

And the news got worse. Here we are in this body where all of our pay is being taken care of, where we have just voted a recess until January 3, and the next bit of news made me feel terrible, because to deal with this awful crash they called on Americans, Americans representing this great flag of ours in Colombia who had been furloughed, who had been furloughed in our Embassy during the shutdown. They called them out of being furloughed to send them to the crash scene, which is in an area that is not secure, there are all sorts of guerrillas around there. They risked their lives, even though they are furloughed, coming back on, to go search for these crash victims, hoping to find someone alive, and to start doing all of the grisly work that we just shudder as we even imagine it. Then, of course, when they are done, because of the inaction of this body, they can go back to being furloughed.

Now, is that the vision this Congress has for how we treat people who deal with taxpayers and our problems all over this world? Do we just call them when we need them and then furlough them all of the rest of the time? I do not think so.

I must say, I am terribly saddened to see us in this mode right now where we are going to go have Christmas and we are going to get our pay. We now hear that Medicaid checks probably are not going to go out to most states to people who really need them for their children; that Aid to Families With Dependent Children is not going to get out in time, because that has all been shut down, and we can go on and on and on. I have students calling from Colorado saying that they are trying to make plans for their next term in college, but they cannot get in to get their loans. Small businesses needing money to get through the season, they cannot get in. I mean we could go on and on.

How can we take off and leave this Government shut down? It has never been shut down for more than 48 hours before. How can anybody think this is a great idea? Only Scrooge could go along with this. This is Scrooge. Yes, let Tiny Tim suffer. Who cares if he does not get his medical checks? Let people go without food. Let Federal employees who have given their life, who are always willing to come out, whether it is in the Colombian mountains or whatever, too bad.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a horrendous way to treat people, and I am ashamed. If there was ever a week where I must say I felt good about my retirement, this has been one. It is like I do not want to be a part of this body.

But then I got to thinking, how did we get here? First we have had this hassle that the gentlewoman from Connecticut was talking about, that we might not even bring the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct thing. Hopefully we are going to do that tomorrow. It is on the schedule now; I hope we see it. Because I think the

taint in this place about people selling their offices and all of that is really awful. So hopefully we get that behind us before we go home.

Then I came across a profile in the New Yorker of the Speaker in which I suddenly began to understand what has happened in this body to split us apart like this. In this profile of the Speaker, they are talking about how GOPAC, the Speaker's PAC, sent all of this information to Republican candidates, many of whom are now Members of this body, and here are some of the things that they said you should do if you wanted to speak like NEWT. That is the quote: "So if you want to speak like NEWT about Democrats, you are to call Democrats sick, traders, corrupt, bizarre, cheaters, stealers; that they are devouring the taxpayers; that they are self-serving; that they are criminal."

Well, no wonder we have some extremists here. No wonder. I mean, how could you call people those names and then sit down and deal with them decently?

Now, I must say, until I read this article I had no ideal this went on. GOPAC did not send me any tapes. But if that is how the Speaker is speaking about us as Democrats, what a great tragedy this is, and it certainly is not in the Christmas or the holiday or the human spirit or the great spirit of this country.

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

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

CONGRESS GOES HOME WHILE FEDERAL WORKERS SUFFER

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I never cease to be amazed at what the Republican majority does, and what they have been doing, in the last few days with regard to the Government shutdown and not moving forward in a positive way on the budget.

This I guess is the sixth day now for the second shutdown that we have had of the Government, and amazingly, rather than coming forward with a continuing resolution today in some form that would allow the Government to continue to operate, but what we received instead was a motion or a resolution that was recently voted on, which I voted against, and which most Democrats voted against, that would allow the Speaker to recess the House of Representatives throughout all of next week.

Let us not kid ourselves. Regardless of what rhetoric was on the floor before by the Republican leadership, the au-

thority has been given now to the Speaker, to Speaker GINGRICH, to basically go into recess, beginning tomorrow, into January 3.

If that happens, and I fully expect it to happen, we will not only go through the sixth day, today, of the Government shutdown and the seventh day tomorrow, but by my calculations probably another dozen days with the Government being shut down.

Basically, we, the Congress, goes home for Christmas and the Federal employees who do not know whether or not they are going to get a check; although they have been promised it, how can they presume that there is any guarantee of that, and they have to worry over the Christmas holiday about whether or not they are going to be able to make ends meet, whether their children are going to be provided for while we in Congress go home.

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I find it totally objectionable. I was particularly amazed today with the continued onslaught, if you will, against children that is taking place in this Congress by the Republican majority.

There was a brief dialog with the Republican leadership an hour ago about whether or not AFDC payments or SSI payments or Medicaid payments, much of which goes to children, were going to be made within the next couple of weeks without a continuing resolution. I do not know if the Republican leadership is even aware of it.

The suggestion was, "Well, maybe tomorrow we'll take up AFDC. We don't know if we'll take up Medicaid, we don't know if we'll take up SSI" or some of these other things. They do not even seem to know whether or not with the Government shut down these benefits are going to be paid. And if we do shut down and then we find out next week that some of these benefits are not going to be paid to children or to other people who are disadvantaged in some way, how are we going to be in a position to make those benefits payable? What are we going to do when we are not even here?

Additionally, today a welfare reform bill came up and amazingly, even though the House of Representatives and the Senate a few weeks ago voted for welfare reform that still guaranteed Medicaid or health care coverage for all children who are now receiving Medicaid payments, all of a sudden the conference report comes back and eliminates that guarantee.

So when we talk about the Nation's children at Christmastime, whether it is the Government employees, whether it is the unfortunate children who may not receive cash benefits during the holiday season, or whether it is the ongoing concern over whether or not children in this country will receive health care, I do not see any real concern on the part of the Republican leadership or the Republican Representatives that make up this majority. They just do not seem to care.

I have said over and over again that my biggest concern in this whole budget debate is what is going to happen with Medicare and Medicaid. There were two things that happened today on those two fronts, so to speak, that were particularly disturbing.

It was indicated in several newspaper reports today that we should expect large increases in MediGap premiums, as much as 30 percent on the average, over the next year. The reason for that is because of what is happening here with Medicare.

Right now many senior citizens who do not feel that Medicare covers them sufficiently, because they have to make copayments or pay a lot of money out of pocket for things that are not covered by Medicare, purchase supplemental insurance called MediGap insurance. MediGap premiums are going up as much as 30 percent. Why? Because increasingly the Medicare program does not cover what is necessary for health care for seniors.

So if we cut back, as the Republican majority is proposing, on the amount of money that is available for Medicare for seniors, it is inevitable that that supplemental MediGap insurance will go up and continue to rise.

The other thing that happened today, and this is the last thing I wanted to say in the time that was allotted to me, is that we had an event with a number of people who are taking care of elderly parents who are covered by Medicaid. They are terribly concerned, and I listened to their stories today, over the Republican budget and what it is going to mean for Medicaid.

Under the Republican budget, Medicaid is no longer guaranteed for anybody, and many people who are children or care givers, whatever, are concerned that without the guaranteed eligibility for Medicaid there will not be nursing homes available for their loved ones or there will not be payments under Medicaid for their loved ones.

Again, the process continues, the Government shutdown, the Republicans do not do anything to move toward these budget priorities on Medicare and Medicaid, and it is truly tragic that we are not going to be here next week to try to address these concerns.

REPUBLICANS TO HANG FIRM TO BALANCE BUDGET

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

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, it is with a strong heart I come here. I am really surprised that Members would even take the well and somehow try to claim ownership to issues of children and demagoguery. It is completely unfortunate, and to say that somehow because I am a Republican in this body that I do not care about children is incredibly insulting.

Let me also say that even to say words about assault upon children

shows poor judgment. We get that kind of language here on the floor. I do enjoy and I am one who advocates the opening up, and I love the dialog that happens in this body, but perhaps because we are moving into the Christmas season and many of us are upset that we still have to be in this town, we get some of those words come about.

I have no regrets being here in this town at this moment. I have no regrets, because the Reserve unit which I went to the gulf war with has been called up and is on their way to Bosnia. So when I think of them, I remember what that deployment was like, and I think of them now being in the snow of the mountains of Bosnia away from their families.

But I also view that, yes, what they face, the cowardly acts of terror and the threats to the force, we also have the same cowardly acts of terror that face those of us who seek to balance the budget. The acts of terror come in the form of words. You see, I am one who believes that words have meaning. So when you say, "Oh, I want to balance the budget," then you ought to really mean you want to balance the budget. Do not say, "I want to balance the budget, oh, sometime in the future but I am unwilling to make tough choices."

Let me share that when I returned from the gulf, I was one that was extraordinarily upset with regard to the direction of our country. When you are touched by the experience of war, you begin to understand that there are many people throughout our society who have sacrificed, sacrificed for future generations and recognized the obligations that we have to take care of our parents and our grandparents, at the same time our obligation to see that our children have it better than what we had.

My fear when I look at our children is, are they going to have it better than what we have had? When I look at economic stagnation and the effects upon the wages, there are a lot of issues out there. But when I look at the national debt, I look at that and say that is the greatest threat to our security.

Serving on the Committee on National Security, we have briefings all the time about threats abroad to national security. But what about the threat from within? The threat from within when we have Members of Congress who are unwilling to act responsibly, and only want to reach into their wallets and pull out the credit card and keep stealing from future generations so they can continue to come back here. Then they wrap themselves in the cloak as if they are compassionate and they have ownership of sincerity, and that if you want to act responsibly, then you are cold, callous and uncaring.

That is wrong. That is wrong. But that is kind of the words that are used in this body and it is extraordinarily

unfortunate. What it does is, it seeks to divide this body instead of unite the body.

So you have the far left and you have the far right and they seek to pull, and those in the middle when we seek to bridge an agreement, we scratch our heads and say, "What is going on?" When I go back home to Indiana, they scratch their heads and say, "Jeez, put NEWT and BOB DOLE and Bill Clinton in the same room so they can solve it." Come on.

Coming to this body and saying that the national debt is the greatest threat to this country, and then finally to be able to do something about it. You see, for the longest time conservatives, we advocated freezing the budget. Then when we got control of the Congress, we no longer advocated freezing the budget, because now we have an opportunity to change systems. So when over the years we work hard to change systems, streamline and make government more effective, we get attacked.

Well, we are going to hang firm and balance the Nation's budget because this is about the future of the country.

REPUBLICANS VOTE TO GO HOME IN FACE OF SHUTDOWN

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

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, this has been a strange day, and these are strange times. We have my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, the Republicans, who claim they have kept us here because they want to negotiate. They have literally caused people to change their plans, change their lives, caused so much uncertainty with the families they claim to care about.

Do not forget, these are the family values people. These are the folks who say they know more about family values than most of us. But yet when they had an opportunity to be sensible, to be credible, to make sure that we operate in a way that respects our families, they have done some strange things.

After all of this, when they had an opportunity to negotiate, the President called them up, met with them, and their leader, NEWT GINGRICH, went back to them and said, "We have an agreement. We can get a continuing resolution to keep Government open."

Mind you, Government is not really operating. We do not have the authority. We have a lot of Federal employees that have been told to go home. This is Christmastime. They do not know what is happening. They do not know when they are going to be returned. We have parks that are closed down. We have people who cannot get passports.

Then my friends on the other side of the aisle got cute and they decided, "Oh, let's strike a blow for veterans. That's a great constituency. They vote. When we say we're doing something for veterans, we really look good. These are the person who have defended our