to save Medicare for the long term, but has failed to offer his own. Perhaps worse, 1994's Clinton health care plan contained major spending reductions in the growth of Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder why it was OK for the President to control spending on Medicare but not for the Republicans to do the same. He also should have spoken further about the Great Society programs Lyndon Johnson used that pen for. For instance, most Americans consider LBJ's war on poverty a terrible failure. Today, one child in three is illegitimate, drug use is up, education scores are down, and generations of families have depended on wel-

fare instead of work. We have the highest crime rate in the world, and many of our inner cities are devastated.

Is the President endorsing LBJ's war on poverty that has cost \$5 trillion and left this country's poor in worse shape than before? One more question, Mr. Speaker. When Bill Clinton was running for President, he promised to balance the budget in 5 years. In his first State of the Union address he promised to use economic projections of the Congressional Budget Office. Now he not only refuses to offer a real 7-year balanced budget plan, but he uses economic figures cooked up by his own economists so he does not have to make tough choices. Then he stands on the sidelines and demagogues honest efforts to balance the budget. Why does the President consistently say one thing and do another?

I realize that this may sound more than a little partisan, but frankly, I am upset about a veto of the first balanced budget we have had in more than a generation, our first and perhaps last chance to stop robbing our children and grandchildren.

My daughter, 13 years old, my son, 24 years old, what kind of future are they going to have unless we get realistic about balancing the budget? I call on the President to do just that. The President's LBJ pen did not work at first. After trying a new inkwell he was finally able to sign his name. If there was any justice, the ink would have been red.

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

[Mrs. CHENOWETH addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

THE REAL ISSUES REGARDING AMERICA'S ROLE IN BOSNIA

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

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, the tragedy in Bosnia is very much on the mine of every Member of this Chamber. Bosnia is not a partisan matter. Our policy in Bosnia, in my judgment, has been the error of two administrations, one of one party and one of another party. The embargo was put on by one, said that it would be lifted by another, but that still has not been done.

The result is that the Bosnians, who were aggressed against, attacked, have not had the weapons to defend themselves when they wanted to defend themselves. Now we say in the Dayton agreement that we will make sure the Bosnians are finally armed. The embargo still exists. It needs to come off. Of course, it never should have been put on.

Mr. Speaker, the issue in this debate is not who is an internationalist and who is an isolationist. I would like to think the issue is who is a realist.

The issue is also one of the power of the Congress and the power of the President. Under the Constitution, Presidents may wage war. It is Congress that declares war.

As we know from studying the Constitution in elementary school, high school, college and university, there are approximately 200 conflicts, large and small, that we have been in since 1789 when the First Congress met in New York. In only five of those did Congress declare war, but it certainly gave support to a number of others through appropriations and through authorization.

But that power of the President to wage war is not a mandate to be Super Cop to the world at either the whim or the policy of the President. The question is: "Where is our vital interest?"

Usually the vital interest has been, in most of those 200 engagements, where the lives of citizens of the United States have been involved. Citizens of the United States are not being held captive in Bosnia and the lives of American citizens have not been involved.

We hear Members of the administration saying, "This is not going to be another Vietnam," even though one of the top negotiators at Dayton had a slip of the tongue in talking to a few of us and mentioned Vietnam in the place of where he meant Bosnia. Whether that is significant I leave to the psychoanalysts.

Our troops are on the ground to separate the warring parties, who now are tired, presumably, and want peace after 500 years of acrimony, war, and conflict based on ethnicity as well as on religion. What happens when those supposedly tired warring parties decide they do not want peace anymore and the American forces are in the middle, presumably trying to separate them? The American forces thankfully do have the power to respond, and to respond promptly.

But I worry when a President, any President, Republican or Democrat—and this is a not a new thought with me—does something in foreign affairs in an election year. We all agree that handling foreign affairs is, frankly, a lot easier than dealing with domestic policy and all the different factions there.

The lives of American military men and women are too valuable to be an election year photo opportunity. The President does not have the power to deploy troops anywhere on either whim or long-thought-out policy. It is the Congress that must face up to the issue as to whether the President has the right to deploy troops in the former Yugoslavia, primarily in Bosnia. I would suggest that the President does not have the right. He has not shown us that there is a vital interest in Bosnia for America.

Certainly there is a humanitarian interest. There are dozens of humanitarian interests where people are being butchered by their neighbors in the

same country, be it in Africa, be it in parts of Europe, be it in Asia. We cannot be, as I said earlier, Super Cop to the world. Congress needs to face up to this issue and not duck it as it has been ducking it for the last 2 weeks.

BLATANT POLITICAL DOCUMENTS SENT FROM THE WHITE HOUSE TO FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

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

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss an issue regarding a letter that President Clinton and Vice President GORE sent to a number of Federal employees. I was at a hearing last week on the space program and we were receiving testimony from the administrator, Mr. Dan Golden, and one of the members at that hearing brought up the subject of a letter that had been sent to NASA employees in his district that he found particularly offensive. I was very concerned about this particular issue, so I asked for a copy of this letter.

Honestly, Mr. Speaker, when I saw this letter, I thought it was a hoax. I thought the President and the Vice President of the United States of America could never be so foolish as to send out to Federal civil service employees an openly and blatantly political document such as this, which is obviously in violation of statute. I had one of my staff call over to the White house to find out for sure, because I thought it was obviously a hoax, as to whether or not the White House had authorized this letter. I was very, very shocked to find out that this, indeed, did come out of the office of the President and was authorized by the Vice President's office.

The letter is entitled "An open letter to Federal employees, from President Clinton and Vice President Gore." It begins with a comment about how proud they are of the work force, and then it goes on to say some nice things about the very good work that our Federal employees do, but then it goes on to talk about the possibility of another Federal shutdown.

It says in the fourth paragraph: "You all know that the law under which most of the government is operating expires on December 15, and the debate that led to the November shutdown is not over," a very true and accurate statement. I agree with it.

Then it goes on to say: "We can't promise you that your jobs and your lives won't be interrupted again. Too much is at stake for America. If you are held hostage again, we know you would not want us to forfeit the Nation's future as ransom."

Mr. Speaker, I think this is an outrage that the President and the Vice President of the United States would send out such a blatantly political document to Federal employees. The Congress of the United States sent to the

President of the United States a continuing resolution to keep the Government open, and the President of the United States decided to veto that continuing resolution, and in him doing so, vetoing that legislation, he shut the Government down. It was quite apparent to me when I heard that he did not talk to the Speaker or the majority leader of the other body on their trip to Israel at all that he was very intent on not negotiating with our side and letting the government shut down.

Indeed, that was the real story behind that lack of dialogue on that trip to Israel, the fact that the President of the United States wanted to go ahead and shut the Government down, and then these two gentlemen have the nerve to turn around and send out such a politically blatant document to Federal employees. I am calling on the chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Service, the honorable and distinguished gentleman from Florida, [Mr. JOHN MICA] to hold hearings on this subject, because I have since discovered this is not the first time that this has happened. No other President in United States history has ever exploited the Federal work force for political advantage like this President has.

I have in my hands a document that came out of the White House, encouraging all Cabinet Members to solicit political donations from Federal employees, so this President has done it before. He has used his political office of the Presidency of the United States for his political gain. He is doing that again in this letter. I think it is wrong. No Republican President could ever get away with doing anything like this. If a Republican tried something like this, the Washington press corps would be up in arms, there would be calls for investigations, there would be hearings being held.

I am rising today in this House to call upon the Subcommittee on Civil Service to hold hearings on what this President and the Vice President of the United States are doing, politicizing our civil service work force. I could tell you that I have civil service employees in my district who got this letter and they were outraged.

□ 1445

IMPRISONMENT IS NOT THE ANSWER

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

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, for all of us, this is a holiday season—a time for reflection and renewal. This should most of all be a time to think about possibilities—the possibilities of doing the best we can.

The other day I read a truly grim report: More than a million Americans are in prison. Last year, the rate of growth in prison population was the biggest ever.