

to speak for 15 minutes as if in morning business.

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

THE BUDGET PROCESS

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I am not on the Finance Committee. I am not on the Budget Committee. Through Democratic caucuses and studying the budget documents, I have been trying to follow this budget process. I have been an avid student of what is going on.

I have been in the U.S. Senate 21 years. I am absolutely incredulous. I cannot believe what Congress is doing with charge, countercharge. Members of Congress are worrying about who is winning in the polls and who is losing in the polls. But I must say I am amazed that the Republicans absolutely refuse to provide a continuing resolution while we try to work this out. I cannot understand this steady objection to keeping the Government going while we fight about how we are going to balance the budget. How do you explain to the people back home that you are trying to balance the budget when you send 250,000 employees home and say, "Not to worry, you are going to be paid anyway"? Can you believe that we told 250,000 Federal employees this morning not to show up for work and "you will be paid anyway"?

The only reason the people on my staff are going to be paid now, which they were not in the first Government shutdown, is because we passed and the President signed the legislative branch appropriations bill.

Mr. President, we are also seeing what is almost tantamount to a constitutional amendment without voting on it. The Constitution says, essentially, that a bill passed by the Congress shall be presented to the President and if the President approves it, he shall sign it. And if he disapproves, he will not sign it or he will veto it. For 205 years in this country, the President has signed or vetoed bills that were sent to him by the Congress, and the Congress either overrode the veto or they did not. If they did not have the votes to override the veto, then Congress went back to the drawing board trying to meet the President's objections in order to get a bill to him that he would sign.

That has been the procedure under the Constitution for over 200 years, and now we have a totally new procedure. And that procedure is that if the President vetoes a bill and there is a majority of one party in the Congress that takes exception to that veto, but not a big enough majority to override the President's veto, Congress shuts the Government down. Teach that President a lesson. How dare he veto a bill when the opposing party is in control of the Congress. President Clinton has correctly characterized this as a gun to his head.

Republicans are not trying to override the veto. Nobody has brought the reconciliation bill back here for revision after the President vetoed it. We shut the Government down—twice. Twice within 2 months we bring the Government to a halt in such a needless, irresponsible way. The budget does not have to be approved tonight. It does not have to be approved between now and January 15, although it almost certainly would be approved by January 15.

There are a lot of people across the land who are saying "a pox on both your houses." Lord knows, I understand that. As I read this morning's account of this woman in Vermont who has a part-time job making \$85 a month and trying to stay off welfare because she deplures it, but who, in the past, has received a little Federal help under what we call LIHEAP, low-income energy assistance program. This woman said she wore four sweaters to try to stay warm so she could keep the heat as low as possible, but I think she said she is going to run out of fuel next week and she does not have one farthing to buy new fuel. The fuel supplier—and I certainly understand his position—says, "We cannot afford to extend credit to these people. We are not rich. We are just out there selling fuel trying to make a living."

Would you believe that 10,000 people in the city of Chicago alone have been refused and shut off from any additional gas because they cannot pay their bills? That is 10,000 homes in the city of Chicago alone. Last year there was \$1.3 billion in this program, Mr. President. The people of the Northern States are running out of money and fuel.

Why? So we can preserve a \$245 billion tax cut for the wealthiest people in America. It makes Marie Antoinette look positively compassionate.

There is the great novel James Baldwin wrote entitled "Go Tell It On The Mountain," a young black man growing up in the South during the Depression, and he talks about a big dinner on the ground. He said these preachers would get up after their stomachs were full and talk about how many people they had saved, and the central character in this book was saying they talked about saved souls in the way you would talk about ears of corn being lopped off the stalk. And he took a vow, because he wanted to be a minister, that he would never take the gift of God so lightly.

Do you know what happened in the book? As time went on, the central character became a preacher, very good at his trade, and the first thing you know he, too, was talking about saving souls like so many ears of corn being lopped off the stalk.

There are two morals in that. One is that we all have a tendency to take ourselves too seriously and get to believing that somehow or other we have all the solutions. But the other moral is that people who are cold are like lost souls. They are real human beings.

In this case, they are real human beings who are suffering. Why are they suffering? Because of us. All so we can have a \$245 billion tax cut. That includes a capital gains tax cut, which would be good for me and just about every other Senator in this body, each of whom makes in excess of \$133,000 a year. We will get a tax cut. People making less than \$30,000 a year will see their taxes go up.

The interesting thing is we are always standing on the floor of the Senate pontificating about what the American people want, especially when we think the American people want what we want. I heard people time and time again saying that people want a tax cut. The truth of the matter is, they do not. Look at this chart. This shows 10 polls asking whether Americans prefer tax cuts or deficit reduction: USA Today/CNN/Gallup in December 1994; New York Times/CBS in January 1995; Wall Street Journal/NBC in January 1995; Washington Post/ABC in February 1995; Times/Mirror, February 1995; Wall Street Journal/NBC, March 1995; Los Angeles Times, March 1995; USA Today/CNN/Gallup, April 1995; the New York Times/CBS, April 1995; New York Times/CBS, October 1995.

In every single one of them, a majority of people said, "Do not cut taxes until you balance the budget." Congress is supposed to at least be mildly responsive to what the American people believe.

Mr. President, let me add something interesting about this last New York Times/CBS poll taken in October 1995. I hope all my Republican friends are listening. The national polls showed that overall, 60 percent of those surveyed did not want a tax cut until after the budget was balanced, 35 percent did. But among Republicans surveyed, the figure was 68 to 30. Well over 2 to 1 of Republicans said do not cut taxes until you balance the budget.

So how did this huge tax cut proposal come to be? Well, the Budget Committee asked CBO to make a study and say, if we get a balanced budget by the year 2002, how much will we save in interest costs and other dividends from a balanced budget?

CBO said, "\$170 billion." So how did we decide to use that fiscal dividend? Use it to soften Medicare cuts? No. Medicaid, our health care system for the poorest of the poor, one-half of which are children? No. Education? No. Environment? No. Earned income tax credit? No. The Budget and Finance Committees said, "Oh, \$170 billion dividend for balancing the budget. Let's give that and another \$75 billion to the richest people in America in the form of tax cuts."

If you have not seen Kevin Phillips' recent article, I recommend it to everybody. He is no bleeding heart liberal. He points out what happened in 1981. If we followed the Reagan prescription of cutting taxes, we were told, we would generate so much economic activity we would balance the

budget by 1984. So 1984 came around and the deficit was up to almost \$200 billion. It was \$58 billion his first year as President, and after we passed everything he asked for, the deficit in 1984 was not balanced, it was \$200 billion out of balance.

Then we went to Gramm-Rudman. Gramm-Rudman was going to balance the budget in 3 or 4 years. And the rest of the story is painfully known to everybody in America. The budget deficit soared once again.

Then we had that fiasco at Andrews Air Force Base. We were going to balance the budget by 1993. What happened? The budget was headed for almost \$300 billion in deficit.

Forgo the tax cut, Mr. President, and take two-tenths of a percent off the Consumer Price Index, and we will be 90 percent of the way home toward a balanced budget. We will not have to tell the nursing home patients of this country that their children are going to have to start picking up the tab for their care in the nursing home. You do not have to tell the elderly when they go to bed at night they might be destitute the next morning because of a catastrophic illness.

Mr. President, I came here to vent my frustration and, hopefully, make a little sense about what is going on and what is not going on. What is not going on is the people's business. I yield the floor.

Mr. ROBB addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, might I inquire of the Chair if we are in morning business or if we are on the Defense authorization bill at this point?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are on the Defense authorization bill.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, although it could be properly conducted on the authorization bill, under the Pastore rule I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized as if in morning business for not to exceed 10 minutes. And it will probably be considerably less.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Virginia may proceed.

Mr. ROBB. Thank you, Mr. President.

IMPASSE OVER BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I just want to address the question that is bothering just about everyone who serves in Congress today and most of the people who live in this area and many of the rest of the people around the country. And that question has to do with the current impasse over the budget negotiations and the shutdown of our Federal Government.

Mr. President, I understand the deep feelings and convictions held on both sides of this argument. It goes to some very fundamental choices that are important to this Government today and in the future.

I think it is very unlikely, given the deep-seated convictions that are involved on both sides of the question, that the budget impasse will be resolved in the near term. Indeed, if both sides were to agree today on how we could solve the budget problem—and I'm not simply talking about a continuing resolution, but the budget problem—we could not craft, draft, pass, and send to the President a responsible compromise budget in the time remaining before Christmas and the holiday period. I say this with the understanding that we are already in the first day of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah as I speak.

Mr. President, while I have never been an advocate for tax cuts before we balance our budget, I have consistently supported a balanced budget. I have consistently supported a 7-year balanced budget. I have consistently supported using Congressional Budget Office figures. And, indeed, both sides have come to an essential agreement on these parameters for any compromise.

But, in light of the difficulty in forging an overall budget agreement, I suggest and appeal to the leaders on both sides of the Capitol to do what they can today to extend the continuing resolution that will allow the processes of Government to continue. This partial shutdown is simply irresponsible and, frankly, one that none of us can adequately explain to anyone who is affected by it.

Admittedly, I represent a State that has a disproportionate number of those most directly affected, but the pervasive effect of the partial shutdown goes far beyond the people who are actually the professionals of Government and who make Government run. It goes to the local economies in which these individuals live. It goes to the confidence of the international and national financial markets.

Indeed, with respect to the first shutdown, the original projections were very significant in terms of the dollars that were directly lost. We had some 800,000 Federal employees sent home and then ultimately paid for the time they were sent home. And we had a complete loss of confidence in our Federal Government for failing to do what we have been sent here to do.

As I have said, the differences between the two sides are clearly very difficult to reconcile. And, indeed, it is entirely possible that the question of whether or not we have block grants or entitlements may not be resolved until after the next general election when we will elect a President of the United States and all of the Members of the House of Representatives and a third of the Members of this body—because that question is fundamental to our system of values.

But nothing for either side will be accomplished by continuing the partial shutdown of the Federal Government. While it is only within the power of this body to end it, there has been re-

sistance to passing a continuing resolution that does not affect, in part, the arguments that are embraced as part of the larger budget debate that is taking place.

But, Mr. President, both sides have made their points on the larger issues of balancing our budget. Now is the time to approve a continuing resolution that would allow our Government to function and not drain taxpayer resources and public confidence. Then the larger questions, where the views are so deeply held and the rhetoric to date has been so irreconcilable, can be addressed in due course.

So, Mr. President, to the leaders of Congress and the President, I say publicly, as I have done privately, continue to work on the great issues that are the subject of the debate that we are engaged in today, but also give the Government an opportunity to move forward at this time by allowing Congress to pass and the President to sign an extension of the continuing resolution. We can then continue to see whether or not we can resolve the larger questions.

I will close by thanking the Chair and thanking other Members who have been very patient while I have made this particular plea. The plight of many of those directly affected and many others indirectly affected at this time of year is serious, one that should not and, as far as I am concerned, cannot be ignored.

With that, I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. NICKLES addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business for 15 minutes.

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

(The remarks of Mr. NICKLES pertaining to the introduction of S. 1484 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

THE BUDGET

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I see my friend and colleague from Arkansas is on the Senate floor and I heard part of his comments in regard to the budget impasse. I say as a person who has been in on many of these negotiations, I have been very frustrated that the administration has not kept its commitment to come up with a balanced budget in 7 years using honest economics. We have had 4 weeks since passage of the continuing resolution. That was 4 weeks of time almost totally wasted, and we have not had a fruitful or real productive effort by the administration. Their last budget submission did not use Congressional Budget Office economics which, because they have been revised, include \$135 billion of savings, enabling it to be easier to balance the budget.

They did come up with a back door Gramm-Rudman to raise taxes if you