

have one that serves the best of this country.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ABRAHAM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GORTON). The Senator from Michigan.

BALANCING THE BUDGET

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I want to speak today on a couple of topics.

First of all, I would like to lend my voice of support for the proposal that was earlier discussed by the Senator from Maine, Senator SNOWE, in regard to legislation she introduced, legislation I am a cosponsor of, to treat the salaries and pay of the Members of Congress in the same fashion that other Federal employees are being treated during this period of Government shutdown.

I share the opinion the Senator from Maine expressed very effectively earlier that it is important for the public to understand that those of us in Congress are no different than anybody else and that we should live by the same sets of rules that govern the rest of the people of similar status as we; and that is, the laws of the country should apply to us the way they apply to the rest of the country.

We did that earlier this year. We ended a long period of time in which Congressmen and Senators were exempt from any laws which people back in our States were forced on a daily basis to adhere to. In the same vein as Federal employees ourselves, we should be required to be treated in the same fashion as the Federal employees whose families this week have been confronted with the issues surrounding the Government shutdown.

Also, I am intrigued by and likely to support the amendment that Senator BROWN discussed in his remarks. I have long felt, in fact, in my campaign I talked about the need for us to place some sort of incentive for the Members of Congress to bring about a balanced budget that they all campaigned on but went to Washington and somehow found very elusive.

The notion of in some way treating us like the officers of a corporation that is running in the red intrigues me a lot, and it is very appealing, I think, to citizens across this country. If the country keeps running big deficits, it hurts the country. If a business runs big deficits, it hurts the business. When the business runs those deficits and is hurt, it is its owners, its managers who ultimately pay a price, and normally that comes in the form of seeing their salaries reduced.

In the same vein, it strikes me perhaps we, as the Nation's stewards of our economy, should have the same kind of responsibility and the same sort of incentive that people running a company have to make sure that we do not run a deficit.

So I look forward to working with the Senator from Colorado to try to

come up with a proposal or a program or an amendment that could address that set of incentives as well.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to talk briefly about why at least those of us who supported the Balanced Budget Act Friday night, who have been so strongly keeping committed to the notion of balancing the budget in 7 years, adhere to this position, because I think those Americans who are watching us in Washington, probably from time to time are wondering why are the stakes so high, why is it so critical that this budget be balanced and the sooner the better, not in 10 years, 9 or 8 years, but in the 7 years we have talked about?

The answer is, a balanced budget means important things to virtually everybody in this country. To average working families, Mr. President, it means a chance to keep more of what they earn.

Most families in our country pay interest on something, some pay interest on car loans that they have taken out; some pay interest on home mortgages, some pay interest on student loans, some pay interest on all of the above. Of course, there are many other items that people borrow money from lending institutions for today, and these interest rates are a big price that they pay along the way.

Putting the Nation's budget into balance means those interest rates we pay are going to come down. It means average families who work hard in this country and want to keep more of what they earn will see rates come down and see more money in their own pockets, instead of sending those dollars along to the persons from whom they have borrowed the dollars. That means more money to pay for children's education, more money to spend on other family necessities. In short, average working families get to have more control over their destinies.

Putting the budget into balance also means a lot for young people in this country. I mentioned already the impact of the student loans and interest rates paid on those loans. Let us talk about a young person who is looking forward to getting out of school in the near future and going to work and earning their own living and addressing their own needs, starting their own families, and so on. Considering the current rate of our national spending growth and the deficits we have been generating and projecting that on into the future, without restraint, means that young people today are confronting a debt burden that is incredibly large.

Already, earlier the Senator from Arizona talked about the impact of these deficits on a child born in 1995. It is estimated that a child born this year, Mr. President, will, in their lifetime, pay \$187,000 just to pay their share of interest on the national debt that already exists and will grow during their lifetime. That would mean, Mr. President, that if we do not bring this

spending spree, this sort of unlimited credit card type of Government operation under control, we will pass on to the children of our country a lot less opportunity than we inherited. It seems to me that all of us have a responsibility to take care of our own bills—not to pass them on to the next generation.

The Senator from Vermont talked about these deficits, and I recognize that they are not just deficits that started today. They have been building over time. One of the reasons I ran for the Senate last year and I think a lot of the other people in the freshman class ran, was to come down here and end the way business had been conducted—no matter who was in the White House, no matter who controlled Congress, because our objective is to try and set the Nation on a new course.

So as we continue this discussion, as we continue to strive to find common ground with regard to starting the Government, we should not lose sight of the overall objective—the objective for this Senator, at least, is to bring the budget into balance in 7 years so the families of this country will be able to keep more of what they earn, so that the children of this country will not grow up with a huge debt burden confronting them and spend too much of their time working to send money to Washington and to pay for their parent's bills, so that our Nation can compete even more effectively in a new century in which global competition will dominate even more than it does today.

For those reasons, I am very proud of what we did Friday night, that for once, despite all the conversations and talk and claims, and so on, that have gone on for many years about balancing the budget, we actually did something about it. We ended the talk and put a bill before the House and before the House of Representatives which, if enacted, would balance the budget. I am proud to say I voted for that bill, and I am proud to say that the bill passed.

For once, Mr. President, on Friday night, we took a stand that was more than just rhetoric. It was a commitment to a specific piece of legislation that would accomplish the balanced budget we all talk about in Washington, and that people have talked about here for a quarter century. After 25 years of rhetoric, Friday night, we did something about it.

Mr. President, I am glad I was part of that effort.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I have not heard all of the presentations on the floor today, but I am sure I would agree with some of what has been said in the context of the shutdown of Government.

The shutdown of Government should not have happened. It should not continue even another minute. There is a lot of talk about who is to blame, and there is probably plenty of blame to go around. Yesterday, I said there is not any juice left in this lemon. It has been squeezed in a dozen different directions. The fact is that this shutdown ought to end.

The Speaker of the House, beginning last April, talked about creating a train wreck, creating a shutdown of Government, boasting about a titanic confrontation resulting in a shutdown. Well, so we have had a titanic confrontation and a shutdown. Regrettably, it hurts our country. It ought not last. We should have and will have, in my judgment, an aggressive debate about the priorities of this country. We will not have a debate and should not have a debate about whether the budget should be balanced. Of course, it should be balanced.

The debate is about how you balance the budget. I hope that negotiators, this afternoon, will decide quickly that the Government shutdown ends immediately, that the negotiations on a reconciliation bill to get to a balanced budget begin immediately, and that we balance the Federal budget.

There is, however, more at stake than just balancing the budget. We certainly should do that. But the plan to do that also represents the spending plan for the next 7 years, or, said differently, it represents the spending priorities of this country for the next 7 years. That is important. The Senator from Arizona, before he left the floor, referenced me and said that I have been active on this. He is correct. But then he said that the difference is, those on the other side of the aisle want the people to send more of their money to Government and those on his side of the aisle want the people to be able to keep more of their money. I am telling you that is not the case. There is not that difference between the two sides of this aisle. I want to demonstrate that there is not that kind of difference.

The difference is in what we would choose to spend the public's money for. I want to use a chart to demonstrate that. We recently had an appropriations bill on the floor, the Defense bill. The majority party, the Republicans, decided that the Pentagon was not asking for enough money. They said: You are not asking for enough, we demand that you take more. We insist that you accept \$7 billion more in spending in this 1 year, over \$30 billion more in the 7 years. We insist that you spend more money. We insist that you buy some B-2 bombers. You did not ask for them and we understand that. You asked to keep the production line open but not to buy more bombers. We insist you start buying more bombers. We have a plan and we insist you buy 20 more B-2 bombers that cost over \$30 billion. We do not have enough money, they say, however, to keep the Head Start Pro-

gram fully funded. We are short \$533 million for that. So 50,000 kids, every one of whom has a name, little boys and girls currently in the Head Start Program are going to be told we cannot afford you, we know the Head Start Program works. It is a wonderful program. A tremendous investment in young kids who come from homes of difficulty, low-income homes. It works. It makes a difference in young kids' lives.

We are told by this plan that we do not have enough money for 50,000 of those kids. But we put the almost identical amount of money into B-2 bombers that the Pentagon did not ask for, did not order, and does not want. The national missile defense, star wars—it is a fancy way of saying star wars. There is \$375 million more stuck in the budget for star wars that the Defense Department did not ask for. And \$1.3 billion is put in the budget for an assault ship, amphibious assault ship that the Pentagon did not ask for; \$974 million is stuck in the budget for a second assault ship that the Pentagon did not ask for. In fact, most people thought the Pentagon does not want one, but Congress wants one, so Congress will decide which of these two it shall buy.

On that side of the aisle, they said, heck, as long as we have the public credit card, the sky is the limit, so buy them both. We have plenty of money. Buy both of those ships for \$2 billion. Then we say for veterans health care, for those veterans who need outpatient visits, 46,000 fewer hospitalizations, and about a million fewer outpatient visits; we are going to save money on you, veterans, because we do not have the money. We spent it on ships the Pentagon did not ask for.

Low-income home energy assistance, 1.3 million households in the middle of the winter when it gets cold, get assistance for the home heating bill because they do not have the money. Well, they are sorry, they say we do not have the money.

But when it comes to F-15 and F-18 airplanes, they say, "By the way, let's buy more, the Pentagon is not right. We know they only asked for a certain amount but we insist they buy more."

I raise these points because when someone stands up and says, "We are the ones who want the taxpayers to keep their money and you on this side of the aisle, you are the ones who want to take it from them." I say baloney, what a bunch of nonsense. You all want to spend it on jet fighter planes and B-2 bombers and star wars. We want to spend it on Star Schools and nutrition programs and Head Start and education that invests in people.

It is not a question of how much we spend. It is a question of what we spend the money on.

I mentioned yesterday, there is probably no better metaphor for the difference in priorities—not the difference in the desire to balance the budget. We

should, we must and we will balance the Federal budget.

Seven years, that is fine with me. Make it 5 if we can get Alan Greenspan and the Federal Reserve to get the boot off the public's neck. Every time we get any amount of economic growth at all, the Fed jumps up and raises interest rates to slow the economy down. We can get some decent economic growth in this country and we can balance the budget in 5 years. We do not need 7.

The metaphor that I think is the best on priorities is a little program called Star Schools. It is a \$25 million program nationally, Star Schools. In the proposal given to us this past week, Star Schools is cut 40 percent; 40 percent of the funding for Star Schools is gone.

But star wars, national missile defense, ergo star wars, a 100-percent increase. The Pentagon does not ask for star wars funding. These folks say, "We want 100 percent increase in star wars funding." A little program, about one-twentieth the size, a 40-percent cut in Star Schools funding.

That represents a difference. These differences in priorities are not little issues for a lot of the American people.

A Republican, David Gergen, who also worked for Democratic administrations—he worked for the Clinton administration as well as Reagan and Bush, but he said recently in an article the following: The lowest 20 percent of the population, "Would lose more income under these spending cuts than the rest of the population combined. At the other end, the highest 20 percent would gain more from the tax cuts than everyone else combined."

That is a difference in priorities, a legitimate difference, one we ought to have an ambitious debate on. But we ought not, because of a continuing resolution and the intransigence of some, have the Government shut down while we debate that.

I am not convinced these days with what is going on in Congress and with the kind of extremism and the interest and, yes, even the appetite to create chaos and, as I said before, what one participant called a titanic confrontation, I am not convinced that the Congress could very easily approve the Ten Commandments. Surely they would find something wrong with them. Almost certainly it would provoke enormous debate. Should there be 11 commandments or maybe only 8? Should we combine six and seven?

The fact is, all of us represent the same interests in this country. Yes, we belong to different political parties. We may be conservatives and liberals. But I think the American public would like us to first of all end this shutdown, and second, turn our attention in a serious way to balance the Federal budget and then do much, much more because our lives are not just about balancing the budget.

That is important, and we should do that. That is not the only thing we can

do in this country. There is much, much more to do to move this country ahead, to advance our economic interests, to compete with others around the world who are shrewd, tough international competitors, to help create more jobs, more opportunity, and more income for the American people. There is much, much more to be done on all of that.

I know there are some in the Congress who do not believe in much of anything that Government does. They do not like Government. But you know Government builds our schools, our roads. We create a police force. We do it together, in something called Government. We have done a lot of wonderful things in 50 years. We have made some mistakes, but we do it together.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. DORGAN. I ask unanimous consent for an additional 30 seconds.

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

Mr. DORGAN. In this debate about priorities, what we need to do is decide—all of us, of every political persuasion—that we want the same goals for America. And then we debate, with the guidance of the American people, how we achieve those goals.

Do we, in fact, achieve those goals by doubling the funding for star wars and deciding star schools are unimportant? I do not think so. Some others may think so. If that is the case, we should have that debate and have the counsel of the American people, as we do, and make decisions.

Mr. President, 200 years of differing views in this country have required us in a democratic system to make decisions by compromise. This time is no different. Compromise is necessary now. I hope by the end of today we are over this hump, the Government shutdown has ended, and we get on to the serious business of balancing the Federal budget and making America better by the right investments in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). The Senator from Nevada is recognized for 10 minutes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President I ask unanimous consent that the Chair advise the Senator from Nevada when there is 1 minute of the 10 minutes remaining.

BALANCED BUDGETS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, people in the audience, people in the State of Nevada, people all over this country, are wondering what this is all about.

Kevin Phillips, who is a Republican, did a piece on public radio this week that I think fairly well illustrates what the problems are between those on that side of the aisle and those of us over here, when he said:

If the budget deficit were really a national crisis instead of a pretext for fiscal favoritism and finagling, we'd be talking about shared sacrifice with business, Wall Street, and the rich, the people who have the big

money making the biggest sacrifice. Instead, it's senior citizens, the poor, the students, and ordinary Americans who will see programs they depend on gutted while business, finance, and the richest 1 or 2 percent, far from making sacrifice, actually get new benefits in tax reductions.

Mr. President, this is what it is all about. This is extremely inconvenient, extremely difficult for everyone in the country, especially States like Nevada where there is such a huge Federal presence, national parks, large recreation areas, the busiest recreation area in America, the biggest entity of the Park System. I should not say the largest—the most heavily visited in the entire Park System, Lake Mead Recreation Area. Almost 10 million people visit there each year, almost a million a month. They cannot get there. It is locked up.

A lot of sacrifices. But the principle, Mr. President, is important, as indicated by a Republican, Kevin Phillips, when he said what is being done by the Republicans is something to benefit the rich, those people of position, and hurting the middle class and the poor. That says it all.

Mr. President, why are we in this situation we are in today? I see my friend from the State of California, who was previously of one of the most famous cities in America, the city of San Francisco, someone who recognizes crisis because she was thrown into the mayorship as a result of an assassination, an American who has spent her life trying to balance budgets, who has come to Congress and the Senate, talking about money, someone who has struggled with how to vote on these issues—because I have spent time with her—and who recognized she would not balance the budget on the back of senior citizens by virtue of her vote, earlier, when we excluded from the balanced budget amendment, Social Security. These are tough decisions, tough decisions for people who strongly believe in a balanced budget.

I resent, Mr. President, because it is not factual, that people on the other side of the aisle say those of us here do not believe in a balanced budget. I point to my friend from California as someone who has lived for balancing budgets.

Yesterday, when I was on this floor, I was between the two Senators from the State of Nebraska, former Governors, the former chairman of the Budget Committee, JIM EXON, and the former Governor of Nebraska, BOB KERREY, chairman of the Entitlement Commission. In a dialog they indicated how they had worked over their political lives for a balanced budget.

No, Mr. President, the balanced budget is not something that the Republicans hold the prize on. We have as many on this side of the aisle who have spent their entire lives talking about balanced budgets.

This is not a battle over a balanced budget. We all acknowledge there should be a balanced budget. It is a question of priorities. We all believe

there should be a balanced budget. This Senator from Nevada believes there should be a balanced budget. But I, along with the Senator from California, did not feel it should be done using Social Security proceeds. I, like Kevin Phillips, Republican political analyst, do not believe the sacrifices should be made "by senior citizens, the poor, students, ordinary Americans who will see programs they depend on gutted, while business, finance, and the richest one or two percent, far from making sacrifices, actually get new benefits and tax reductions." This is not a Democrat who wrote this for a Democratic magazine. This is a Republican who gave an honest analysis on National Public Radio.

Why are we here? We are here because the Republican majorities in the House and the Senate have not passed the appropriations bills. It is as simple as that.

We could spend a lot of time discussing how is the best way to balance the budget, and I think it is appropriate that we do that. But we should do it in the context of real legislation, not contrived crises that we see develop here. If the appropriations bills had been passed on time, we would all be home today with our families.

We all have stories to tell. I will have my five children together for the first time in a long time, Thanksgiving. They are all now gathering in Nevada without the patriarch of the family. But that is OK, because I believe what we are doing here is important and I believe my five children also believe what I am doing here today is important, because what we are doing is a matter of principle.

People have called my office. They want this thing resolved. I do not blame them. They do not identify themselves as Democrats or Republicans. They are average Americans whose greatest expectation of Government is it operate to serve people's interests. They are the kind of people who pay their taxes, play by the rules, and vote for the person and not the party. They want to know why this standoff is occurring, and I have explained why the standoff is occurring. It would be easy for all of us to fold our tents. I would go home to Nevada to my five children and everybody would disperse throughout the United States, but it is not that easy.

We are stuck at an impasse because the bills that finance Government were simply not passed on time. Under the congressional budget process, the House Appropriations Committee is supposed to finish the last annual appropriations bill by June 10. Is it not interesting, we have 13 appropriations bills and none of them were finished on time. Commerce, State, and Justice, July 19, 6 weeks late; DC appropriations, October 19, 4 months late; Labor-HHS, July 24, 7 weeks late; Defense, July 25—on and on, and, simply, they could not do it. The Senate then had to follow suit. We did the best we could.