

the ill-conceived Section 2104 of H.R. 1561, the American Overseas Interests Act, which was passed by the House of Representatives on May 24. This legislation has given these boat people, most of whom have been determined to be economic migrants rather than political refugees, false hope of resettlement in the United States directly from the camps. This false hope has led to rioting in refugee camps and has stopped a very successful program of voluntary repatriation under which more than 70,000 of these boat people have returned to Vietnam. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and many objective observers lay the blame squarely on this legislation, the House passed provisions in the American Overseas Interests Act for outbreaks of violence in the camps and for the collapse of voluntary repatriation.

In an effort to break the current impasse the State Department is negotiating with Vietnam a program, called "Track II," under which any boat people who volunteer to return to Vietnam will be entitled to an interview by the Immigration and Naturalization Service to determine once and for all if they qualify for refugee status under U.S. law. In this Member's opinion, the Track II proposal offers some hope of restarting the voluntary repatriation program, thereby decreasing the numbers of boat people languishing in the refugee camps and diminishing somewhat the pressure for massive involuntary returns which would lead to a humanitarian nightmare next year.

In a recent State Department briefing, we learned that the negotiations with Hanoi face some serious obstacles. I would urge my colleagues to lower the Congressional profile on this issue and allow the negotiations to run their course. Further action on the harmful legislative provisions contained in H.R. 1561 would only exacerbate the problems facing this program.

Mr. Speaker, finally this Member would insert into the RECORD an article from the November 29, 1995 edition of *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, entitled, "Why Prolong the Boat People's Suffering?" This article, written by Mr. Robert Van Leeuwen, the retired chief of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Hong Kong, makes a most convincing case that the biggest losers from the ill-conceived Section 2104 of H.R. 1561 are "precisely those Vietnamese whose fate is the object of the proposed legislation." I commend this article to all my colleagues on both sides of Capitol Hill.

[From the *Asian Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 29, 1995]

WHY PROLONG THE BOAT PEOPLE'S SUFFERING?

(By Robert Van Leeuwen)

In June 1989, the United States and 50 other governments at the U.N.-sponsored International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees agreed on a Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) to provide humanitarian solu-

tions for the continuing exodus from Vietnam. Six years later, CPA's achievements include tens of thousands of former "boat people" safely back in their country.

But legislation introduced in the U.S. Congress by Representatives Chris Smith and Ben Gilman pretends that history simply did not happen. Proposed last May, the legislation suggests that the last 40,000 Vietnamese in camps, all of them already determined not to be refugees, should now go through re-screening by an entirely different and far broader set of criteria to see whether they could be admitted to the United States as refugees.

In other words, the congressman would have us believe that hundreds of millions of dollars spent to implement the CPA, the continued provision of asylum in Southeast Asia, 75,000 persons determined not to be refugees safely back in Vietnam, 89,000 others resettled in third countries and a continuing flow of non-refugees back to Vietnam, was all in vain. That all this, achieved in a framework of internationally accepted humanitarian principles and standards, should be seen as null and void, and all the result of a biased and sinister design implemented by equally biased and sinister people.

This is clearly not credible.

But who pays the price of this ill-conceived initiative? Ironically, the biggest losers are precisely those Vietnamese whose fate is the object of the proposed legislation. Second in line are the U.S. taxpayers asked to subscribe to expenditures initially set at some \$30 million, to settle in the U.S.A. some 20,000 Vietnamese already determined after elaborate evaluation of their stories not to be refugees. Then there are the returnees to Vietnam who would see thousands of those who chose to hold out in the camps suddenly and inexplicably rewarded by a new chance for a free ticket to the U.S.A. And after them, the still shadowy figures of those around the world who would be paying for an inevitable perception of lack of consistency and credibility in U.S. foreign policy.

Of course, no one ever doubted that implementation of the CPA would be difficult and controversial. For 14 years, following the collapse of the Republic of Vietnam in April 1975, hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese "boat people" had been given temporary asylum in Southeast Asian countries of arrival pending their permanent resettlement elsewhere. Since all were automatically considered eligible for resettlement, the momentum of the exodus was huge.

Then Hong Kong, inundated by arrivals from northern Vietnam, and in cognizance of changed realities in that country, imposed a cut-off date on June 15, 1988, after which eligibility for resettlement was no longer a given. Countries of the region followed suit. So it was that, a decade and a half after the end of the war, a young fisherman in northern Vietnam or those with older ambitions in the South could no longer hop along China's coast to Hong Kong with the assurance of finding there the gate to a permanent home in the West. Instead, they had to tell their story to government and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) officials charged with the task of determining by internationally accepted criteria and through elaborate and expensive procedures whether their inability or unwillingness to return to Vietnam was based on a well-founded fear of persecution.

Essential to the international consensus on the CPA was a clearly stated agreement on the fate of those determined not to be refugees: "Persons determined not to be refugees should return to their country of origin in accordance with international practices. . . . In the first instance, every effort will be made to encourage the voluntary return of such persons."

In 1988, the UNHCR signed crucial agreements with Vietnam and Hong Kong that guaranteed standards of treatment for new arrivals and for returnees to Vietnam, including full access by UNHCR staff to both categories of persons. And by 1992, difficulties notwithstanding, an honorable end to the long saga of the "boat people" was in sight. The stream of new arrivals had dried up. Voluntary returns to Vietnam from Hong Kong alone, temporary home to the largest number of Vietnamese in search of resettlement, averaged more than 1,000 a month in 1992 and 1993, and continued at almost 500 monthly throughout 1994.

Last May, though, immediately following press reports of the Smith-Gilman proposal, those figures for Hong Kong and the region as a whole dropped to an all-time low since 1989 of 156 returnees in September of this year. A similar precipitous drop in volunteers for repatriation was observed in the spring of 1991 just after published statements by Orange County Representative Bob Dornan and the then Vice President of the United States Dan Quayle holding out false hopes of resettlement for Vietnamese regardless of the necessary distinction between refugees from persecution and non-refugees in search of better economic prospects. People still in Vietnam took to the boats again and looked in vain for the U.S. aircraft carrier rumored to be waiting for them in the Tonkin Gulf. It never came, but arrivals in Hong Kong, down to 6,595 in 1990 from over 34,000 in 1989, soared to 20,206.

Today the search for refugees among the Vietnamese has been completed for some time. The number of new arrivals dropped to virtually zero in 1993. The future for the 40,000 non-refugees left in Southeast Asia's camps lies in return.

Over the six years of the CPA, those responsible worked under the most intense international scrutiny imaginable. No one hesitated to jump to the press with criticisms and allegations of human rights infractions, nor did the press, governments, private voluntary agencies and a colorful variety of individuals hesitate to dump these on UNHCR's doorstep. Inherently, no system of procedures for refugee status determination anywhere in the world can be perfect. Reasonable criticism and allegations based on fact helped to improve and strengthen a humanitarian framework for action designed to alleviate, not to prolong or deepen human suffering. No one, least of all UNHCR officials, stood to gain by ignoring them.

Unfortunately, reason, vision and recognition of the facts do not always have a louder voice than easily heard outcries of wrongdoing based on ideological convictions, emotion or narrow personal agendas. It is everyone's responsibility to see to it that the former, not the latter, prevail.

It is both quick and easy to make statements or propose legislation from positions of public trust. It may be far less so to live with the consequences. In the case of the Vietnamese that means with virtual certainty yet another prolongation of their dehumanizing stay in detention camps surrounded by endemic crime, the torn-up papers of vain hopes and children who have yet to see a world beyond barbed wire. That is the price they pay.

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

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

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AND
THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee to the minority leader.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be here tonight and join with several of my colleagues to talk about the budget agreement or the lack thereof and what the concerns and considerations are about a budget agreement in this body.

It will be the topic of conversation over the next several days. Not the prior speaker but the gentleman who spoke before the prior speaker made reference to the November 19 agreement that was agreed to by the President and the Congress in terms of a continuing resolution which would open the Federal Government that had been closed in those few days beforehand. The gentleman referenced this agreement, but what he did not do was to talk about the full scope of what this agreement was, a commitment to a balanced budget. I would like to read what the commitment included. It had a couple of parts to it.

My colleague intimated that the President had talked about a balanced budget in 7 years and that, in fact, that that was the scope and the sum total of this agreement and under the economic assumptions of the Congressional Budget Office and leaves the impression in the public's mind that the President has backed off of that agreement and has not been true to his word about the balanced budget and the economic assumptions.

It is not only the President who he intimates has reneged on this effort, but, in fact, the Congress and those of us in the Congress who, in fact, supported that agreement.

But the full scope of that agreement includes the following. It said that the President and the Congress shall enact legislation in the first session of the 104th Congress to achieve a balanced budget no later than fiscal year 2002, that is a 7-year period, as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office and the President and the Congress agree that the balanced budget must protect future generations, ensure Medicare solvency, reform welfare, and provide adequate funding for Medicaid, education, agriculture, national defense, veterans, and the environment. Further, the balanced budget will adopt tax policies to help working families and to stimulate future economic growth.

Part B, the balanced budget agreement shall be estimated by the Congressional Budget Office based on its most recent current economic and technical assumptions, following a thorough consultation and review with the Office of Management and Budget and other government and private experts.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle would like the American pub-

lic to believe that the agreement was only to a 7-year balanced budget and solely on the economic assumptions made by the Congressional Budget Office. It is a total reneging on the part of my Republican colleagues and the Republican majority in this body to, in fact, what that agreement was all about.

First and foremost, it was about ensuring the values and the priorities of this great Nation of ours and that has to do with Medicare and Medicaid and education and tax policy that is equitable to working middle-class families in this Nation. This agreement was signed and voted on by two parties and yet the only people who have been intransigent on this budget agreement and will not move off of \$270 billion in cuts in Medicare and \$163 billion in cuts in Medicaid is the Republican majority in this House of Representatives. Thank God, the President is holding firm on those priorities and the values of this great Nation of ours.

I will say to you that Members on both sides of the aisle feel passionately about their positions on the debate and we should feel passionately. We are debating the future of this country and the listening public should make no mistake. Sometimes you think that there is an argument, that we are bickering back and forth. I will just tell you, as this Member, and I know my colleagues feel the same way, these are issues that are worth fighting for.

If we are not fighting here for the values of this Nation and the priorities of the people of this country, then we do not deserve to represent those people who put their faith and thrust in us and asked us to come here on their behalf.

This debate is more than just about numbers. It is about those values. It is about those priorities of the American people.

Democrats and the President are opposed to the Republican budget plan because it makes deep and devastating cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education and environmental protection, and we truly believe that those cuts go too far, too fast, and are going to hurt too many people in this country.

Let us talk about Medicaid for the moment. Medicaid is the Federal program that provides health care to tens of millions of needy children, of the disabled and the frail elderly in this country. Speaker GINGRICH's budget plan cuts Medicaid by 28 percent, \$165 billion. At the same time it rolls out \$245 billion in new tax breaks and loopholes to the wealthiest individuals and corporations in this country, to the richest corporations in this country. They will see a \$17 billion windfall. And at the same time Medicare beneficiaries will see their deductibles go up, their copayments go up, and they will lose the choice of their doctor and many rural hospitals in this country will close down.

If you are a hard-working American listening tonight, you might think

that the cuts in Medicaid do not affect you, that they only affect people on welfare and that it is just a program for the poor. Well, that is wrong, and it is a mistake. The changes in Medicaid proposed in the GOP budget would have a devastating impact on middle-class working families in this Nation. Do not take my word for it. Everyone is familiar with something called the Consumer Reports. It is a publication that tells you if you are getting a good deal or a bum deal when you go out to buy a new car or a computer or a refrigerator or some sort of an appliance in your home.

The group which publishes that famous report has taken a look at the Republican Medicaid plan from a consumers point of view and, guess what, they say it is a bum deal for America's working families. That is right, the Consumers Union has said, do not buy the Republican plan because it is a lemon. That is what it is.

The reports looks at the impact that the GOP Medicaid cuts would have on nursing home residents and their families. According to its findings, millions of American families would be impoverished by the Republican plan. Medicaid covers the cost of care for 60 percent of nursing home residents in this country, and it includes guarantees and insurance that families are not saddled with the financial burden of that care. But all of that is about to change if the Republicans get their way on this budget.

According to Consumers Union, families of nursing home residents can expect the following changes if the Republican budget is approved. First and foremost, and understand this, if you have a parent, if you have a loved one who is in a nursing home and the cost of nursing home care is about \$38,000 a year these days, that in fact if this bill gets passed, if this budget goes through, ladies and gentleman who are listening out there, adult children may be held financially liable for the nursing home bills of their parents.

Second, family assets, including homes, may be sold or seized by Medicaid liens. Let me tell you that what it says in the fine print is that if you make above the median income in your State, your assets, as an adult child or a parent who is in a nursing home, can be tapped to pay for that nursing home care.

□ 1945

It was Ronald Reagan who wanted to protect adult children from having to be destitute in terms of having their funding taken away in terms of paying for health care and nursing home coverage for their families who put those laws into effect in this Nation. In the State of Connecticut, if you make more than \$41,000 a year, the State can come after you to pay for the cost of your parents' nursing home care. Heed this well: Further, no one is guaranteed nursing home eligibility, no one. States may set unreasonably low income levels so that thousands of people

will be denied help in paying the high cost of nursing home care. Families may be forced to spend their life savings for long-term care of a loved one.

Speaker GINGRICH has put together a budget that reflects his priorities, not America's priorities. It is a budget that will hurt those who would need our help when helping those who are doing just fine. Over and over again the budget socks it to working families while cushioning the blow for the wealthy. Balancing the budget is an important goal, but balancing the budget has to be not about just balancing the books. It has to be about what balancing what our priorities are about.

I am going to stop at this juncture for my colleagues who are on the floor, and I want to open up the discussion to them, and we can make the continued points, and I am happy to yield to and to recognize my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE], who has spent endless hours on the floor of this House, and in meetings, and in his own district to try to truly educate the public on what is in this bill which is so hurtful to people in this Nation and particularly takes away health care, that security and that safety net of health care in this country. I am happy to yield to my friend from New Jersey.

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO], and I certainly want to follow up on some of the comments that she made.

Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on what the gentlewoman from Connecticut said, particularly when she started out in the beginning and she read from the concurrent resolution that was adopted a few weeks ago, just before Thanksgiving, that set forth the basis for the negotiations over the budget. That is the continuing resolution which, of course, expired Friday. I wanted to, again in following up on what she said, I wanted to make a couple of points:

First of all, I think everyone has to understand that there were three parts, at least three parts, to that continuing resolution that everyone agreed on. One was that while we negotiated the budget between the White House and the Congress, between the Democrats and the Republicans, that the Government was not going to shut down, that the Government was going to continue to operate, and on Friday, when the Republican leadership walked out of a meeting with the President, whereupon they were continuing to negotiate the budget, and when the Republicans leadership in this Congress refused to bring up a continuing resolution Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or even today during a normal business day so that the Government continues to operate, they broke the commitment that was made a few weeks ago that the Government would continue to operate while we worked out our differences over the budget, and I think it is particularly tragic that we went through another

business day today with close to 300,000 Federal employees going home. Remember these people are going to be paid, they are not working, and the Government and the people that are serviced by the agencies that are closed down lose out. And I made the point over and over on the floor of this House that we need to put our ideological differences aside and let the Government continue to operate while we negotiate this budget.

Now, as my colleagues know, I do not even know if it was mentioned today during the short debate we had on this joint resolution that the gentlewoman mentioned, but you have to understand that Social Security offices are closed, that the national parks, the national recreation areas, the national monuments are closed not only in Washington, DC, but throughout the country. People who depend on Government agencies for certain services which their tax dollars are being used for cannot obtain those services. It makes absolutely no sense for any of that to occur while we continue to argue over and negotiate the budget.

That was No. 1.

The other part of the resolution that the gentlewoman mentioned was the fact that the priorities, the priorities whether they are Medicaid, Medicare, the environment, education, and the other things that were mentioned in that continuing resolution, this agreement that was reached a couple weeks ago, they have been completely ignored by the Republican leadership. In fact, in the joint resolution that was brought up today, which most of us voted on, including myself, that resolution made no reference to the Government shutdown or the need to continue the operation of Government, no reference to the priorities such as Medicare and Medicaid, and simply said that negotiations should continue based on the most recent technical and economic assumptions of the Congressional Budget Office. Well, we already understood that we already agreed that we were going to operate with a 7-year budget essentially based on CBO numbers. We did not need to argue or debate that today.

Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the Republican leadership has refused to come up with a resolution to let the Government continue to operate so that everybody goes home and gets paid anyway, and they refuse to talk about the Medicare and Medicaid and the other priorities, so, you know, this agreement that was reached, as the gentlewoman from Connecticut said a couple weeks ago, this agreement has—the other part of the bargain here, to keep the Government open and to deal with the priorities such as Medicare and Medicaid are basically out the window. I think that is very unfortunate because I think that the President—it is abundantly clear that the President has used the time over the last 2 weeks to set forth a budget wherein he preserved those priorities, and basically

on Friday, when the Republicans walked out of the negotiations session, he came back and said, "Look, I can't make the level of cuts in Medicare and Medicaid that the Republicans are asking me to make and still preserve the programs," and they made a commitment, the Republicans, that they would provide adequate funding for Medicaid, insure Medicare solvency, and work for sufficient funding for the environment and other priorities. They have broken that commitment, and I just wanted to talk about one aspect of this, and then I am going to yield to the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI].

Earlier today the President—earlier this evening I should say—the President vetoed the VA, HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act which includes the Environmental Protection Agency, and most of the programs that protect the environment and most of the funding for the programs that protect the environment, particularly the EPA, and the President again articulated his priorities. He noted in his veto message that the bill includes a 22-percent cut in requested funding for the Environmental Protection Agency, including a 25-percent cut in enforcement that would cripple EPA efforts to enforce laws against polluters. Particularly objectionable are the bill's 25-percent cut in Superfund, which would continue to expose hundreds of thousands of citizens to dangerous chemicals and would hamper efforts to train workers in hazardous waste cleanup.

Now my Republican colleagues, the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, the chairman of the subcommittee that brought this bill up, when they got on the floor, they responded to the President's veto by saying, well, the President has not come up with a 7-year balanced budget; where is the balanced budget? Again, neglecting the priorities.

Here is one of the major concerns that the President has. Why is it that the EPA, and the environmental protection programs in general, take the biggest cuts of any Federal agency or any Federal programs and basically their whole enforcement program is crippled? Well, the reason is very simple, and that is because the Republican priorities are neglecting the environment in the same way that they are neglecting Medicaid and they are neglecting Medicare. They have basically hoisted up the notion that we have to have a 7-year balanced budget, and it does not matter how it is balanced, it does not matter where the priorities are. Well, I should say maybe even go further and say that the priorities, as they have always have been in this whole budget negotiation, give the tax breaks to the wealthy, give the tax breaks to the corporations, and take the money away from Medicare, Medicaid, as well as the environment.

The President today, as he has for the last 2 or 3 weeks, indicated what

his priorities are. He indicated his priorities on the environment today very clearly in his veto message, and I think that the main thing that we have to do over the next few weeks, as these budget negotiations continue, is hold the Republican leadership's feet to the fire and say, "Look, we're all in agreement with a balanced budget, we will even go along with your 7-year plan and your CBO numbers, but we've got to protect our priorities," and I have not seen any effort at all over the last few weeks on the part of the Republican leadership to protect those priorities that we have articulated and that were very well articulated in the agreement a couple weeks ago.

Ms. DELAURO. I just want to make one point and then yield to our colleague, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI]. The point that you have made is that there truly is nothing balanced about rolling back environmental protection in order to, at the behest of corporate polluters, which is what has happened in this portion of the budget, is those people who—will want to continue polluting, have had the opportunity, in fact the most egregious points about this effort is that they have the opportunity to help to draft the legislation in this body, and we are rolling back those environmental protections for the aggrandizement of these special interests which is an integral part of this budget.

One of the last pieces I wanted to mention is that we have in this tax break package rolled back the alternate minimum tax. For instance, you are going to cut student loans that allow working families, middle-class families to get their kids to school. We all went to school with student loans. They are going to try to cut out these programs and at the same time do away with the alternate minimum tax. That is the tax that again was put in by Ronald Reagan to have the richest corporations in this country pay their fair share of some taxes at a 20-percent level. Nobody was asking for that repeal. This is being repealed, and they are telling us at the same time that we have got to bring our fiscal house in order, we are going to give this—you know millions of dollars of windfall to the richest Americans, and at the same time we are telling working families we are sorry we have got to cut back on the student loan, your kid cannot go to school, and you are going to have to figure out another way to do it, or a veteran in this with, you know, sorry we are going to cut \$6 billion of veterans' benefits, but we are going to give all these billions of dollars to these folks who at this time do not need it. It is truly mind-boggling to think about what this says about the priorities of this Nation.

I now would like to yield to my colleague, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI], who has really been fighting the fight on this issue in talking about how all of this affects her constituents in the State of California.

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for yielding, and for her leadership, and her persistence and her relentlessness on presenting this issue to the American people, and to my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE], for his leadership as well.

It is very clear listening to the two of you and to our other colleagues who have been making this fight to protect Medicare, and Medicaid, and student loans, and school nutritional programs for young children, et cetera, that what this fight is about here in Washington, DC, is not about politics, it is about philosophy and values and priorities.

□ 2000

When we talk about balancing the budget, you have heard it a million times, the budget should be balanced in its values as well as fiscally balanced in terms of taking in and spending the same amount of money. That is why it is so very hard if you call a balanced budget your driving issue, why you can in the same breath talk about a tax cut of a quarter of a trillion dollars for the wealthiest people in our country.

How can it be a statement of our national values, as our budget should be, for us to talk about cutting back on what our colleagues mentioned here, Medicare, Medicaid, student loans, school nutritional programs, et cetera, while we are giving a tax break at the high end?

Our colleagues on the Republican side in this session, in this budget, make the folks who talked about trickle-down look good. Trickle-down never worked, but at least it gave some recognition that somewhere, somewhere along the line, there should be something for folks at the bottom of the economic scale. Their view was if you give it all to the top, create wealth at the top, the benefits will trickle down.

Our colleagues now in this budget, in this Congress, do not even care if it trickles down. "If you are at the low end, if you are poor, if you have not had the same opportunities as others, you are not going to get them. So be it."

In our Labor-HHS we cut, or the Republican leadership cut, \$1 billion out of aid to disadvantaged children, the Chapter I education appropriation, \$1 billion. That is 1 million children in our country who will not get the kind of assistance they need early on in their education to help them fulfill themselves and make a valuable contribution to their society, as well as become taxpayers.

I am very interested in showing what our colleagues spelled out in terms of the cuts and the values and the unfairness of the tax cut while we are, in many cases, increasing the taxes for people who make \$30,000 or less, and we remove the earned income tax credit for families, too. Some people are making the minimum wage. If two wage-earners in a family are working at the

minimum wage, full time, they bring home the rip-roaring sum of \$17,000, and they will get a tax increase, because they will not, unless they have children, they will not receive the earned income tax credit. These young couples are preparing to have children, they are saving up to have children, and our colleagues are increasing their taxes, while giving the preponderance of this tax cut to the high end.

I want to show once again what this means to California. Last week when we had our special order, I talked more specifically about what it meant to San Francisco. I do this because I think each of us, and I was pleased to be invited by my colleagues to do this last week and now, because we represent our districts here and are members of a delegation from a State, and we should all evaluate what it means to the people in our districts and our State, the budgets of our local communities and our State budgets, and the economies of our region.

I am proud to be part of the California delegation in the Congress. My district is San Francisco, 80 percent of the city of San Francisco. I share representation with the gentleman from California [Mr. LANTOS]. This budget plan that the Republicans are proposing has a devastating impact on the State of California.

First, let me tell you what California brings to the country. In terms of the balance of payments, in terms of trade, this dynamic, incredibly resourceful State of California has, and we can go top to bottom with many of these issues, and some of them are throughout, has contributed enormously to our exports, and therefore our balance of payments, and therefore to our national treasury in terms of high tech, biotech, agriculture, entertainment. This list goes on and on. There is tourism. Many people, of course, come from all over the world to visit California, so dollars from all over the world flow into our State. We have invested in our people. Our country, when our country invests in its people, we reap the benefit.

Our particular State has been a very dynamic one, very resourceful in terms of when we have a setback, we can bounce back because of the diversity of the economy in our State. We are taking a beating on the base closures and the cutbacks in defense spending, and that is appropriate as we wind down after the cold war, but that means that we also have to recognize that there are needs that we have in our State.

Under this Republican balanced budget, the State of California, in the 7 years of the budget, will lose over \$72 billion just in the reconciliation part of the bill, not including the appropriations, so it will be closer to \$100 billion in the 7 years.

Just to put it in perspective, our State budget in California is approximately \$57 billion a year, so it will be nearly 2 years in the next 7 years of a State budget which will be removed

from California in terms of assistance to individuals, Medicare and Medicaid, student loans, et cetera, school nutritional programs, in terms of the cutbacks for localities and to the State budget. What that does to the economy of the State also has an impact on what happens nationally, because California is one-eighth of the country.

I encourage my colleagues to look to your own States and districts to see what this really translates for you. Is it dynamic? Does it contribute to your people becoming more prosperous, and therefore paying more taxes, producing more revenues, enriching their lives, building a better future for our country, or does it have the opposite effect?

Unfortunately for California, the impact of this budget is devastating, and one that we simply cannot absorb without severe economic setback for us in our State. When we hear people talk about this balanced budget, you have to say why are we here at this point, one week before Christmas, when we would all much rather be working in our districts with our constituents or spending time with our family, or preparing for a religious holiday? Instead, we are here. Why are we here? Because we have not finished our business.

Every year the Congress must pass 13 appropriations bills. We have not done that. On top of it, the ones that we have done are so out of balance in terms of the values of the American people, the President could not possibly sign them. And three cheers for President Clinton for vetoing most recently the VA-HUD bill and the Interior appropriation bills, because if there is one thing that we all agree on in this country, it is that we want our children to breathe clean air and drink clean water and eat food that is not contaminated by pesticides.

This antipollution insistence of the President is one in which I strongly support him. We all have to, too, because if there is one thing that is beyond all of us, as much as we want the best for our children, we cannot control the atmosphere and the water that comes out of the tap in our homes; or if we go to the market and we want to buy meat, we want to know that it is inspected, and what we bring into our homes, to our families, is safe. Government plays a role in that. I thank the President for vetoing.

I remind you, veto means "I forbid." I thank the President for forbidding these huge cuts in EPA, which protects the water and air our children drink and breathe. I thank the President for vetoing the Interior bill, which does damage to our environment. Hopefully our colleagues on this side of the aisle, the Republican colleagues, will see the light and come to terms with the President on these bills.

When we have agreement on this appropriations bills, there will be no need for a continuing resolution, and we can debate the priorities of our budget in the appropriate time frame. Remember, when we talk about a balanced

budget and we throw in a quarter of a trillion dollar tax cut, overwhelmingly at the high end for the wealthiest individuals of our country, you are, de facto, imposing severe hardship on children and senior citizens in our country.

One other point, in closing, that I would like to make. In the Los Angeles Times—yes, we San Franciscans read the Los Angeles Times, too—there is an article today which I will submit for the RECORD, and it is called "Offspring May Pay Medicaid Tab." "GOP plan to balance budget would let States require adult children of nursing home residents to contribute to cost of parents' care."

Mr. Speaker, I have already addressed this at length, but this article does so, too. From the National Senior Citizens Law Center, Patricia Nemore says, "This is hitting families when they have their children's education and their own retirement to save for."

As my colleague, the gentlewoman from Connecticut, said, if you are above the median income level your assets will be called upon to pay for your parents' nursing home care if they are on Medicaid. This is after families have paid down so many of their resources already, and that is why they are on Medicaid and in the nursing home. This is when families in middle age, middle-income families, are raising their own children and sending them to college.

This is at a point where you use an arbitrary figure, like median income. Certainly there are people in our country who can afford to do this, but using an arbitrary figures like median income, and to say that that is a burden that the States may now put on families, I think contributes enormously to the economic as well as the health security of America's families.

Mr. Speaker, at this magnificent time of the year, when we should be heeding the words of Matthew in the Bible and feeding the hungry and giving shelter to the homeless, et cetera, as the Bible called for, and as the gatekeeper in heaven said, "When you did this for the least," and I would rather say, "the poorest of our brethren, you did it for me," when we do that, certainly we honor acts of charity, we honor the God who made us, we honor our creation. But these people should not have to be dependent on the largesse of individuals. We must have public policy that recognizes that the way we are going to have a strong country is to invest in our people, to give them education and opportunity, and to understand that they cannot be exposed from a health or economic standpoint in the ways that this so-called balanced budget proposal of our colleague proposes.

I am so pleased that President Clinton had the courage, in the face of all that has happened, the close down of government, to say "No, I forbid," to these proposals that the Republicans are making on the appropriations bills. When they come to the reality that the

public will not accept those false priorities on the Republican side and the President is proposing what is good for America's future, only then will these bills be passed. There will be no need for a continuing resolution anymore, they will be passed and signed by the President, eliminating the need for the CR and taking us to a place where we can truly produce a balanced budget, balanced in money, balanced in values, balanced in priorities.

Once again, I want to thank our colleagues for calling this special order and their ongoing leadership on this issue, and call again to my colleagues' attention the impact on our State. See what it does to yours.

Ms. DELAURÓ. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our colleague from California for reiterating the effect on adult children, and how their assets are at risk if they have a family member who is in a nursing home. One other point in terms of continued education, a number of our colleagues this afternoon, Republican colleagues, talked about how the President has been derelict in his duty and at this last hour is vetoing these appropriation bills.

I say to my Republican colleagues, you cannot talk out of both sides of your mouths. You cannot be in charge of this institution, hold the majority on all of the committees, and in the final votes in committee and on the floor of the House, and when you get to the appropriations bills, when you cannot get them completed in the House and in the Senate and send them to the President, that has been the single biggest issue in holding back what has been going on here in terms of getting to the budget, is they have not done their job on any of these appropriations bills. I thank the gentlewoman for bringing that point out.

Ms. PELOSI. If the gentlewoman will yield, I just want to make one further point in that regard. Yes, if this House had done its work on time, September 30, midnight, had the bills to the President, we would not be here now. Certainly in years gone by, there have been times when appropriations bills have not been passed on time and we have had a need for a CR, but to this extent it has not been seen before.

I want to make the further point that if we had not spent the first half of the year on the Contract With America, which had no prospect for Presidential signature, and only one bill, I think of which has even been signed into law, fine, if you have an agenda you want to bring to Congress; but make sure you do the work the public has sent you there to do, too, and that is to pass the appropriations bills, to debate the priorities, pass the bills so Government can function.

Ms. DELAURÓ. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Washington, JIM McDERMOTT. In terms of the Medicare issue, the gentleman from Washington has really led the way in terms of heeding what the trustees said in terms of solvency, and \$90 billion to be

able to deal with that issue, because none of us view that there are not changes that could be made in the Medicare Program, but the gentleman has had the foresight to think about the future and what happens with baby boomers and setting up a structure to deal with that, and not sending the balance of that \$90 billion from the \$280 that the Republicans want to cut from Medicare for their tax cuts for the wealthy, but has been someone who has worked diligently on trying to deal with the Medicare issue. I am proud to yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman. I want to commend my colleague, the gentlewoman from Connecticut, for having this special order, because at time like this, it is confusing. Many Members wonder if anybody is paying any attention whatsoever to what the real issues are. As I walked into the Chamber a moment ago, my colleague, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI], put her finger on what the real question here is. We are arguing about philosophy.

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Now, people can get confused. I went home to Seattle this week, and it is always good to go home and talk to people in your district, and I talked to my mother and father. My father is 90, my mother is 86, and their questions were, what is this all about? What is it all about? Why is all this fighting going on? Why do you not just resolve it and get it over with and come on home?

The question is one of philosophy. I personally, like Ms. PELOSI, take my hat off to the President for standing up for a philosophy that says that people are entitled to health care.

Now, that is at the root of it. You can have all of this argument about CBO figures and whether this is honest scorekeeping or whatever; all it does is confuse people. But if they would simply remember that the issue here is whether people are going to wind up at the end of this session with entitlements to health care in this country, they would understand what the President has put his foot down on and will not move; and I hope he does not move off of that.

Mr. Speaker, the programs Medicare and Medicaid get all mixed up in people's minds. The names sound sort of the same, so people confuse them, even when they talk about them. Medicare is basically a program of providing health care for senior citizens and disabled people in this country, and Medicaid is another program. Medicare is all funded by the Federal Government. Medicaid is half State and half Federal Government, and it deals with poor women and children, and with senior citizens; and two-thirds of the money in Medicaid goes to pay for nursing homes.

There is another program in Medicaid which people know very little

about called the QMB Program; that is, Qualified Medicare Beneficiary. That means if you are a poor senior citizen, you do not have very much money—you have to remember that there are 9 million widows in this country living on less than \$8,000 a year; now, that is just getting by. If they do not have the money to pay for deductibles and copays, the QMB Program of Medicaid pays for their part of the health care plan.

Mr. Speaker, it is the Republicans' intention to take away the entitlement for both Medicaid and Medicare from all Americans. That is their long-term goal. Speaker GINGRICH has said that he does not want to do it now because he knows that politically it is not acceptable, but they want it to kind of wither away and die on the vine. They are simply after that program.

To understand what is going on in Medicare, and I do this because I wound up explaining to my parents, right now Medicare is a program of guaranteed benefits; no matter who you are in this country, no matter what color you are, how much money you have, no matter where you live, no matter what, if you are 65, you are in the Medicare Program and you are entitled to a guaranteed set of benefits.

Now, the Republicans say, look, we do not want to guarantee anybody any benefits. We will guarantee a fixed contribution. We are going to give them a certain amount of money. You could call it a voucher. They are going to give \$4,600 to every senior citizen next year and say, you take your little \$4,600 out there and buy a benefit package like you have now, and next year we will give you \$4,900, and the next year we will give you \$5,200. That is why they can say we are putting more money in.

However, the fact is that the second year, that \$4,900 will not buy the guaranteed benefit package you have today. So your benefit package is going to shrink, and each year it is going to shrink until you do not have, in the year 2002, what you have presently in that guaranteed benefit package. The guarantee of benefits is gone. All they are going to do is send you the voucher and send you out into the street.

Mr. Speaker, I look at my parents, and I think every American ought to look at their parents, if you are in my age range. I am 58, so from 58 down to about 35, you ought to look at your parents and say to yourself, how will it be when my mom and dad go out in the street with that voucher in their hand looking for a friendly insurance company to take care of them?

My dad is 90. Now, you just tell me which insurance company in this country wants to have my father as one of their beneficiaries? I mean, he has had a heart attack, he has had a stroke, he has had a whole bunch of things. He is doing just fine right now, but nobody is going to bet on him.

Mr. Speaker, that is what they are doing to senior citizens in this country.

They are taking away the guarantee that he will be covered and say, "Mr. McDermott, take your money out there and see if you can find anybody who wants to take care of you."

Now, I would not have come over here, because I was sitting over in my office reading letters, and a lot of people think it does not do any good to write a letter to their Congressman. I am here to tell you that everybody ought to be writing to their Congressman or Congresswoman and telling them what they think about this whole idea, because I read a letter which was sent out, this was in California, and somebody through that I ought to read this, and I will read it to you because it tells you what senior citizens are sitting there facing.

"Dear non-HMO Medicare patient," that means a patient, a senior citizen who does not belong to an HMO, "As of December 31, 1995, the San Jose Medical Group will no longer provide care to non-HMO Medicare patients and, as such, I will no longer be able to provide your care. Non-HMO Medicare reimburses our doctors at rates so low that the San Jose Medical Group cannot cover costs. I am writing to you now because I wish to continue to provide care to you and would like to inform you about the senior HMO Medicare plans which are available to you. I can continue to serve you when you enroll in one of those senior HMO plans listed below. Should you wish to locate another physician who accepts non-HMO Medicare patients, you can call," and they give a number here.

Mr. Speaker, they go on. I mean, they are selling HMO's. This is a doctors' group shoving people into HMO's. "Selecting a senior HMO plan is an option you have under your Medicare health benefits. With a senior HMO, you no longer need to buy Medicare supplements. This saves some of our patients thousands of dollars a year. HMO's have no annual deductible, but you do have to pay \$5 or \$6 for each office visit. These plans cover everything that Medicare allows and most add in extras like eyeglass benefits, physical exams and prescription drug coverages. Some plans even cover hearing aids, mental, and dental care.

"Now, what is the downside? Well, you do need to select a primary care doctor from whom you must get a referral to see a specialist." Think about what that means to older people. Most of them have things wrong with them. I mean when you get to be 70, 80 years old, you have something wrong with you, and you are not going just to see the GP, you are going to see somebody dealing with your diabetes or with your lung problems, or you will see your cardiologist or something special.

Before you can see that specialist, you have to have this primary care doctor who must give you a referral. Why? You already know Dr. Johnson takes care of your heart, why can you not just go to him? Why do you have to go to Dr. Thomas and get Dr. Thomas

to refer you to Dr. Johnson? It is crazy. It is simply adding cost over, being used to keep the senior citizen from getting the referral to the specialist.

Now, this is what is going on, and I always say, with all due respect to my California colleagues, in Washington State we always say, go down to Los Angeles and watch what is happening, because it is going to be in the whole United States in the next 3 years; whether it is Hula-Hoops or music or clothing or whatever, it all starts there.

Well, they are starting with the letters now, sending them out in California, and they are going to be sending them out to every senior citizen in this country. You have to ask yourself, why does the doctor put down the name of six HMO's? I will tell you why he does, because I am a physician. He belongs to those. I will bet you he belongs to them. What he did when he signed in, they said to him, now you have to bring your practice in here, otherwise we are not going to need you. So this doctor is writing to all of these senior citizens saying, please join these HMO's, because if you do not join, they are going to kick me out. That is how the HMO's operate; if there are no patients, they throw the doctors out. So the doctors are in the business of urging people to get into HMO's.

The President has said, I want to protect people's right to choose their own physician, not have to join an HMO if they do not want to, not be forced, either economically or by an subtle pressure from the doctors, even; I want people to have the right to choose whoever they want.

Now, at the end of what the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI] talked about, she also brought up an issue which I think, I have said to senior citizens groups all over my district and I think everybody ought to be thinking about it, they asked me, what can we do about this? I said, tell your children, because most of the people under 65 in this country think, well, this has nothing to do with me, this is Medicare, that is for old people; or Medicaid, that is for poor people. I am not poor. But the fact is that Medicaid takes the burden and Medicare takes the burden of health care off people like me.

Mr. Speaker, most people my age and a little bit younger are struggling to help their kids get through college, so they are busy paying college tuitions, and they have never in my lifetime, in my adult lifetime, no one has ever had to think about paying their parents' health care bills. It simply was off the table.

That is what Medicare did in 1965 and Medicaid. When President Johnson signed those bills, he lifted the burden off individuals and said, as a country, we are going to take care of everybody. Nobody is going to be stuck with their particular problems; we are going to share the burden.

What this Congress, what the Republicans are doing is trying to put it back

on people and say, well, if you are lucky and your parents died young, or if your parents are healthy or whatever, you get off. However, if your parents are sick, you are going to get stuck, because as they take away that guaranteed benefit package in Medicare and your parents are out there with that voucher that does not buy what they have today, they are not going to have it and you are going to say, well, mom, why are you not going to see the doctor?

Well, I did not have the money; I could not afford it. So people like me and younger than me are going to be stuck saying to their parents, you go see the doctor; here is the money. So while they are paying for tuition for their kids, they are also going to be paying for their parents' health care.

The real impact, though, is if your parents, and our health care system has worked so well that people live and live and live and we have lots of people 80 and 90 years old in this country who ultimately wind up for some period of time in nursing homes. Now, if you have to go and live in a nursing home, the cost is \$30,000 a year at a minimum. And if you take the Medicaid Program, as the Republicans are intending to do, and throw it back to the State legislatures, there is going to be a fight in 50 State legislatures about how you pay for Medicaid and how you pay for nursing homes.

A very easy thing for Members of a State legislature to do is to say, well, why do we not get some money out of the children of the old people and that will be a way that we can reduce our costs for nursing homes in this State. So they are going to pass laws in the 50 States saying that the parents, or the children, if they are at whatever level of income, have to pay \$1,000 or \$2,000, or who knows what they will decide, because if the States are short, like they are in the State of Washington, there is no extra money.

We passed a tax initiative that says, they cannot raise taxes except with a two-thirds vote. The Republicans put a phony rule in here that you had to have a two-thirds vote to raise taxes, but every time it comes up out here, they waive the rule. In our State, it is law. So the State legislature cannot come up with additional money, and if the Feds do not send down the Medicaid money, the State legislature is going to start looking for somebody else to pay the bills for their senior citizens, and they are going to look to the children.

It is going to happen. People are going to wake up here in about a year or two and say, where did this come from? How did it happen? It happened right now in December 1995, and the only one preventing that from happening is the President of the United States who continues to veto this kind of legislation. The chaos that is being wreaked through the health care system is on every level, and the President is the only one at this point who

is holding firm, and he is really protecting the American people and their health security net, health safety security net in this country.

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I think that what you are doing here tonight by giving people a chance, and Members of Congress to come and tell what is happening, is a way of educating people about what the real issue here is.

It is not about whether the CBO numbers are better than the OMB numbers and all that kind of gobbledygook that I hear out here. It is about whether or not people in this country are going to have the entitlement to have health care at a level that they have come to expect in this country. We have been able to do it in the past and it is certainly not out of our reach now. I commend the gentlewoman for having this special order.

Ms. DELAURO. I want to thank my colleague for helping in terms of public education and for focusing on this and what it is, and that is values and what the values are in this country as they are not reflected in the Republican budget.

I yield the balance of our time, we have about 5 minutes left, to my colleague the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. LOWEY].

Mrs. LOWEY. I thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO], for organizing this special order, and thank the gentleman from Washington [Mr. MCDERMOTT] for coming down and talking to us about Medicare and Medicaid. I, too, was sitting in my office when I heard the gentleman from Washington [Mr. MCDERMOTT] talking.

There is a lot of confusion out there. People are wondering what this alphabet soup is all about. OMB, CBO. Frankly, we know that it is hard enough to predict what the budget is going to be next year. It is hard enough to predict what economic conditions are going to be next year.

For the Republicans to tell the President that his numbers are not right because they differ 7 years from now does not make sense at all. So what really counts is that the President is standing firm and saying, "I will balance the budget in 7 years but I have got to protect Medicare, Medicaid, the environment and education."

Really I think the public is a little bit fed up at this point and would like us to get together, come to some conclusion. I was at the Statue of Liberty this morning, frankly, and to see the Statue of Liberty closed because the Republicans are saying do not use these numbers, do not use those numbers, use these numbers. The public really wants to know why the Social Security offices are closed, why the Statue of Liberty is closed, why they cannot get their passport.

I would suggest that while we are debating these very serious issues, we get a continuing resolution and get the

Government going again, because it is unfair to penalize the people for what is going on here in this House of Representatives. So we should be adults, get the Government going, and then continue to debate these very serious issues.

Frankly, I want to applaud the President again for standing firm. Medicare, Medicaid, education and the environment are issues that are worth us standing firm on.

Frankly, I was in my office looking through my mail, and rather than talk in generalities, I was looking at a letter from a constituent of mine by the name of Lorie Kraft. She is from Forest Hills, NY. She has a 79-year-old mother, Rena Payne. Like many children, Lorie is her mother's primary caretaker.

You were talking about your father. Her mother has a form of dementia. Her mother needs a lot of care. What Lorie was saying, "I already supplement my mother's income by buying her groceries, paying her utility bills, purchasing health care supplies. If Medicare benefits are cut," Lorie says, and I quote, "it would be absolutely a devastating strain added to an already very difficult burden."

We have to know that what the Republicans are proposing is the largest cut in history. We know we have to reform Medicare and Medicaid. Yes, there is fraud in the program and we have to continue to make it better, but cuts of \$270 billion just do not make any sense.

I hope all the people out there understand that there is no reason to shut the Government down. We should be adults, get together and come up with proposals that make sense for the American people.

If the Republicans would stop tacking on these extremist proposals on all the appropriations bills, and the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI] and I sit on the Committee on Appropriations, we know that the Republicans did not do their work. They should have completed their work by October 1. That is why we are in this pickle that we are in, because they did not complete the work. It is because on all these bills they want to tack on extremist provisions, whether it is provisions in the environmental bills that cut back on our protection for the environment, or cutting back on education, or cutting back on health care.

We were sent here to stand up and fight for the Lorie Krafts of this world and their mothers, and I am very proud that our President is standing firm, that we are here tonight to make it clear to the American people. I hope you let Members of Congress know that we have to continue to fight to make sure that Medicare and Medicaid are preserved.

This is an important battle, and it is a battle for the soul and the values of our Nation. I thank the gentlewoman again.

I want to turn to my colleague the gentleman from Kentucky [Mr. WARD].

Mr. WARD. I just wanted to make one short comment. That is, that we have heard lately about the importance of charities helping out and we have heard about churches maybe stepping in.

I want to observe and make sure that people understand that if each of the 250,000 or so churches in America, there are about a quarter of a million churches, if each one had \$1 million, \$1 million that they could add, that would not even equal the tax breaks that are in this budget. It cannot be done in that way.

AMERICA NEEDS A BALANCED BUDGET

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

Mr. LONGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening again to call our attention to the national debt. As of 3 o'clock this afternoon, it now totals \$4,989,584,833,636.17.

I have to confess to some amount of nervousness as to the stability of the platform on which the debt now stands, let alone the ability of this country to continue assuming a debt burden of this size.

I also again point out for the record that it is \$4.989 trillion when in fact we have a national debt limit of \$4.9 trillion. Again, it is important to understand that there is at least another \$89 billion that is not included under the congressionally mandated debt limit, nor does this number include the \$61 billion that the Treasury Secretary has borrowed from the Federal Civil Service Retirement Fund.

I would like to put some context behind the issues that we are discussing on the balanced budget and the need for this Congress to insist on finally, once and for all, balancing the Federal budget.

Our high level of Federal spending did not arise overnight. It took place, it built up over a 50-year period. In fact, you can trace its origins to the days following World War II when the U.S. economy was one of the few economies left standing in the world and it was booming. We had 8 or 10 million veterans or more returning from war, finding jobs in an economy, continuous growth and tax revenues coming into Washington on a level that no one in their wildest dreams could have ever imagined.

Very gradually successive Congresses, Republican and Democratic Congresses, became accustomed to very high levels of revenues and very willing to spend those revenues. In fact the case can be made that they became so accustomed to the high level of revenues that they began to think that they could spend more than the revenues that were coming into the Treasury. Hence, we now have at the end of these 50 years a national debt that is just under \$5 trillion.

I should mention that at the same time that spending was increasing, taxes were increasing as well, from several percent of income in the late 1940's to well over 20 and 30 percent, in many cases 40 and 50 percent of income today, when you factor in local, State, and Federal taxes.

But the bottom line is that we have been spending more than we have been bringing in, particularly in Washington.

What does this have to do with the current debate? We have just listened to a very earnest discussion about some very valid concerns about the welfare of the seniors and those in this country who need help.

But the point that I would make is this: There are many valid concerns in Washington. But we have a duty to our country, to our children, to the taxpayers, to total up what is the amount of money that we are willing to spend on these different concerns.

I have to confess that this is a body that we organize along the lines of Republican and Democratic, majority and minority control. There is a reason for that. The heart of our system is a debate between two points of view.

This goes right back to the first Congress following the Revolutionary War, that having two points of view, having a two-party system, we get the best thinking of both parties. But I have to confess that today that is not taking place, because what we have on the one hand is a Republican Congress that has stepped up to the plate and come up with a 7-year plan to balance the budget, but on the other hand a Democratic Party that has refused to do so.

I note that today's papers indicated that President Clinton is now going to be offering his fourth budget. Fourth budget, that is, because not a single one of his budgets has achieved balance within the 7-year time frame. In fact, a good case can be made that none of his budgets would ever balance, that they would continue to pile on billions and billions of dollars on top of this Federal debt, a Federal debt that we and our children and grandchildren will have to pay not just for the rest of my life but probably for the rest of their working lives.

There is something moral about the fact that if you want to take a stand in favor of serious needs in this country, that you owe it to the public, you owe it to the Congress to step forward with your convictions and show the Congress how you would pay for it. That means that if you think, as our previous speaker suggested, if one thinks that the Republicans have not done a good job of setting financial priorities within a 7-year budget, that someone should step to the plate and show us how to do it differently.

Very honestly, that is not being done. I have a new appreciation for what the word "rhetoric" means, earnest language, but where is the substance.