

It's only been, after all, 60 years of deficits." It is time to get the job done.

Now, I am no stranger to differences between parties. We have a two-party system. That is so we can have good, wholesome debates between competing programs. But eventually we need to vote and get the job done, and I think we are prepared to do that.

We can take our politics straight up, face to face, but when that is done, we have got to face the budget problems. We must deal with tax relief for the American people, and we must move toward a balanced budget.

Official Washington is looking toward mid-November for what is commonly called a legislative train wreck. I think it is a misnomer, but that's the term being used to describe a show-down over the budget, the appropriations bills and the debt ceiling. I prefer to think of that conjunction in a different way. I think of it as a day of accounting, a time when truth will finally prevail.

The President and his senior staffers have been talking a lot lately about using the veto to block virtually everything that would move this country toward a balanced budget. President Clinton has made his veto pen the last desperate defense of big government.

Over the past 20 years, I have watched the budgets we have dealt with and the appropriations bills. I don't remember a President threatening to veto appropriations bills because they did not spend enough. It was always because Congress could not control its insatiable appetite in spending too much. Now we have a President who is threatening to veto almost all the appropriations bills, with only one or two exceptions, because he wants more spending, increases over last year, increases that will add to the deficit.

So we have a tough task before us. Many people wonder if we will be able to get the job done. I believe we will. I would like for it to be done with cooperation between the two Houses of Congress, across the aisle between the two parties, and, yes, with the President. I encourage the President to join us in this discussion.

This is a crucial time. Over the next few weeks we have to make tough decisions. It is time that we engage. We need the President to get involved, to roll up his sleeves and say we are going to do what is right for our country's future.

Today Senate Republicans look both to the immediate opinion of the American people and to the judgment of their posterity. It is, after all, our children and our grandchildren, most of all, for whom we are doing this. They, rather than any party, will be the big winners in the reconciliation bill in 1995.

That is why I and my colleagues approach the arguments, the decisions, and perhaps the crises ahead with a confidence that goes beyond political assurance. Like the Quaker poet of the

last century, John Greenleaf Whittier, said, we know we have "the safe appeal of truth to time." That is what this is all about. And now is the time for historic decisions.

Mr. President, I yield the floor. And I observe the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEDICARE REFORM

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, with the press and all the reports and the dialog continuing on Medicare, I guess for most of us who are trying to do some things to reform Medicare, to strengthen it and save the program, which has broad-based public support, we have become frustrated about what is really at issue here. We know that there have been ways devised in order to save and strengthen the program and to increase the spending on each beneficiary between now and the year 2002.

With those that would be critical of the plan that has been put forward and with continuing to call what some would say are cuts in Medicare, then maybe we should approach it from a situation that maybe if you think it is a big cut, let us just freeze it, let us just freeze it at current levels. And I wonder if they would start counting the apples that are in their basket.

You know, it seems to me that math is a funny subject to study. But, nonetheless, if you have 48 apples in your basket, and by the year 2002 we are going to add some apples to that basket to where you have 67, in other words, 2½ apples—that is pretty tough to do, add a half apple a year to your basket—that does not sound like a cut to me. It sounds like an increase to me. But the cost per beneficiary will go from \$4,800 presently being spent per beneficiary to \$6,700 in the year 2002. That is under the plan that is presently called for in the budget resolution that passed this body and this Congress.

What started this whole debate is right here, this little report. Now we cannot get very many of them because they did not print very many of them. But it is the status of Social Security and Medicare programs done by the trustees, of which four of the seven are President Clinton's own appointees.

They said it pretty plainly, "The Medicare Program is clearly unsustainable in its present form"—in this little report.

There have been other reports that have come out in the past that said Social Security will run out of money. Other reports say, in 2 years, Medicare will run out of money. Those reports are OK, but this one is a little bit different because next year is the first time in the history of the Medicare

Program, which is 30 years old this year, the first time when we will be spending more money in outlays to the beneficiaries than we have money coming in—for the first time. That changes the debate a little bit, and it also should change the way we look at this problem and the way we want to deal with it.

So the trustees say we have to do something about Medicare. Secretary of Health and Human Services Shalala, Secretary Reich of Labor, Secretary Rubin of Treasury, Commissioner of Social Security, Shirley Chater, all appointees of President Clinton, said:

We feel strongly that comprehensive Medicare reforms should be undertaken to make this program financially sound now and over the long term.

We went through a situation in Montana, when I was a county commissioner, of falling property values. We had an initiative passed in Montana that froze all property taxes, the mills that we could levy, and we were in pretty tough straits trying to finance county government. That may not sound very important to us who work in this town but, nonetheless, the people who live in our counties and our cities across the Nation would say that is pretty important because that operates our schools, takes care of our sheriff departments, public safety, our roads, bridges.

You had to act then to make some adjustments to our outlays, or we would find ourselves in financial difficulty that we could not get ourselves out of. If you do not take into consideration that next year we will be paying out more than taking in, and as that escalates, pretty soon if we go 2 or 3 years, then you will find even this Government will be incapable of dealing with the debt that has been created by overextension of payments out of the Medicare Program.

So, basically, what they said was that we had to take some actions now.

Let me show another chart. They also said:

We strongly recommend that the crisis presented by the financial condition of the Medicare trust funds be urgently addressed on a comprehensive basis, including a review of the program's financing methods, benefit provisions, and delivery mechanisms.

In other words, let us take a look at the whole program, and we tried to do that.

Today, Medicaid and Medicare are going up three times the rate of inflation. We propose to let it go up at two times the rate of inflation. That is not a Medicare or Medicaid cut. So when you hear all this business about cuts, let me caution you that is not what is going on. We are going to have increases in Medicare and Medicaid, and a reduction in the rate of growth.

Guess who said that? President Clinton, October 5, 1993.

Who is fooling whom? We have to take a look at all of it. This is what the President wants. He is saying, let us limit the growth to 7 percent; the budget resolution says 6.4. We have an area where we can really, really compromise and come up with a program.

So we have established that there are not going to be any cuts in Medicare. So how do we deal with it? We say, "Mr. President, that is exactly what we have proposed in this Congress." So how is it that President Clinton proposes a reduced growth rate and it seems acceptable and yet, when the Republicans propose the exact same thing, it is splashed all over papers and televisions and all across our States by the folks on the other side of the aisle as "devastating cuts." I think it is time for a little fairness here, and I also advise all of us, you cannot have it both ways.

So if you do not like the cuts, let us just freeze them. Think about that for a little bit. We will freeze it at levels right now. I am wondering if that will be acceptable to the other side. The senior Senator from Montana recently wrote a guest column in the *Missoula paper*. He said, "There is no crisis here." Their report clearly states the crisis needs to be urgently addressed. It does not say we should start to think about maybe making some changes. It says now is the time to do it. That is, deal with it when we have the ability to deal with it. We cannot stick our heads in the sand, not for very long anyway, because you know what is exposed the most.

We have to worry about the financing. Any savings in this plan—any savings—even in part B, goes back into the plan. It can go nowhere else. It must stay in the system of Medicare, either part A, which is the hospital trust fund, or part B, which is the dollars. It has to stay there. Any savings goes back into the plan. It can go nowhere else. It can finance no other part of government. So the trustees' report requires us to act.

Anyone who says otherwise is not being very candid with the American people. It is not being very honest if we are to preserve the system while expanding the choices the beneficiaries will have if we do nothing at all. With the proposal now on the table, spending continues to increase around 6.4 percent a year. That is twice the rate of inflation. That means spending per beneficiary will go from \$4,800 a year to \$6,700 in just 7 short years. And I ask you, can that be a cut?

So when the other side and the media say we are cutting Medicare to give tax cuts to the rich—we have heard all about that—it sells good but it "ain't" necessarily so. In fact, it is not so.

A colleague of mine recently remarked the new Democratic mascot should be the ostrich. We do not want to get into a situation like that.

I also heard the expression other day that maybe it is not Medicare, maybe it is "Mediscare." Every day is Halloween for the other side, because they just like to scare folks.

Mr. President, I say to my colleagues, we are trying to be honest with America, just honest with America. Get the figures down and make sure that we do what this report says

we should do and also maybe accept some leadership from our President who said, yes, we have to do some things, and he said it on October 5, 1993.

I do not think he is too far off the mark, and I do not think America thinks that either. I know we do not, and we have undertaken this very, very seriously.

Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks time?

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for up to 15 minutes following the presentation of the Senator from Missouri.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

TERM LIMITS

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, the 1994 elections were elections about reform. Those of us sent here by the people of America were asked to make substantial changes in the way this body conducts business, the way in which Government is carried out in this country. The people asked us to make significant changes. In return, we made promises which resulted in their entrusting to us the sacred opportunity to serve the people. The promises we made were important promises. They were promises to end politics as usual, to curtail an imperial Congress. They were promises to balance the budget. They were promises to change the welfare system profoundly.

Mr. President, I believe they were important promises. I believe they were promises upon which the people relied, and have a substantial expectation. We have made progress in satisfying those promises in a significant way.

Earlier this year, the American people were optimistic about our efforts, about our willingness to change Washington. This fall, though, the American people tell a different story. Those who keep their finger on the pulse of the American public have indicated a signal from the people—a serious discomfort with what is coming. The public's faith in their elected officials has again plummeted to an all-time low. Once more, Ross Perot, talks about putting an end to the two-party system, and once more he is heard.

What has happened? What is the reason for the new season of discontent? I

believe it is, in part, because the people have asked us to commit to the reforms we promised and they feel that some of their agenda is being ignored. One of those agenda items which we have not directly addressed, that we have not spoken too clearly on, one that is on the minds of the American people indelibly, is the idea and concept of term limits. People are familiar with that. Forty Governors have term limits. Twenty-three States have, out of their own capacity and ability, attempted to impose term limits on the Congress. They see the Congress as being a place which bogs down in beltway politics instead of reflecting the agenda of America, and does so because of individuals who come here and just stay. Certainly, it is an agenda that the people expected us to carry forward. Seventy-four percent of the people support the concept of term limits. They believe, and I believe, it ought to be a part of the agenda of the 104th Congress.

Leadership is about the messages that we send, the signals we give—signals not of rhetoric but of action, signals of real reform. Last March, our class came to the floor to support a constitutional amendment to balance the budget. We spoke of a common commitment to change and a new day in the Congress. It mattered very little that we fell short of the 67 votes we needed. It was clear what we were doing and the depth of our commitment and the sense of our real dedication to that objective. I think the people understood there were some who stood in the way of that objective. But what truly mattered was the signal we sent as a class. It was a signal of promises made and promises kept.

What matters is that we fought the fight, we kept the faith, we kept our promise, and we will keep moving toward that objective. We have already moved toward the objective in the budget, and we are moving toward the objective in the appropriations, and we will again move toward that objective by way of a resolution to have a constitutional amendment.

We must decide what signals we will be sending this fall as the American people monitor our performance. It is out of concern for those signals that I believe we should vote on a sense-of-the-Senate amendment relating to the limitation of terms of Members of Congress. We are talking about the number of terms people in the Congress can serve.

This afternoon, barring any legislative maneuvering, we will have a vote on that amendment. It will be the first time in 50 years that there has been a vote on term limits in the U.S. Senate. I believe it will be an important vote, it will be a historic vote. It does not carry with it the power of law, so it is not a binding amendment. It is, however, an identifying amendment. It is the power of a clear and principled statement of the purpose and resolve of