

WHY I AM STANDING FIRM FOR A BALANCED BUDGET

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, as a freshman Member of Congress, I wanted to take some time this afternoon to explain why this Member is standing firm for a balanced budget.

We are attempting to carry out the will of the people. Eighty-six percent of Americans want to have a balanced budget, and we are intent on keeping our word.

On September 27, 1994, many of us stood on the steps of the Capitol here and promised, through the Contract With America, to balance the budget within 7 years. This is nothing new to us. I know it is new for some people in America to actually expect people in Washington, DC, to keep their word, but for the freshman class that is the norm. That is what we expect.

Recently we have been criticized by the President for shutting down negotiations. But if being criticized by the President means we will hold the President to his word, then, believe me, it is worth it. We have found that it is impossible to trust what the administration has told us or what the President has said.

On November 20, 1995, the President signed into Law Public Law 104-56, and I would like to read it briefly. It says, "The President and Congress shall enact in the first session of the 104th Congress to achieve a balance budget not later than fiscal year 2002, as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office." That has not happened yet.

As was pointed out in today's Wall Street Journal on page A8, the editorial page, under the heading "Freshmen Hazing," I am going to read a paragraph from that. It says,

More than a month ago President Clinton signed an agreement to work with Congress to produce a 7-year balanced budget using updated Congressional Budget Office numbers. Since then the White House has done everything it could to slip out of that deal. The topper came Tuesday, when Mr. Clinton met with GOP leaders, and once again apparently agreed to use CBO numbers and reach a 7-year balance budget deal by the end of the year. Then Vice President Gore appeared before reporters and, when asked about the agreement, said, "Did the President agree to put down an Administration-CBO plan according to those assumptions? No, absolutely not."

Once again, this is a flipflop and shows why we cannot trust anything that comes out of the White House.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I know why the President is so opposed to a balanced budget. It is because he has to protect the abuse, the blatant abuse of taxpayer dollars by the administration. Secretary O'Leary and the Department of Energy are very inefficient and wasteful in the way they spend tax dollars. Secretary O'Leary, although all her responsibilities are domestic, has traveled 16 international trips, some at

a cost of over \$800,000, each taking along as many as 50 employees and 68 guests, and many of those guests have failed to pay their portion of the trip.

She has also hired professional photographers and video crews. But she is very concerned about her image, and that is why she is trying to catch herself at her best.

She hired a personal media consultant at a cost to taxpayers of \$277 a day.

She employs over 500 public relations employees at a cost of approximately \$25 million per year to the taxpayers.

She has even hired a private investigative firm to develop a list of unfavorable, unfavorable reporters and Members of Congress. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

According to the General Accounting Office, their reports and their audits say that the Department of Energy is ineffective as a Cabinet-level agency. Vice President GORE himself, in his National Performance Review, has said parts of the Department of Energy are 40 percent inefficient and are going to cost taxpayers \$70 billion over the next 30 years if we do not do something.

Well, the President has condoned this action by keeping Secretary O'Leary in office. He condones the waste, the abuse, and you cannot balance the budget unless you cull this deadwood out.

We are not convinced the President or the administration means anything it says. That is why we are standing firm against waste and against abuse and for a balanced budget.

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR CONTINUING RESOLUTION TO ASSIST THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to thank those members on both sides of the aisle who helped and cooperated with us as we got a continuing resolution that keeps the Capital of the United States open. I recognize, particularly because I am among the Members who has a very large number of Federal employees, how frustrating a piecemeal CR has been.

On the other hand, it does seem important to get to the real principle of the thing and to the real people who are behind all of our rhetoric.

The CR that has just passed still has to go through the Senate, and I am informed that there is a difference in language between what they have passed and what we have passed, so we are still on tenterhooks.

This will not be known as the most bipartisan Congress in more than 200 years. There will be very few matters which can be pointed to which received any bipartisanship.

I must say, I would have been ashamed to have been a part of this

body, however, if that posturing and partisanship prevailed against the most needy people in our society, those on welfare and against the Capital of the United States.

So I am grateful to all involved that this matter passed. I appreciate the work of the Speaker, the majority leader, and the minority leader on our side. I appreciate the work of the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON] and the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY].

If all had not, in fact worked together, I am not sure exactly where the District would have been left, but it certainly would have been twisting in the wind, and the hardship on people on AFDC would have been unspeakable.

There is still great unfinished business as far as the District of Columbia is concerned. We are one of, I think, only a couple of appropriations that have not even passed yet.

The continuing resolution lasts until January 3. Imagine what it feels like to have a continuing resolution until January 3 to spend your own money. That is the money that is locked up here in the continuing resolution, and it gives not 1 cent of Federal money to a city that is insolvent, at least technically so, and cash-strapped. It is a very small favor that the House has done, but it is a lifesaving favor.

I want to use this occasion at the end of the first year of the 104th Congress to ask the Members, come back with more bipartisanship than they left.

The balanced-budget-in-7-years matter, for example, is one that the parties have come very close together on, and yet the Government is being kept closed tight as if you needed a hammer to get the rest of the way. The rest of the way is very small.

In negotiations, you use hammers only when you are getting nowhere. We are getting somewhere, and yet the hammer of keeping Federal employees out of work, of keeping them without a paycheck even though they have been promised their pay is still there. Imagine, if you had to be without your paycheck over the Christmas holiday. There are few of us that could afford that.

So what we did here today was minimalism, but important minimalism. I hope it opens the way to a greater sense of what is really at stake here, the confidence of the country that the two parties that have essentially run this body for 200 years are capable of continuing to do it for 200 more.

When you have been tested on whether or not you will keep your own Capital City open, you have allowed your own prestige to be tested. I am afraid this will not play very well around the world, but at least the headlines will not read, "The Congress of the United States Closes Down Its Own Capital." I am grateful that it will not read that and hope that the last act of the year, and that is what we have probably seen

today, the last act of the year, bipartisan act, keeping the District open, allowing those on welfare to get their checks, allowing veterans to get their checks, that that will be the first, the first indication that it is possible to get bipartisanship, and we start on small matters.

Then surely on large matters where we are very close, like the balanced budget in 7 years, we can do what needs to be done without drawing our swords on one another. We have drawn much blood, figuratively speaking, in this Chamber.

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I think in so doing, we may have paved the way for a third party to come down this aisle. We have got to restore confidence in this body. I hope the last vote of the year does that.

WHY THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN?

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

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I would like to send a message to the people in my district in California. Over the past few days, a lot of people in my district are calling me and asking me what is going on here, why the Government has to shut down? I represent the 41st District in California, about 40 miles east of Los Angeles, and about 3,000 miles from Washington, DC. My district is a typical suburban middle-class district in sunny, southern California.

These folks are hard working people who spend most of their time working and raising their families. As a result, they are not familiar with all the political games we are playing in Washington, DC. They told me to go ahead and shut down the Government so we can save money, so we can balance the budget. The fact is, there is no financial savings. All the Federal employees still get paychecks.

They also are wondering why we have so many nonessential employees in our Government anyway. I do not know how to answer that. But let me tell you, I feel sorry for the Federal employees furloughed. They have been treated like pawns in a chess game. They have been sent home, being called nonessential, not once, but twice. I bet you their emotional scars are really deep. They are really emotional victims.

But there are some other victims, too. The folks from California come all the way out to Washington, DC, spending their savings to see the Washington Monument, which is closed. It is not that easy planning a trip to Washington, DC. It is expensive. They are truly victims, financial and emotional.

How about the small businesses that depend on tourism, all the small shops, motels, coffee shops. They have to lay off their employees. They do not get paid. How about them?

How about some other private contractors who depend on Government contracts? They have got to stop. They have to let their employees go home, without pay.

How about those folks? They are really the true victims, emotionally and financially. Do they complain? No. They are afraid to complain because they may lose the contract from the Government. I know it, because I was one of those silent victims myself in the past. These are the ones that are the forgotten victims during this holiday season.

Let us take a look at whose fault is this. People are saying it is the Congress' fault, you are the ones that did it. Some are saying it is Mr. Clinton.

Let us take a look at it. I will ask the people in California to make their own judgment. Government does not have to be shut down. The Congress and Senate submit the budget to Mr. Clinton. He vetoed it, three times. Interior, he vetoed. VA-HUD, Commerce, Justice, State, et cetera. If he did not veto it, but went ahead and accepted the budget and worked out the details later, it would have been all right. He actually vetoed. That is why we have to have a Government shutdown. Or he could accept this budget proposal, which is nothing but a balancing of the budget within 7 years using Congressional Budget Office projections.

Back in February, he submitted, which is \$276 billion off; resubmitted, June, \$210 billion off, rejected; third time in December, only a few weeks ago, \$115 billion off, rejected; last Friday he submitted, \$87 billion off. Getting closer. By that time Congress took action and Congress rejected his proposal unanimously.

Mr. Clinton, try one more time. We are going to get there, \$87 billion, that is all we are talking about. Just one more time and we will get there. Then we can bring all these people happiness in the holy season.

Let me tell you, Congress does not have any power to send the troops to Bosnia. We passed a resolution three times and sent it to Mr. Clinton not to send troops. He did it. Yes, he has the power. Congress does not. Of course, we have financial control. Somebody said it is Congress' fault. I will tell you. I would like to ask the people in my district in southern California who are listening to my presentation today, make your own judgment. Really, whose fault is this?

Mr. Speaker, thank you, God bless all, and God bless America.

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.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Connecticut [Mr. SHAYS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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

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

ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THIS SESSION OF CONGRESS

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

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, this Congress has finally headed home, not just for the holidays, but for the rest of this session. We have already apparently taken our last vote. This may be one of the last, if not the last speech on this floor for this session of Congress, and when history records this session of Congress, they will record it as being the least productive and the most destructive session of Congress in U.S. history.

By the end of the fiscal year, we had passed the Paperwork Reduction Act and the Unfunded Mandates Act, and no appropriations bill. After wrangling for 9 full months, after being given the President's budget, only 1 of 13 appropriations bills had actually gotten to the President's desk, and that was the legislative branch. And thank God the President vetoed it.

The last thing we would have wanted as a Congress is to have our salaries and our organization funded and none of the rest of the Government. We were lucky that he vetoed the legislative branch. But that meant there were no appropriation bills and we were dependent upon a continuing resolution.

Now, what we have done is to go home for the holidays while Federal employees are locked out of their jobs and the American public is locked out of their Government.

Each of the most compelling cases that we have brought up have apparently been dealt with. We brought it to the floor that 3.3 million American veterans would not get their benefits, so there was a reaction and we got a bill to take care of them. I hope that it will go through. I have no confidence at this point. It has not been passed by the Senate, as far as I understand. Those checks will be delayed anyway.

We brought up the fact that 13 million welfare recipients have to have their checks processed by December 26. We are planning on being in recess, home with our families, but denying 13 million welfare recipients, most of whom have to have their check just to survive. The check has to pay for their rent. Without that check, they would not even have food to put on their