

out of business during the holiday season.

Normally, these 2,000 workers from Almacs would be eligible for emergency assistance from the Labor Department. But, with the shutdown, there is no one to process the State's application for assistance, and as a result, there will be no help for the families of Almacs workers during the holidays. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a shame.

The Speaker could have prevented the shutdown and responded to last year's call for an end to gridlock. Because right now gridlock is back.

The Republicans have a 7-year budget plan that is just too extreme, and they know it.

I am glad the President did the right thing to protect the education, health care, and the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you to end the politics and start serious negotiations.

MEDICARE PLAN NOT GOING TO KILL MEDICARE

(Mr. GANSKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I was in my office a few minutes ago when I heard a statement made on the floor that I felt I had to respond to. I would be ashamed to stand on this floor and say that the balanced budget plan, the Medicare plan is going to kill Medicare. That is simply not the case.

I can speak with some credibility to this because I am a member of the Committee on Commerce, and in my opening statement on the markup I said that I thought a savings of \$270 million would be tough and that it would be my preference to lower those. And the fact of the matter is that the current budget numbers are significantly lower in terms of the savings from Medicare. This is a message that I think we are obscuring.

Can these savings be done that would still give quality Medicare? As a physician, I think so. But I will tell my colleagues what will happen if we do not. If we do not reform Medicare, in 6 years there are, I understand, insufficient funds to pay the bills. Let us get past the demagoguery.

FURLOUGHED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

(Ms. MCCARTHY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, thousands of Federal employees in my district are once again furloughed and nine cabinet-level agencies plus EPA and NASA serving millions of Americans have shut their doors.

The Republican leadership for a second time has chosen to use American taxpayers as pawns in an effort to compromise the President's vow to protect

Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment.

The Republican leadership has failed in its responsibility to the American people to enact a budget. This failure has wide-ranging effects.

It's not just the Federal employees who are prevented from working. Crucial services to the American public are not available: FHA mortgages are going unprocessed; small businesses are not receiving assistance; and veterans' benefits may be delayed.

As a former member of the Missouri State Legislature and chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee—we balanced our budget while protecting vital services and passed our spending measure every single year. We do it at the State level as do county's and cities and business and homes and we should be able to do it at the Federal level.

It is time to work together to get the job done. It is time to pass necessary spending bills and to offer a budget resolution that protects the values of the American people. The American people want teamwork and this is what we as Democrats insist upon.

PRESIDENT SHOULD BE KEEP HIS COMMITMENT TO AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. CANADY of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, just moments ago the President signed into law the Lobby Disclosure Act of 1995. I am very pleased that the President has taken this action, and I congratulate the President on his support for this important reform measure.

But today, as we are facing a Government shutdown, as we are facing the challenge of balancing the budget, I must remind the President of something he signed into law just a few days ago. The President signed this language into law: "The President and the Congress shall enact legislation in the first session of the 104th Congress to achieve a balanced budget not later than fiscal year 2002, as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office."

This is a solemn commitment that the President has made to the American people, and I believe that the President is obligated to come forward with a plan which will accomplish this goal. The President said he would do it, now is the time to do it.

The House, last night, voted resoundingly on a bipartisan basis to support the same goal. We can do it. The President needs to put his plan on the table.

NOT A SEASON OF JOY FOR FURLOUGHED WORKERS

(Mrs. CLAYTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, this is the Christmas season. This is the observation of Hanukkah. Both of those religious communities now celebrate what should be a joyful season. It is the season of Advent. It is the season where we have certain words that come to mind, like sharing of family values and those things that are essential. It is the season where we learn to give within our means. I hope it is the season that is instructive to us as we are debating the balanced budget.

It certainly is not a season for joy for those workers who have been furloughed. There does not seem to be a sense of fairness when the poor must suffer while the rich are given big tax breaks. It is certainly not the season for living within your means when indeed we find the deficit will go up at the end of 7 years rather than go down.

Yes, this is the season where we should be reasonable people. I would expect that reasonable people will learn how to compromise. Shame on us in this season of joy, this season of Advent, when we bring such discord, such dis-joy and such pain on the most vulnerable. We should be sharing our wealth not taking away health care for the vulnerable people of this country.

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STOP WEAVING FABLES AND TELL THE TRUTH

(Mr. MICA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, how could the President of the United States gather little schoolchildren for a media event backdrop to veto a bill and not tell them and the American people the truth?

Mr. Speaker, our President should remember the story of Pinocchio when he weaves these fables. The President and the American people should know what is happening with their Federal Environmental Protection Agency and hazardous waste dollars. The truth is the General Accounting Office has said raw politics, not public health or safety, is the prime consideration for picking cleanup sites.

The truth is that 85 percent of Federal Superfund money goes for attorney fees and studies. The truth is that we have doubled the size of the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, with almost 9,000 bureaucrats in Environmental Protection Agency downtown just a few miles from here.

The truth is that even the courts say that cleaning up dirt to an edible standard is wasteful and ludicrous. We need to stop weaving these fables and tell the truth.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION FOR D.C. KEEPS CITY'S HEART BEATING, BUT BREAKS THE HEARTS OF CITY'S RESIDENTS

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask the support of this body for a continuing resolution for the District of Columbia, which will come before this body this afternoon.

Members will shake their heads when they see it, for if we were to ask what is the least we could do to carry out our responsibilities to the Nation's Capital, this would be it. Allow the District to spend its own money for a little more than a week and get no part of its Federal payment.

Mr. Speaker, this comes close to humiliation for the 600,000 people I represent, who are not allowed any access to their Federal payment, even though they are second per capita in Federal income taxes in this country.

But a worse humiliation would be the total catastrophe of a second shutdown of the District on its own money. There have been several agreements that would have broken this impasse, but each time some person or the other simply turned over the tables.

Our appropriation has been delayed for 3 months now. No city can survive this way. It has delayed reform, taken it off the table and forced the District into crisis management.

Today's continuing resolution keeps the city's heart beating, but it breaks the heart of my 600,000 good residents.

PRESIDENT HAS ALREADY AGREED TO PRECONDITIONS IN BUDGET DEBATE

(Mr. HOKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you watched the news shows this weekend, but the drumbeat has been from the Chief of Staff, Leon Panetta, that the President would meet with leaders of Congress provided that there are no preconditions. No preconditions. No preconditions. It is a mantra he has been repeating and he has been beating.

Mr. Speaker, 29 days ago the President signed a piece of paper that, in fact, did have one single precondition. It was very simple. It said that he agreed the President and the Congress should enact legislation in the first session, that ends at the end of December, to achieve a balanced budget not later than the fiscal year 2002. As estimated by whom? By the Congressional Budget Office.

That is the only precondition, but it is a very real precondition and it is an important precondition. How can the President now be saying that he is not going to even meet, he will not even talk unless there are no preconditions. Obviously, what the President has decided, what the Chief of Staff has decided, is that they are going to take the lowest road they possibly can and demagogue this right through Christmas.

CONGRESS SHOULD DEAL WITH THE REAL PROBLEMS FACING AMERICA

(Mr. HINCHEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, first of all, with regard to what the previous speaker said, there were other preconditions. The President agreed to a balanced budget so long as that balanced budget protected Social Security, protected Medicare, protected education, and protected the environment.

Mr. Speaker, the budget that these people want to pass on this side of the House does none of that. But what about that resolution that was passed yesterday? It is a nonbinding resolution that says that we should balanced the budget in 7 years. What is the validity of that number? None whatsoever. The Speaker dreamed it up. It might as well have been 5 or 9 years.

Furthermore, there will be 3 Congresses here between now and the year 2002. Neither of those 3 Congresses will be bound by what this Congress has done. They will have to deal with the economic realities of the situation. What will those economic realities be? If you believe the Congressional Budget Office numbers, which is what that resolution said, the economic realities will be this: A recession; perhaps a deep and serious one.

Let us be serious here. Let us deal with the real problems facing the people of this country. It is the economic problems. It is the creation of more jobs and a sound economic budget; not the one that was passed here by this majority.

PRESIDENT SHOULD DO WHAT ALL AMERICANS DO: BALANCE THE BUDGET

(Mr. LAHOOD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House passed in a very bipartisan fashion, with many Democrats, a sense of the Congress resolution to balance the budget. Earlier this year, we passed a balanced budget amendment with 300 votes.

Now, apparently, Democrats too want a balanced budget. If there is one thing that the American people understand, it is balancing the budget, because they balance their budget year in and year out. They cannot understand why we cannot get our act together.

Mr. Speaker, there is really only one person standing in the way of all of this. It is not the Democrats, because they are with us. It is not the Republicans, because we have got a balanced budget that we sent to the President. So, we ask the President to join with us; join with his Democrat colleagues; join with us and do what all Americans

do. Balance the budget. Balance the Federal budget. End waste. Do what all Americans do. Make the ledger sheet balanced, and then we can move on to other important issues.

DO WE CUT TAXES OR DO WE HELP SENIOR CITIZENS AND CHILDREN

(Mr. GEJDENSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, what is clear here is that the Republicans are intentionally avoiding the issue at hand. We can do that with the Senate. Senator DOLE and Senator DOMENICI are ready for an agreement that will keep the Government running while we debate a very serious issue, whether or not 60 percent of a \$245 billion tax cut goes to people who make over \$200,000 a year or whether we cut \$270 billion from the anticipated cost of Medicare. That is the only debate here.

Before we shut the Government down because the Speaker got a bad seat. Now we are shutting the Government down because the Speaker has worse poll numbers than Richard Nixon when he left office.

Let us not take out the Speaker's bad seat or bad poll numbers on the American people. Let us do what previous Congresses did when they were responsible, even when they disagreed with each other. They kept the Government running, and they had that debate. The debate is pretty basic: Do we cut taxes by \$245 billion or do we help protect seniors and children?

WE NEED A BUDGET THAT BALANCES IN GOOD TIME BUT PROTECTS THE ECONOMY

(Mr. NADLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans have shut down the Government because they claim that we have to have a balanced budget in 7 years based on figures provided by the Congressional Budget Office—and only the Congressional Budget Office.

Republicans have been leading many Americans to believe that if we adopt their balanced budget plan, interest rates will drop, there will be more jobs, and economic conditions for families will improve significantly.

But according to that same Congressional Budget Office, after a few years under the Republican plan, unemployment will rise and economic growth will drop.

You don't have to be an economist to know that that's called a recession.

So the Republicans are telling us that they have to shut down the Government because President Clinton won't agree to their 7-year plan for economic hardship.

We must continue to fight this plan.