

permanent, and certainly more expensive, plan for the site will be put in place just a couple of years from now.

Most Americans will not have the opportunity to visit the White House Visitor Center today to offer their comments. Most will not even know that the future of Pennsylvania Avenue is under discussion. But if they were here, I know they would have strong feelings they would want to share about the Government's plans to limit public access to the White House.

And that is the third way to measure the price we pay when we trade security for freedom: by calculating the high cost of Washington's paranoia on the national psyche.

Mr. President, all Americans are deeply concerned about the safety of their President. The security measures used to protect him must be well thought out, appropriate, and thorough. I do not question the desire to afford him every ounce of security we can muster, but I do question whether we can satisfy that desire without sacrificing the people's freedoms. The balance between security and freedom has been tipped too far in favor of security.

Mr. Mark McCurry, the President's spokesman, says the American people "will have greater access to the front of the White House as a result of some of the changes they want to make." But that just is not so. How can we cut off traffic from a historic stretch of Pennsylvania Avenue and claim we are improving access?

Once the ball starts rolling, where does it stop? Already, the drastic security measures undertaken on Pennsylvania Avenue have set a precedent and are being mirrored here on Capitol Hill. Access to two streets on the Senate side of the Capitol have been shut off. Parking has been eliminated or restricted in many places. Security at the Capitol itself has been tightened dramatically. Officials in other Federal buildings are asking that parking meters be removed from their sidewalks, too.

Where does it end? How much of Washington, DC, are we going to have to rope off before the public figures out we simply do not want them here? As tragic as it sounds, that is the message we are sending to America.

Mr. President, on behalf of the American people who are not here to stand up for themselves, I ask my colleagues to join me in denouncing the assault on our freedoms being undertaken on Pennsylvania Avenue. President Clinton has gone too far, but it is not too late to halt his efforts to close off the people's house on America's Main Street from the people themselves.

I urge that we take action now, before a single spadeful of earth is turned.

In Le Roy, MN, population 900, the town's weekly newspaper reflected recently on Washington's current obsession with security. I would like to read some of it:

"We also wonder about the cost of the security around the Nation's capitol and if this much security is truly needed," wrote Al Evans in the *Le Roy Independent*.

"We are sure any midwesterner visiting there would question this. Perhaps we in this area of the country are too trusting, but there are limits to security measures.

The folks in Le Roy, MN, understand that closed streets do not equate with an open democracy. Why do not the Washington bureaucrats and politicians get it?

For 195 years, the address 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue has been a symbol of a government accessible to the people. Yet our government of the people, by the people, and for the people is slowly becoming a government just a little farther away from the people, too.

It is time we stood up and said "that is enough."

I yield the floor.

THE BUDGET

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I will just take a few minutes of the Senate's time to comment on the set of issues that we will be spending much time on over the weeks ahead, those specifically related to our budget, the reconciliation legislation, which will also include legislation to reduce the tax burden on Americans, and the whole issue that surrounds that concerning the economy of our country.

As I traveled throughout my State during last year's campaign and as I have traveled since that campaign, I have heard Americans and Michiganders in particular tell me two things. Both of the things they have told me I believe are included in and really are the centerpieces of the budget that we are working to achieve here in the U.S. Senate.

The first thing they tell us is that they want a budget that is in balance. Americans and people in my State are frustrated by the fact that the U.S. Congress has gone a quarter of a century without bringing the budget into balance. They have to do that in their families. Most of our States and our local communities have to balance their budgets. The American people are frustrated when Washington cannot do the same thing, when we cannot bring ourselves to establish priorities, to set an agenda that allows us to spend no more than we take in.

People in my State also want a budget that is balanced and that is balanced legitimately. They are tired of fancy bookkeeping in Washington, bookkeeping which allows us to think we are doing better than we really are. That is why, I think, many people in my State applauded the President of the United States when he came to Congress not too long ago and, with bipartisan encouragement, said that we should use the statistics and the revenue estimates and the budget figures of the Congressional Budget Office at

both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue to make determinations as to where our Federal Government's deficit was.

Interestingly, of course, we now have a slight change in direction here in Washington. Here in the Congress, we have stuck to the ideal of balancing the budget and we have used legitimate statistics compiled by the Congressional Budget Office in calculating our budget to make sure it would be in balance based on the accurate readings of the CBO.

Unfortunately, now, as the actual rubber hits the road, at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, we have a detour. There what we see is a diversion away from the use of CBO statistics, a diversion away from the idea of using the same budgeting calculations that are used on Capitol Hill, and instead a throwback to days gone by when statistics that are used in rosy scenarios, to balance the budget not with tough choices and setting priorities, but rather making unrealistic estimates as to the economy's growth and unrealistic estimates as to the needs for various promises and a variety of things allowing to balance the budget through fancy bookkeeping.

I have to ask today, Mr. President, why has this occurred? Why have we moved backward, and why has the White House chosen this course of action? Most people know the answer is simple. Without making those kinds of calculations that only can be made inside the Office of Management and Budget, tough choices would have to be made. Politically unpopular choices would have to be made.

I ask another question today as well: Where was the balanced budget fervor in the White House earlier this year? Why has it come about so late in the game? Again, I suggest that it is more politics than it is public policy objectives.

Indeed, I sit on the Budget Committee, and earlier this year, in the spring, we had several representatives of the administration come before us to discuss the President's budget. When they did, of course, that original budget was not in balance. It did not project a balance in years 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7.

I asked, did you ever go through the exercise within the administration of coming up with a balanced budget or a budget that would reach balance in 7 years, recognizing that you might have done it, and concluded, for whatever reason, not to offer it because you did not want to establish the priorities that would be required to balance the budget? To my surprise, I was told that no one had ever gone through the exercise. This is as recently as the spring and, indeed, the budget we had been offered by the White House, by the administration, was the only budget that had been put together.

It makes me very suspicious, now, as we come to the end of this process, that suddenly we are told there is a budget, suddenly we are told there is a commitment to a balanced budget, and

suddenly we are told the CBO numbers are no longer the ones that will be used to attain that budget. It leads me to believe that we are basically being told these things as we come upon an election year in which a central part of the debate in America will be whether or not the American Government should spend no more money than it takes in.

Balance the budget and do it in a way that is credible and legitimate, is one thing I hear in Michigan. The other thing I hear in my State is that people want to be able to keep more of what they earn and that, in particular, the middle-class families of my State want to be able to keep more of what they earn. Here, in Washington, inside the beltway, in many of our committees and on the floor of the Senate itself as well as on the House side of the Capitol Building, we are told by people who purport to represent constituencies back in their States that there is no demand for reductions in taxes in America, that this desire to reduce taxes is somehow a myth created by people on our side of the political aisle for whatever purpose, I guess, happens to be convenient at the time.

I just want to know what constituencies those who claim Americans do not want a tax cut represent, because I cannot go to any part of my State without being told by people how hard it is to make ends meet in America, and in Michigan today. What people tell me is not that they wish somehow Government would intrude on their job site or their business or their community and start dictating what salaries they should earn. They do not tell me that. They do not tell me they want to see Washington begin to create some kind of central economy management system here inside the beltway. What they tell me is, if you will just let me keep a few more dollars that I earn in my paycheck, I would feel a lot better.

It is interesting to me to hear people tell us they do not hear any cries back in their State for tax relief when, at the same time, many of the very same Members of Congress come to the floor, bringing charts with them, to talk about the so-called middle-class squeeze that middle-class, hard-working, average American families are feeling today. Why is that middle-class squeeze being felt? The answer is quite simple. It is because American families—hard-working families, where people go out to work every day, and in some cases where more than one person is in the work force, and they work very hard—find at the end of the week or the end of the quarter or the end of the month they do not have as much money left after withholding and the payment of taxes as they need to make ends meet.

So, I think it is very disingenuous to, on the one hand, decry the fate of the middle class because of the difficult time middle-class Americans are having making ends meet and at the same time claim middle-class families do not want a tax cut. The fact is, if we reduce

the taxes on families in this country there will be less of a squeeze, in particular less of a squeeze on the middle class. In my judgment, those are simply mutually exclusive positions. I have a very hard time believing that in the constituencies of other Members of this body or in the House there is not the same yearning for an opportunity to attain the American dream, more chance of people keeping what they earn, that I hear from the constituents that I represent.

Here in the Senate we are trying. We tried during the budget resolution debates and we will try again in the next few weeks to deliver on commitments we made to our constituents from one end of this country to the other, our commitments to bring the budget into balance and to do so with a legitimate, credible budget and at the same time allow hard-working, middle-class families to keep more of what they earn.

The alternative to that is business as usual. The alternative to that is more fancy, funny bookkeeping. The alternative to that is big Government in Washington calling more shots, making more decisions that affect the lives of our families.

So, as the debate proceeds, I hope, as people hear these arguments that we cannot move to a balanced budget or that we cannot do it in 7 years or we cannot have a tax cut, they will reflect on the fact that the people making those arguments are the same people who have tended to be in charge for the last 40 years here in Washington as the budget deficits have increased, as the Federal debt has increased, as taxes have increased, and as the middle class has felt the corresponding squeeze that comes about when too many of the dollars of hard-working Americans are sent to Washington to fulfill the priorities of somebody else.

I think if one reflects on that debate, they will conclude that that budget which we passed here in the Senate earlier this year and that budget we are going to try to now bring to conclusion in the weeks ahead, puts us on the right path to achieving not only our objective of making sure our economy is strong, but achieving the other goals of balancing the budget credibly and reducing the tax burden on hard-working families.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

A BALANCED BUDGET

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I rise in support of the long, arduous march, 32 years long, to balance the budget of the United States.

This is a most historic period in American history. On or about October 24, this Congress, the House and the Senate, will come head to head with the decision to join with America in its call for properly managing our financial affairs.

What we have here is a classical contest between those who come from the country arguing that Washington should stop doing business the way it has been and those who believe that Washington should continue just as it has been. Look at the essential questions that will be settled. In the case of the budget, the new Congress, the majority, is arguing that the budget should be balanced and it should be balanced within 7 years.

I read from Newsweek magazine by author Joe Klein, who talks about the chief spokesperson for the status quo, in name, the President of the United States. He says:

The sloppy, hyperactive wonkiness that defined Clinton's first 2 years in office has been supplanted by a sleek, tactical cunning. He has traded activism for passivism. He gives the appearance of taking stands—for some sort of tax cut, some sort of welfare reform, some sort of balanced budget—but these are ploys, mirages; they exist only to undermine positions taken by the Republicans.

A fundamental goal of this vote on October 24 will be to balance the budget. The President promised a balanced budget in 5 years when he ran for President. He forgot the promise. He then said he would not offer a budget, leave it to the Republicans. He then offered a budget that was unbalanced and received no votes when it was put before the Senate. It was 99 to zero. He then said he would give us a balanced budget within 10 years. But the Congressional Budget Office and all economists know that is not so; it does not balance in 5 years, 7 years, 10 years, or any years. The status quo or change; balance the budgets or leave them spending new debt and deficits.

Second, tax relief. I read, Mr. President, from today's Washington Times. And I am quoting the President:

It might surprise you to know that I think I raised [taxes] too much, too.

President Clinton said last night he thinks he raised taxes too much in his first year in office. Fine. We are trying to refund that tax increase. His tax increase, the largest in American history, was about \$250 billion—status quo—tax more and spend more. We are proposing to lower taxes \$245 billion—change, lower taxes on the working family, lower taxes on American business. Change or status quo.

We say in response to the Medicare trustees that Medicare must be saved or it will go bankrupt in 6 years. We have offered a good plan. It saves Medicare for current beneficiaries and those yet to come. It is reasonable and does what the country needs to have done.

What does the Democrat plan do? First of all, it is 21 pages. It is not a plan. The Congressional Budget Office cannot score it because it does not have enough detail. At best, if it were so and it were a plan, which it is not, it would push the solvency out 24 months. Is that what the beneficiaries are looking for, 24 months of a reprieve, or are they looking for us to take this program and make it solid