

in a bipartisan effort. We have over 40 Members who have joined already to cosponsor a resolution that would open the Government, stop the bleeding, stop the loss of money, but let us continue to debate whether we cut Medicare and Medicaid, whether we cut the education loans, whether we cut in the environment, but open the Government so we are not losing \$50 million a day.

This funds the Government at 90 percent. It allows people to be back at work doing the nursing home inspections that they are entitled and must be responsible to do, opening the national parks, opening the monuments, taking down the image internationally that the Government is shut down. Our embassies have had to send out letters to ensure our foreign governments that we are, in fact, not a government in crisis or revolution. This should not be.

And let me remind my colleagues that under the Constitution we are to work with the three branches of government, and we must work with the President and this House and the Senate. Let us work together, pass House Joint Resolution 155, and allow us to open this Government up. It is most important. House Joint Resolution 155. Let us pass it and open the Government.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order in place of the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES].

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

TALK IS EASY; BALANCING THE BUDGET IS DIFFICULT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BUYER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, actually, I do believe with some of the Members here on the floor, we could actually work out the budget deal. Don't you think? That is about how I feel at the moment, is to override that which is down below the hill so that we can get it done.

One thing that did bother me, before I start in on this, is when I heard one of my colleagues mention the word "perhaps." Balancing the budget is perhaps a laudatory thing to do. Perhaps is kind of a word like a maybe. Like balancing the budget may be a good thing to do. It does not imply any form of desirability, which, in fact, bothers

me somewhat, and that is the problem that we have.

It is easy to talk about let us balance the Nation's budget, but when we actually get down to doing it, it is very difficult. One thing that is bothersome is, whether it is the Republicans or whether it is Democrats, there is this blame game that goes on in this town. And when we feel the heat back home by our constituents or Federal workers or someone who cannot get a passport or visa, it is easy to quickly blame someone else. Or if, in fact, someone is working in a Veterans Administration and someone calls to have a need and they say, well, just call your Congressman. They would like to blame the Congress, and that is an easy thing to do.

There is something that confronts us, though, and that is the Federal Government cannot sustain its current fiscal policies. I do not care who we are or what our background is or our partisanship, that is a fact. The spending commitments will far exceed the revenues available to meet the Federal Government's obligations. That is a fact. So we cannot deal on assumptions. Assumptions carry great liability.

Facts are stubborn things. It is a condition, not a theory, which presently confronts us. Look at this chart here for a moment. This is what confronts us. We have a national debt. Look at this national debt and the explosion. There is a great blame game when they say this national debt. They blame it on the 12 years of the Reagan-Bush era, as if Congress did not pass spending bills. So when they cut taxes, they did not cut spending, and we got a mushroom in the national debt.

I came to Congress in 1992. I am not interested in a blame game here. I know what confronts us. Fact is what confronts us.

If my colleagues would time travel with me and we say, now in the year 2002 we balance the budget, well, this bothers me. I am not satisfied. I am not satisfied because I know the national debt will continue to grow from its \$4.9 trillion today to around \$6.8 or \$6.9 trillion. This national debt, this will take us up to about 2030 to 2035 to bring it back into better balance. I will not even be alive.

So people say, STEVE, why are you doing this? It is very easy to come here to the floor and say all of these things. Oh, my gosh, we have Federal workers not being paid. Here are some of the impacts. Here is someone that needs a visa to come back to school from whatever country they are from. Or here is someone that needs to go overseas for a particular job, or whatever is going on.

There are numerous examples, and we can go on and on and on. Do we give in to the moment or do we permit the eyes of our minds to see the greater vision? And the greater vision is saving the country. Save the country. Because if we permit the national debt to just

mushroom and balloon like it is, I know what countries do whose debts become unmanageable. They devalue their currency.

I will submit this to the American people. If they see Members of Congress leaving this institution and they are starting to buy gold, Americans better buy gold, because we can see what is about to happen.

So it is easy to come here and wrap ourselves around whatever issue. There is no ownership on the issues of compassion. Some like to believe there are, but there are not. I neither believe that the milk of human kindness has soured, nor will I give in to the tears of vexation.

Mr. Speaker, I look at this chart and I think what a luxury President John Kennedy must have had when he came to this town in the early 1960's. Because at that time he had 70 percent of the budget that was discretionary spending. Seventy percent. Twenty-three percent was entitlement, 7 percent was interest on the debt. By 2002, the discretionary spending will have gone from the 70 percent all the way to only 28 percent.

□ 1445

So when we subtract 16 percent of the 28 percent for the military budget, we are not arguing over much anymore, because the mandatory spending side, entitlements and interest, they overtake itself. It is wrong and we have to balance the budget. Let us not give in to the rhetoric today.

CLEAN CONTINUING RESOLUTION WILL PUT FEDERAL EMPLOYEES BACK TO WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. VOLKMER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BUYER], who just spoke, for his steadfastness for an effort to balance the budget, but I must disagree with him to the extent as far as he will go by saying that we must have a vision, and the vision is that we balance the budget in 7 years, and in the meantime, we make people suffer unendlessly. Those people who are suffering are innocent victims, not only Federal employees but contractors, private businesses, et cetera, in order to reach that goal, and it is not necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I tell the gentleman from Indiana, he and others on his side had an opportunity to vote for the coalition balanced budget amendment that many of us supported, and they did not, for the sole reason that it did not include a big tax cut for the wealthy. That is the only reason.

So, it tells me that what they really want is a big tax cut for the wealthy at the same time they want to cut back on Medicare, et cetera. But that is not

really why I want to take the 5 minutes. I just want to emphasize that I, too, support a balanced budget in 7 years, but I do not want to give the tax cut and cut Medicare and all those other things at same time.

We can have a balanced budget. There is no question in my mind that if the majority party would decide to go with the coalition budget, we could pass it and I think the President would sign it and we would have it done, but that is not what they want.

The other thing, what I really came here to talk about is I keep hearing in this well, and I heard it in December and I have heard it ever since December 15, telling us that the President has not come forth with his budget; that he agreed in the November 20 continuing resolution to bring a balanced budget. That is not what it says.

Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the gentleman from South Carolina and others who have made that statement, that they either cannot read, and that is a sorry affair for somebody to be in the Congress that cannot read, or, if they can read, they do not understand what they read.

I would like to read to the Members of Congress, for those who have not read that resolution, what it actually says.

Section 203: Commitment to a 7-Year Balanced Budget. The President and the Congress shall enact legislation in the first session of the 104th Congress to achieve a balanced budget not later than the fiscal year 2002, as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office; and, the President and the Congress agree that the balanced budget must protect future generations, ensure Medicare solvency, reform welfare, and provide adequate funding for Medicaid, education, agriculture, national defense, veterans and the environment. Further, the balanced budget shall adopt tax policies to help working families and stimulate future economic growth.

This does not say anything about the President submitting a balanced budget to anybody, but yet they keep insisting the reason they shut down the Government is because the President has not submitted a balanced budget to them. They submitted their balanced budget and they say the President has not submitted his.

Mr. Speaker, the President never agreed to do that. There is not one statement in there about the President submitting a balanced budget. What is really interesting to me is the conditions that they now put on a CR, continuing resolution. Back on October 1, we had a CR, a continuing resolution, that ran into November. It did not have any conditions.

The President stands today, and we on this side stand, ready to sign and vote for a continuing resolution to keep this Government going. We proved that yesterday. We wanted to take up the resolution of Senator DOLE, the majority leader from the Senate, that would have kept this Government working, but we could not get 20 Members from the other side to go

along with us. We got 2, and that is all from the majority party.

The Gingrich Republicans refused to let us even take that up. They said, "No. We are going to keep the Government shut down until we get our way." Pure blackmail. That is all it is.

Mr. Speaker, this has never happened before in the history of this country. We have never had a shutdown to this magnitude and to this length of time. And how much longer will it go? Well, we are going to have to ask Speaker GINGRICH, because he is the only one that can tell us. All the rest of the Republicans are going to follow him just like a pied piper. If he decides that we do a continuing resolution, we will do it. If he decides we do not, we will not. So, we will have to ask Speaker GINGRICH whether this is going to last another month, a week, 2 weeks or whatever.

Mr. Speaker, I say all we need is a continuing resolution, a clean one, and we can get everybody back to work. We can still negotiate on a balanced budget.

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL ORDER

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes in place of the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. FUNDERBURK].

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

CONSEQUENCES OF GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Maryland [Mrs. MORELLA] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker and Members of this body, it was yesterday that I took part in a bipartisan press conference that dealt with a group called the Federal Employee Emergency Assistance. It was there that we discussed the fact that the people who are receiving the assistance by and large are people who are receiving income in the range of \$20,000 to \$27,000 a year, who are single heads of household; most of them are women.

Can my colleagues imagine these people who are not receiving a paycheck who have to pay rent or a mortgage or utility bills? Well, I and my colleagues who were there have pledged support to this fund, but this fund should not be so overloaded, as it is now, with the calls that are coming in, the emergency calls, if we did not have this shutdown.

This is day 20. I have spoken often about it. My colleagues have spoken often about it. Every day the circumstances become more dire in terms of the consequences. We have problems now with the Centers for Disease Control not being able to perform its functions and NIH not being able to per-

form their functions. Blood banks are running out of the supply of blood. Meals on Wheels is facing the consequences of a shutdown.

We know also that there has been some discussion about having a continuing resolution bit by bit to put a few more agencies back in operation. I would submit to this House that if we have a bit-by-bit continuing resolution, that we are going to have a lot of organizations, people, American citizens, falling through the cracks, because there are enormous consequences and ripple effects of this shutdown.

Home buyers, home buyers who are looking for the VA or FHA loans would be affected by it. Federal contractors would be affected by it. I brought just a few of the many, many letters I have received from Federal contractors. That means jobs and continuation of employment.

HIV-AIDS, a stop work order for a company in Montgomery County, MD. Another company that is dependent on tourism in publications has had to lay off people. Another company that deals with the EPA. Another one that deals with the EPA through Superfund. Can my colleagues imagine the toxic waste sites that will not be cleaned because of this?

Aerospace, information and environment, NASA, these are all contractors that even if we pay our Federal employees, and I have been involved very much in making sure they will be paid, these Federal contractors will not be paying these people who are furloughed and some may even lose health benefits over a period of time.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would say we have got to work together. A clean continuing resolution is what we want until we reach the resolution of this budget in terms of the deliberation. I say to the President, get that 7-year budget scored by CBO in front of the negotiators. I say to the negotiators, stay there, stay there until it is done. I say to my colleagues, I hope the President and I hope my colleagues will consider withholding their salaries when Federal employees are not being paid. I say to my colleagues, there should be no recess for this House until we get the Government back in full operation.

CONGRESS SHOULD DO A REALITY CHECK AND REOPEN THE GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I have come to the floor, as many others have, to point out here it is, Thursday afternoon. It is the 20th day of the shutdown and the Congress has no business, and that is because we are not allowed to bring up the main business that everyone in America wonders why we are not dealing with and the sad fact the Government is shut down.

The Government is shut down and we are being denied the right to come to