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STOP THE BICKERING

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

Mr. CREMEANS. Mr. Speaker, let us stop the bickering.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to reflect on what they have done to reform this Government. Have they come out in support of tax limitation and the balanced budget amendment? Have they fought to reform unfunded mandates? Have they embraced the Republican-led changes in the way that Congress has done business, or have they fought the reforms put forth? Have they tried to filibuster, delay, and destroy the Contract With America?

Mr. Speaker, many Democrats have come the floor today and this past week for one reason, to stop needed reform in this Congress. They attack the Republicans on irrelevant issues. They complain about their procedures. They whine when we make necessary cuts.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come to stop this silly bickering. Let us work together to complete this contract with the American people and restore the people's faith in this Congress.

THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

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

Ms. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, this week we consider legislation that is the first step in a long process that will lead to a balanced budget. While we all know the litany of numbers surrounding the growth of the national debt, the numbers are so staggering they are worth repeating.

Over the past 12 years, it has tripled in size. We are now saddled with a \$5 trillion national debt and yearly interest payments of over \$200 billion.

I was elected to put an end to this practice, and for that reason I support the bipartisan, bicameral constitutional amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER] and the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STENHOLM].

I urge every Member to support it.

After we complete work on the balanced budget amendment, we will then turn to the budget and appropriations process. During consideration of the yearly spending bills, I will work hard to cut wasteful and unnecessary Government spending. There are plenty of programs to target, and I look forward to the debate that will take place during consideration of these bills.

There will be tough choices to be made to reach our goal by 2002. However, as a former State legislator and past president of the National Conference of State Legislatures, there is one thing I will not cut. I will not support balancing the Federal budget on the backs of State and local governments.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO END WASTEFUL PRACTICES IN CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to call attention to yet another example of how Congress wastes taxpayers' hard-earned money.

A week or two ago, every new Member received this letter from the Clerk of the House encouraging us to order our own personalized gold embossed set of the United States Code book, a set of 223 volumes that I have since discovered we can take with us when we leave office.

After doing a little research, I have learned that these books with each Congressman's name nicely engraved in gold on the binder costs taxpayer \$2,500 a set. Thus, to provide every new Member of the last two Congresses, they have spent over \$500,000; a half a million dollars spent on books that are available in every House office building, in the House counsel's office and, of course, in the Library of Congress across the street.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me as an original cosponsor of a measure that will end the practice of ordering these books and demonstrate to the American people that we are serious about cutting the deficit and that we are taking a small step in our individual offices to make a difference in the United States of America.

SENIOR CITIZENS, WAKE UP

(Mrs. MEEK of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am a senior citizen. I am here to say to senior citizens throughout this country, wake up, better smell the coffee. They are getting ready to make some very drastic changes here in this Congress that will affect you. So you have better call them, write them, and talk them to slow this train down.

I realize that a balanced budget is needed to control the runaway spending in this country, but as it is currently drafted, they are going to balance the budget on your backs, senior citizens. You have felt the toil of this country for all of these years. You paid taxes all of these years. Now they are going to cut Medicare, they are going to cut Medicaid, they are going to cut Social Security.

Do not let them fool you. There should be truth in packaging here so you can see the package that is being put together, so you can know what the cuts are.

Do not be fooled by what you are hearing about a balanced budget. Sure, it is good, but it is not what you can see that is going to hurt. Look at the massive cuts in Medicare. They are using the Constitution to change the fiscal policy. Let them do it. That is what they are elected to do, to cut.

Why use the Constitution to do that? Wake up, call them write them, whatever is within your voice, because the budget will be balanced on your back.

THE CREATION

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

Mr. HOKE. In the beginning there was limited government and a sound economy and abundance covered the face of the land.

Then Johnson, leader of the Spendites, looketh into the Treasury and saw there was a surplus, and he was sore afraid. So he called to the high priests of the Spendites, who even then had controlled the Congress for 10 years, and he spake thusly, "Democrats," for that was the Spendites' name, "We must exhaust the Royal Treasury, for there is a surplus, and I am sore afraid."

The Spendities heeded the call of lord LBJ and spent as if there was no tomorrow, creating foolish and wasteful Spendite programs that promiseth much but dideth not. And the Government became big and bloated, and the economy weak and burdened, and the children and the grandchildren, and, yea, even the great-grandchildren of the subjects of the Spendites were saddled with great debts. And the people cried out, "Balenceth the budget." But the Spendites were sore afraid, so the people cried out for the Thriftities to lead them out of the wilderness of deficit spending.

LET US HAVE THE TRUTH ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, today we will vote on some version of the balanced budget amendment. I rise in opposition to it, and I do so because I think that there is still the great unanswered question: Will this balanced budget amendment exclude Social Security? If it does, why not say so?

We have an opportunity today on the floor to support the Gephardt-Bonior amendment which our Republican colleagues could join us in if they in fact wish to exclude Social Security. And if not Social Security, then what?

Disclose. Let us have truth in budgeting. We have an opportunity today to support the Conyers amendment if, indeed, we want to be truthful and honest with the American people.

We have reason to be doubtful about the Republicans' intention about Social Security because of what they say.

My colleagues have pointed out this article written by Speaker GINGRICH which says, "Replace Social Security

with a stable permanent retirement system." There is a picture of a Social Security card being cut by scissors.

Perhaps my colleagues on the Republican side would like to read this, and as recently as last evening, a senior member of the Committee on Ways and Means on this floor said in the debate, "We cannot ask our children to support a growing number of seniors who live 20 and 30 years past retirement." The gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. JOHNSON] said that.

If you do, in fact, wish to exclude Social Security, vote to do so.

THE FIG LEAF THAT WAS GOOD ENOUGH

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

(Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I took a special note today to go back to the Cloakroom and find that 412 of our colleagues voted for the resolution offered by the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FLANAGAN].

Now, given the fact that we do not have 412 Republicans, apparently our Democrat friends, in spite of the fact that they called his resolution a fig leaf, yesterday thought it was a good enough fig leaf to vote for it. But yet today they will come to this floor and try and scare the senior citizens of our country into believing that we want to cut Social Security.

As I said yesterday during debate on the resolution offered by the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FLANAGAN], I do not know of any politician, Democrat or Republican, who wants to cut Social Security. I have never ever heard one politician ever running for anything from dogcatcher to Congress who ever said they wanted to cut Social Security. We do not want to do it.

Apparently the Democrats do not want to do it, because the majority of you voted for Mr. FLANAGAN's fig leaf resolution yesterday, because you thought it was good enough to send a message.

Do not try to fool. Do not try and scare. Let us be honest with our senior citizens. Nobody wants to cut Social Security. We do not intend to do it.

THE 100-DAY NIGHTMARE

(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, the 100-day dream has become a 100-day nightmare. The process by which this balanced budget amendment to the Constitution came to the floor of this House is the classic example.

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I serve on the Committee on the Judiciary out of which this balanced budget amendment comes. Two weeks ago on a Wednesday afternoon, with over 20 amendments still unoffered in committee, the committee closed down

operation and went home. The Rules Committee, with over 100 amendments still pending, limited amendments on the floor to 6.

To amend the Constitution, if we are lucky in this body, we will get 2 days of debate. This is not democracy, America; this is irresponsibility.

"IT'S THE MAJORITY, STUPID"

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

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, as we listen to the rhetoric and the misinformation and the scare tactics that are going to be on this floor today, I think it is important to remind people that it was the Democrats who cut Social Security benefits in the 103d Congress by \$48 billion, and not one Republican voted for it. And there is no threat in the 104th Congress.

Back in November the majority of the American people spoke loudly and clearly when they elected a Republican majority to this Congress; a majority of the people embraced the provisions in our Contract With America, which includes a balanced budget amendment. A majority of the people demanded that we change Congress, and a majority of the people sent a message that they want a smaller, less costly, more efficient Government. What my colleagues from the other side of the aisle seem to forget is that a majority of the people did not elect the Democrat President 2 years ago. In fact, only 43 percent of the electorate voted for our current President.

I urge the President and the rest of his party to join with the majority of the people in supporting the balanced budget amendment.

The majority has spoken; it is what they want; it is what they deserve.

IN SUPPORT OF THE STENHOLM BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

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

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of a constitutional amendment to balance the budget. I have had three opportunities to vote on the balanced budget amendments since I have been a Member of Congress. We failed three times.

I do not think we will have a better opportunity than now to pass one, finally.

I support the Charlie Stenholm balanced budget amendment because it has strength and it is realistic and it is doable.

I also know that Members of Congress, most of us, are well-intentioned; we want to do the right thing; but the fact is every one of us has a laundry list of where we are going to cut costs. The problem is that we all have a different laundry list of where to cut, and therefore nothing is cut.

Every day we spend \$816 million interest payments on the debt alone—that is right, \$816 million every day. That is money that we could use to control crime, make job training and education available to more Americans and immunize our children.

Interest payments are simply devouring large portions of the Federal budget and preventing the Congress from funding programs that are important to the American people. We know we are accountable for our actions, we know we are not doing the right thing, we know we need some enforcement powers. We need to do it by passing a balanced budget amendment.

THE REAL AGENDA

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

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, let us talk about what the real agenda is and what the real problem is with sticking the term "Social Security" in the constitutional amendment. What you do then is you open a huge lobbyists' loophole in the Constitution, because what would happen is that anybody who wanted to bring some social welfare spending approach to Capitol Hill would simply call it "Social Security." Do you want to have midnight basketball? Fine, call it "Social Security." Do you want to have the Corporation for Public Broadcasting continue to get money? Call it "Social Security." Do you want to have the NEA to continue to get its funding for pornographic art, just call it "Social Security."

Every lobbyist coming to Capitol Hill asking for more spending would simply call it "Social Security" and say therefore it is not covered by the balanced budget. That would destroy Social Security.

Do you want the surest formula for destroying Social Security? Just put it in the Constitution in a form that people can use it to destroy the system. That would be the wrong thing to do on this floor today.

BALANCE THE BUDGET AND REDUCE THE FEDERAL DEFICIT

(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, like many of my colleagues, I believe Congress needs to work toward balancing the budget and reducing the Federal deficit.

I believe we must legislate in a more fiscally responsible way that will ensure our Nation will remain financially strong for our children and grandchildren.

Over the next several weeks, we will debate many measures to achieve a balanced budget.