

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to respond while the gentlewoman from Kansas, Mrs. MEYERS, was here, because she made a comment. I wanted to just share for the record that as we talk about young people having children, I think we would be remiss if we did not see opportunities that we have here in Congress where we can intervene, and we have not done that.

I know the gentlewoman did not mean to scapegoat innocent children who happen to be born out of wedlock. We could have an opportunity in the Medicaid discussion itself to fund prevention, but we do not do that. Currently we wait until they get pregnant, and then we are able to say, oh, look what is happening. We do not spend money to provide teenagers with family planning and to make sure we intervene in a positive way. That is something we could have the responsibility for.

I just want to put in the record that the gentlewoman and I are held accountable for that.

Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas. If the gentleman would yield for 30 seconds, I would say my main concern is that programs that we initially started and have carried on, that we tried to help people, and instead they have become an incentive for people to join the welfare system. They have become too generous and they have become an entitlement, people know they are there, and they have been abusing the system. That is what I am trying to end.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, if I might, I believe in the House absurdity begets absurdity. This shutdown is obviously one of the most absurd things I have seen. It clearly has accomplished nothing, although it has provided a great deal of hardship, not only for Federal employees but American taxpayers as well.

Last week the senior Senator from Texas, my colleague in the other body, Mr. GRAMM, made a comment asking if anybody noticed whether or not the Federal Government had shutdown. I would take a moment of the House to mention two people who I think did notice that the Federal Government had shutdown. One is Molly Scott, who deals with the contractors at the veterans hospital in Houston, who are not getting paid. Nor is Ms. Scott getting paid. In fact, her apartment house is about to start an eviction notice against her, and her 9-year-old disabled son can no longer go to day care because she does not have any money to pay them.

But it turns out Mr. GRAMM also noticed, because 2 days ago his campaign for the presidency was capable of picking up a check for \$4 million from the Federal Elections Commission, which is a so-called entitlement under the law. So it appears that the absurdity of how this Government is being run under the Republican leadership is one where people who go out and work for a living, who have a contract with the Government to work for them, do not

get paid for their time, and therefore they cannot pay their creditors; and people who are running for political office can get paid. That certainly makes no business sense, but if it is revolutionary, I think that would be correct.

Let us address a couple of questions about why we are here. This all started when this House under the Republican leadership failed to finish its business, its constitutional business, by October 1, 1995. We did not send any appropriation bills to the President by the beginning of the fiscal year. So far now, 3 months into the fiscal year, we have sent only 10 of 13.

We all know that the process of Government under the Constitution is one of give and take. The fact is that you send the bills to the President, the President can veto or sign those bills, and you work them out. It happened with Ronald Reagan when he was the President and had a Republican-controlled Senate and Democrat-controlled House, it happened with President Bush, and it has happened throughout the history of this Nation.

But to add insult to injury I think is the fact that this Republican leadership decided earlier this year that we would adjourn for the month of August when we had not finished our business. Now we are in this mess. Now they are talking about adjourning until the President gives the State of the Union address without taking care of their business.

There is just simply no excuse for that. We have heard the stories about people, like the folks like Dick Clark, who is with the University of Texas Health Science Center at the Texas Medical Center in my district, who has NIH grants to do research, and they are looking to let people go. Or the businessmen in Houston trying to sell U.S. goods and services overseas, but they cannot get passports to get out of the country to do it.

The fact of the matter is we tried to address this issue. Two weeks ago we tried to bring a compromise budget to the floor using the coalition budget scored by the CBO which actually would add less debt to the Nation and less debt to my children and your children and our grandchildren than the Republican budget, and you blocked it just like you blocked the CR.

Let us do our work. Let us put the country back to work. Let us stop this childish behavior, just like Senator DOLE has said in the Senate.

COME TO THE TABLE, MR. PRESIDENT, AND BRING A BALANCED BUDGET WITH YOU

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

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I do not doubt that the American citizens are very disturbed about what they see happening in Washington. They are probably wondering, when are the lead-

ers of Congress and the President of the United States going to get together? Is this not a negotiation just as a labor-management negotiation would be?

The fact is, it is not such a negotiation, and that is unfortunate. It should be. The congressional leaders want it to be. The congressional leaders went in with a plan, a budget that had been overwhelmingly approved in both Chambers and had been sent to the President, and which he vetoed.

The President has had no plan. The President, who has signed on the dotted line to say "yes, I believe in a seven year budget," and "yes, I want that to be scored by the Congressional Budget Office," something he had advocated in this Chamber several years ago in a State of the Union Address. But when the President left town and went abroad, his agents came up with no plan.

Finally they submitted a little plan. That little plan was \$400 billion in deficit. Now, if you have a \$400 billion deficit every year, you are going to add \$1 trillion to the national debt essentially in 2½ years, and that will mean we add \$4 trillion in a decade to what is already a \$5 trillion national debt.

Now, when the President came back, quite correctly, he got away from the aides having the discussion, and meetings were held at the White House. The President participated, the Speaker of the House participated, and the majority leader of the Senate participated. That was all very well. Some days they seemed to be making a little progress. But never has the President submitted a balanced budget. And he probably never will. He has not kept his end of the bargain. He has not kept his word.

Now, in a labor negotiation with management, both sides would go in with their wish list, if you will, and there would be an honest discussion of those wish lists. There would be a discussion of the priorities, what is important to the workers, what is important to management. For the latter, it might be the loosening up of work rules. For labor, it might be additional benefits and an increase in wages.

Unfortunately, this Congress-President negotiation has not been what every labor-management negotiation in America is like. It has been one side—the congressional leadership—coming to the table prepared to bargain with a plan about which they are willing to have an argument. But the other side—the President—has no plan. The other side has no real options, no real offering, to solve the problem.

I think the American people, who are disturbed by gridlock between the executive branch and the legislative branch, want to see their leaders sit down and work it out. Yet that is not happening, and it will not happen until the President comes to the table with a plan.

Unfortunately, on the President's side, some people are still saying, "Well, why do we need a balanced

budget?" Well, we need a balanced budget because, as I said earlier, we have a \$5 trillion national debt, and if we do not zero out that annual deficit in the next 7 years, we will add another \$1 trillion to the national debt. The average child born today, as many have said, already owes \$187,000 in their lifetime to pay the interest on the debt. That lifetime payment does not reduce the national debt!

What does a balanced budget mean for the average citizen?

Let us look at a few items just as a Californian might look at them. The holder of the average California home mortgage, which, believe it or not, is about \$176,000, would save almost \$4,800 per year through lower mortgage interest payments, because a balanced budget by the Federal Government would give confidence to bondholders, to the stock market, and to other financial entities in our country.

How about students? I happen to be a former university president. Student loans are very important to provide educational opportunity for millions of Americans. A California student with an average California loan, which is roughly \$4,300 repayable in 10 years, would save \$858 in interest payments over the life of the loan. That is based on U.S. Department of Education figures.

A balanced budget for the Nation would result in almost 500,000 jobs being provided in California. The cost of borrowing by local governments would be reduced. The 12 largest cities—including my own city of Long Beach—would save \$1.38 billion which could be reinvested in these 12 cities for schools, law enforcement, and public health. In other words, the average citizen would benefit.

Mr. President, get your financial plan—your budget—come to the table, and let us settle this dispute.

EFFECTS OF THE FEDERAL SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, the shutdown of the Federal Government is a national disgrace. Yesterday the Senate acknowledged that enough was enough, that the point had been made, that the issue of a 7-year balanced budget was being actively negotiated, and that it was time to stop the widespread suffering caused by the Government shutdown.

But the extremist right wing in the House seems to have so much contempt for the Government and such indifference to the pain the shutdown is causing, that they will not listen to reason. They think nothing of using the Federal Government as a tool of political blackmail or extortion.

Fortunately, President Clinton has protected his priorities and not caved in to these gangster tactics. In the

104th Congress, President Clinton and congressional Democrats have defended ordinary Americans who rely on programs like Medicare, Medicaid, student loans, and student lunches. Republicans have sought to gut these programs which help millions of people. So it should come as no surprise that they seem indifferent to the plight of millions of people, both clients and Government employees, who have suffered from the Government shutdown.

I spoke to several such people Monday at the Federal Government headquarters in New York City. I met one of my constituents, Ms. Edio Rodriguez, there. She is a single mother trying to raise two children on her own. But this furloughed secretary at the Department of Environmental Protection has not been paid in several weeks. In the Rodriguez household, it was anything but a merry Christmas. The only household income is earned by one of her sons, who is also a college student. He may be forced to take next semester off because he cannot pay his student loans and support the family at the same time.

An employee of the Social Security Administration put it beautifully when she said, "I don't know the politics of the situation. They aren't clear. The humanity of the situation, or lack of it, is very clear. Working people should be paid, and people who have 23 years of service should not be told to go home and stay home against their will and without a paycheck."

The indifference of this new majority toward Federal employees is so overwhelming that I may be wasting my breath by talking about the humanity of the situation. But other Americans are being affected, too.

I met my constituent Laurine Fox, a musician who was supposed to be the guest conductor for an orchestra in Bulgaria over the holidays, but Laurine could not get a passport because politicians in Washington are bickering.

I met a woman whose elderly parents immigrated from Europe many years ago and now live in Georgia. They made a pilgrimage to New York to see their names inscribed on the wall at Ellis Island. But Ellis Island was closed, and their sentimental journey was ruined.

It is not just individuals who are being harmed. U.S. manufacturing companies, the city of New York and the U.S. Government stand to lose millions of dollars, because the shutdown is rendering ineffectual the first Hungarian Apparel and Textile Manufacturing Seminar, which is scheduled to take place next Monday in New York. The Hungarians cannot come because they cannot get visas.

Mr. Speaker, this is more than lost business opportunities; it is an international embarrassment.

Mr. Speaker, we can no longer ignore the human beings who are suffering from Washington paralysis, like the jeweler who works right across the

street from the Federal Building in New York City. His business over the Christmas season was down more than 60 percent. Yet some Members of the Republican majority have said that no one has noticed the Government shutdown. To those right-wing extremists, all I can say is try telling that to the American people. This shutdown is pure malicious insanity.

Mr. Speaker, the blackmail and extortion will not work. It is time for the new majority to stop acting like gangsters and start acting like statesmen.

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TELLING HORROR STORIES AND BLAMING REPUBLICANS WILL NOT SOLVE BUDGET PROBLEMS

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

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, this evening we are hearing a litany of comments about various problems that have arisen with the Government shutdown. I am afraid the other side of the aisle is trying to confuse the issue by citing all these examples.

There is no question about it. The Government shutdown is causing problems, but that is simply confusing the issue, as I said. Talking about ad hominem stories, in other words Government by anecdote, does not really solve the problem. Telling horror stories about some things that are not being done or services that are not being provided does not solve the problem. Just standing there and blaming the Republicans for the problem, does not solve the problem.

I think we have to go back and look at the real issues involved here, and the real issue is the incredible size of the national debt and the size of the budget deficit every year, and the amount of money that we put into paying interest every year.

Mr. Speaker, we have a national debt approaching \$5 trillion. That calculates out to about \$19,000 for every man, woman and child in these United States. And when we consider the number who are working and are able to repay this debt, that balloons to approximately \$30,000 per capita.

We pay interest at the rate of \$1,000 per year on the national debt for every man, woman and child in the United States; \$1,000 per capita. And, once again, if one translates that into the taxpaying citizens, on average each taxpaying citizen is spending well over \$1,500 or \$1,600 just to pay the interest on the national debt each and every year.

The budget deficits continue, which means the debt gets bigger every year and the interest payments get bigger every year. We simply cannot continue. And that is a fact. That is the real issue here. It is not the horror stories about the Government being shut down, the issue is our national debt.

We have proposed, Mr. Speaker, that we achieve a balanced budget in 7 years