

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

using honest numbers. That is a very modest goal, but that is something that the Republicans have proposed, and that is something that the Congress has passed and sent to the President.

In November, the President promised that within 30 days he would present a balanced budget that met those criteria, balanced in 7 years using honest numbers. December 15, when his proposal was supposed to be unveiled, it did not balance. It was out of balance by a large amount, according to the Congressional Budget Office, which analyzes these things.

In the meantime, the House and the Senate passed the Balanced Budget Act of 1995. It passed on October 26. The President vetoed it. I can understand his philosophical problems with some of the issues, but I do believe he has an obligation to negotiate seriously and to present to the negotiators his version of a balanced budget. That has not come forth even up to this point.

As a result, the Government has shut down in an attempt to force the issue. It simply has not worked. He has still not presented a balanced budget. I am reaching the conclusion that the President does not want to balance the budget and he is not going to present his version of a balanced budget. I believe that is tragic given the enormity of the problem. He will not sign our balanced budget, he will not present one of his own, what do we then do?

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious problem for this Nation, and it is a very serious problem for this Congress. We are trying to address it, and perhaps we have to take another track if the President simply will not respond and will not present a balanced budget of his own. After all, the House is the body that initiates the legislation dealing with appropriations. That is prescribed in the Constitution.

Perhaps what we have to do is present to the President bite-sized budgets. Maybe we should call them mini budgets, dealing with one issue at a time and saying, Mr. President, this is all we can afford to spend on this particular item in this fiscal year and ask him to sign each of these, almost a line-item budget, if we like. And maybe if we put it in bite-sized chunks, he will be able to understand the problem, we will be able to deal with it, and we can achieve a balanced budget in that fashion.

In any event, we have to take another approach, something that he will understand given the fact that he simply will present a balanced budget to us and will not sign the one that we have prepared.

So I urge all of us to look at this afresh, and I especially urge the President to work with us and negotiate in good faith as we try to solve this enormous national problem.

REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP ABDICATING ITS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GOVERNANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that partisanship has never been the major reason that I have been serving in this Congress, and I think, over the years, I have tried very hard in my career to build bridges across the aisle on all the committees I have served on and build bridges between regions and representatives from different regions of the country. But as I witness the current impasse, and have never seen anything like it in my career, I would have to say that we have a serious problem within the Republican Party.

This week we saw that the Senate, which is in Republican control, pass a bill to end the shutdown, this historic shutdown of the Federal Government. As we have seen workers temporarily laid off, without checks, across this country, the House Republicans cannot find it in either their management or their personal skills to pass the bill that was passed in the Republican Senate.

So my question this afternoon, with all due respect, is what is wrong with the Republican leadership in this Chamber that is abdicating its responsibilities for governance? I would say it is not only the budget that needs to be balanced, but, I think, it is the Republican leaders in this House that are out of balance, and it has gotten to the point where it is not just the Federal workers that are being affected, but the taxpaying public of this country that is being denied services.

Let me say in that regard, as someone who has taken a lifelong career interest in veterans affairs, that today I received a communication at my request from the Veterans Hospital in my region of the country, which has jurisdiction over the Ann Arbor Medical Center, as well as the Toledo Veterans Outpatient Clinic in my own home district, and I asked the chief of medical services there, Dr. Lloyd Jacobs, for a report on what was happening in our region of the country, and learned that the personal in that particular hospital, in our outpatient clinic as well, received paychecks with less than half of their normal amount, as only time worked before December 15 was credited for pay.

In fact, in those checks deductions were taken out in full, and that accounted for significantly less than half a paycheck in many instances.

Dr. Jacobs indicated to me that this has caused very significant hardship for people working in our clinic and hospital. For example, a clinical pharmacist, who is the sole supporter of two young children, is already having trouble meeting mortgage payments for that family. Another single mom in that hospital, with a 13-year-old child,

is seriously worried about adequate food until the next paycheck. And one employee told him about the fact that she was unlikely to be able to come to work because she was having difficulty buying gas and she really did not have her full payment.

Before I recognize the esteemed member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs here, let me just say that the doctor told me that his staff is now so demoralized, sufficiently distressed, and distracted that he has recommended, as medical center director in our region of the country, that they are going to diminish medical services to our veterans, including cutting back and stopping reconstructive vascular surgery, cardiothoracic surgery, interventional cardiology, and other risky and stressful procedures, because he is worried about the people who support him in the operating rooms concentrating on the operations they are supposed to be performing on our veterans. He wrote me saying he hopes this is temporary and can we not do something here in Washington so that he can begin doing the job the taxpayers expect him to do, and that is to operate on the veterans in our region who are seeking medical care.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY].

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me. What she said is exactly true, and is happening in all our 171 veterans hospitals across the country. We are really headed for a disaster unless we come up with something to pay these people, to pay our bills on surgical equipment, medicines, and the things we have to use and do to be sure that these veterans get the proper medical care.

It is a problem. I congratulate the gentlewoman for pointing it out. We have to do something. We have to pass a continuing resolution to take care of these veterans hospitals. If we do not, we are not taking care of those that marched off and did a great job for our country and have served well. I appreciate the gentlewoman's yielding.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would like to ask the distinguished gentleman from Mississippi, who has served in this Chamber with honor for many, many years, has he ever seen anything like this before?

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Never in my 30 years.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that.

All I can say is that one quality seems to be missing in this Chamber, and that is good measure, good measure, on the part of the Republican Party. And if I could plead with the Members who are here on the floor, please heal your wounds, take us away from this edge of brinkmanship. Pass the bill that the Senate has sent over here.