

Perhaps in this Christmas week, with just 4 days remaining prior to that precious day, we should set aside the accusations, and try a little Christmas tolerance and generosity and kindness.

Merry Christmas, dear friends.

LABOR GRINCH STEALS CHRISTMAS

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

Mr. FUNDERBURK. Mr. Speaker, 3 weeks ago I stood outside a Harris-Tetter supermarket in Rocky Mount, NC, ringing the Christmas bell and collecting donations for the Salvation Army. Now, I come back to Washington, DC, to learn that many retail stores are no longer making room for kettle drives because of a recent ruling issued by the National Labor Relations Board. It seems that big labor unions—who are spending millions for TV ads against a balanced budget—feel discriminated against because the shopping centers that open their doors to the Salvation Army and other charitable organizations during the holiday season will not permit union picketing at their doorsteps. The NLRB, in its infinite wisdom, sided with the unions. Not surprisingly, many malls and shopping centers have told the Salvation Army that they would love to host kettle drives this year but they just cannot afford the enormous costs of being sued by labor unions.

Mr. Speaker, this is an outrage. This is yet another example of an out-of-touch, bloated Federal Government that doesn't care about the poor and needy who could receive a hand-up from the Salvation Army instead of a hand-out from the welfare state. Today, I am cosponsoring H.R. 2497 to stop this abuse of power by the Department of Labor. Let us stop labor unions from threatening businesses who invite bell ringers from the Salvation Army.

NO WAY TO RUN A BUSINESS

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

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans claim they are going to run our Government like a business. Well, Mr. Speaker, I am still looking for one, just one business in this entire country, that would run itself like the Republicans are running this Government.

Think about it. They are so mad that they are not getting their own way that they are sending home 280,000 employees, with pay. That is right, they are sending them home with pay.

There is not a single business in this country that would do that if they were using their own money. Nobody in their right mind would do that using their own money. But they are using taxpayer money to do that. It is wrong.

Those people should come back to work.

It reminds me of a kid in the neighborhood I grew up in. He was so mad he would pinch himself. He would say, "I am going to keep pinching myself," and the rest of us would look at him in complete amazement, because he was only hurting himself.

The sad joke here is the Republicans are only hurting the taxpayers.

BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS AFFECT CHILDREN

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, my son John plays on a U-10 soccer team, the Budget Bombers. Now, judging from their names, you would think we were a bunch of Democrats, but actually they are a bunch of future taxpayers who will inherit Democrat deficits.

Their coach, Kurt Rodenberg, gave me this hat. I think it is appropriate for the season. It says "Budget" on it. I will call it the Kasich cap.

But there is another cap out here. This is the Clinton cap. Something for everybody. Fun, games, promises, and make-believe; SSI for prisoners; fear and demagoguery for senior citizens; rules, regulations, and red tap for bureaucrats; American jobs and benefits for illegal aliens. And, for the children, Clinton and Demo-Clauses would never forget the children, for the children have a \$5 trillion debt. Higher interest rates, higher mortgages, less jobs. What a future for the young U-10 soccer team.

This is their compassion. This is their Christmas spirit. This is their love. Merry Christmas, Mr. President. But really and truly, fast forward them to ground-hog day.

PUT AMERICAN FAMILIES FIRST

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, compromise: It is a simple concept. A 7-year-old understands it. For a child, it might mean something like having an ice cream cone or a candy bar, but not both.

Well, maybe I should have a child explain this concept to some of the extremist Republicans in this house. Because even though they are all older than 7, they are acting a lot less mature than that. You see, they want it all. Tax giveaways to the wealthiest Americans. Cuts in student loans and Head Start. Gutting regulations that protect clean air and water. Making our seniors pay more for health care.

And they will not give up, no matter how much suffering they cause, until they impose their radical demands on every American family. It is too bad.

You see, if a 7-year-old insists on ice cream and a candy bar, it just means a

little disagreement. But when the Republicans will not give up any of their antifamily demands, every American, students, seniors, children—must pay.

Come on. It is time to grow up. Stop holding your breath and stomping your feet and join the fight for a decent budget that puts American family first.

TIME TO WORK ON A BALANCED BUDGET

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

Mr. FRISA. Mr. Speaker, I am sure most Americans feel as I do that we have heard enough of the blah-blah and the yak, yak, yak. We have a job to do, Mr. Speaker.

When I ran for election to this great body, I promised I would be different. I would not be like the Democrats who controlled this House for 40 years, ran up America's charge cards, got ourselves into debt, so that so much of the budget now is just going to pay the interest on our national debt. And regardless of the President's crocodile tears and his empty words and his quivering bottom lip, we are not going to be intimidated, because the simple fact is, Mr. Speaker, we have done our job and put a balanced budget on the table. The President has nothing but empty words.

We are here to work. As soon as the President is prepared to really roll up his sleeves, get the political will and drop the posturing, then we will have a balanced budget.

UPHOLD ETHICS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, these are difficult days for the House of Representatives. Portions of the Federal Government are shut down because the appropriations required have not even been enacted. Budget talks that could bring us to a balanced budget plan have not even really meaningfully begun; the parties are trapped in a meaningless standoff.

But something is afoot that is more serious, even more serious to this institution than either of these unfortunate developments. The House Committee on Ethics, in a unanimous bipartisan vote has recommended closing a loophole that allows Members of this institution to cash in through lucrative book deals. Efforts are now underway to prevent the Committee on Ethics recommendation from coming to the floor of this House for a vote. These efforts, apparently done with the blessing of the Speaker himself, pose a very serious threat to this Committee on Ethics.

If the committee on Ethics, operating in a bipartisan fashion, can no

longer speak and govern on issues relating to the integrity of this House, we will have forever damaged this institution.

I urge members to uphold the Committee on Ethics recommendation.

BALANCE BUDGET FOR WORKING PEOPLE AND AMERICAN FAMILIES

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

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, this is the debt of the United States on December 19, almost \$5 trillion. Now, I think there is one thing we agree with on both sides of the aisle, that the economy is very important; not only reducing the deficit and paying off the debt, but to American families.

Mr. Speaker, just a few facts that I think are very interesting: A recent study shows that the optimum level of government spending is 17.6 percent of the gross national product. Unfortunately, government spending is 4 percentage points higher than that. If we would reduce it, we could increase the amount of energy in our economy. For every dollar of Federal spend down to the optimum level, we could get \$1.38 in growth.

This week, the Dow Jones dropped 50 points when the President scuttled the budget process. Let us get back to it. Let us balance the budget for our working people and for our families.

RISK IN DELAYING AFDC CHECKS

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

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I have talked to some of my Republican colleagues in private about this matter, and I want to say it publicly to the balance of my colleagues. If we do not pass a continuing resolution today or tomorrow at latest, 4.7 million families who are on AFDC are in risk of not getting their AFDC checks come January 1 of next year.

There are consequences that go with that, and I want to remind my Republican colleagues that they are playing with fire, if they think people will sit by and idly wait on them to play budget games with their lives and their ability to eat.

They came forward with a continuing resolution for veterans yesterday, and I am calling on my colleagues today to come forward with a continuing resolution to address this serious problem.

TIME TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT BALANCED BUDGET

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

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, it is strange that day in and day out

we keep hearing from the President and from his liberal friends that come to the well of the House and talk about how they want a balanced budget. But to hear them talk, \$12 trillion over the next 7 years is not enough. They want a balanced budget, but they are not willing to balance it.

I think they want an unbalanced budget, just like they have had for the last 26 years. More spending, more spending. And let me say this: In the year 2012, what are they going to do when every tax dollar will be consumed by entitlement and interest on the debt, and there is no future for our children and grandchildren? What are they going to do then?

It is time we get serious about a \$5 trillion debt. It is time that we get serious and not play these games. What are you willing to do to get a balanced budget?

BUDGET GAMES

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this chart shows the headlines in the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, and the Washington Post this morning. They cut straight to the chase. One reads "GOP rebellion scuttles accord on the budget talks." Another reads "House Republicans derail budget talks." The other one from the Wall Street Journal says "The Republicans are revolting." They should read that Republicans keep government closed to give tax cuts for the few.

It appears as though there is a group that will not compromise and insists on holding not only government workers, but Social Security applicants hostage in keeping the Government shut down until they accept their harmful budget cuts and ill-advised budget-busting tax cuts for the few.

I am committed to balancing the budget, and I am also here to say I am committed to senior citizens, children, police officers, veterans, teachers, and students, and I will not sacrifice them to balance our budget.

We should remain committed to balancing the budget over 7 years, and doing so in a way that protects the priorities of Medicare, Medicaid, crime fighting, and education. Balancing the budget is not an agreement to do on Christmas eve. It is something you have to do all year.

EXCUSES FOR NOT BALANCING BUDGET

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

Mr. BAKER of California. Mr. Speaker, this Congress has not balanced the budget in 26 years, I would like to remind the gentleman, so let us just start out with the facts.

President Clinton vetoed the balanced budget passed by the House and Senate. Then 30 days ago, after his poll numbers dropped, he vowed to sign a balanced budget in 7 years using real numbers. He did nothing for 30 days.

Then the four leaders met and agreed to three things. First, we are going to balance the budget in 7 years using real numbers; second, it is nice that we can all agree; and third, we are going to do it by yearend.

Within 5 minutes, one of the four participants in the meeting, AL GORE, stepped outside and repudiated two of the three. "No, we are not going to use real numbers and we are not going to do it by the end of the year." OK, AL, so much for the agreement.

Then the President yesterday found a new excuse why he could not go along with the balanced budget. Aliens had taken over the House and they would not let this nice guy NEWT GINGRICH sign a deal to reopen government. I could not believe it.

□ 1030

The stock market did not believe it. While he was spinning that tale, it went down 50 points, but the liberal press bought it. Today's excuse: Aliens and unidentified flying objects will capture BOB DOLE and he will not be able to sign.

Folks, there are 236 Republicans on this floor that are for a balanced budget in 7 years with real numbers. Let us do it for our kids.

REAL BUDGET IMPASSE IS TAX CUT FOR THE RICH

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, the real budget impasse is a \$270 billion tax cut for the rich. NEWT GINGRICH calls it the crown jewel. That is where the budget impasse exists. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be part of the reform-minded Democratic freshmen who believe we can balance the budget without taking away from our children, or making devastating cuts in Medicaid, Medicare, and the environment. This is where we are today.

And Mr. Speaker, we have another problem with the welfare bill to be proposed on the floor of the House today. This is an unfriendly Congress when it comes to children. There are no work programs in this proposed Republican welfare plan for the parents of these children. This legislation does not want the welfare recipients to be independent. The Republicans have cut the work programs out. We take away \$14 billion from Medicaid so that women and children cannot get good health care that are on welfare, and then those children who are disabled, the severely disabled children, 320,000 of them, this welfare bill tells them that we do not care about you by cutting their needed SSI benefits.