

compromise." My friends, in a democracy I do not know how we come together to make policy without compromising. Not compromising our principles, but agreeing that there are different ways to do things, different ways to accomplish objectives, and know that in good faith, Americans acting through their elected representatives could reach those ends. Not stamp their feet. Not point a gun at the President's head and say, "If you don't do it my way, I shut down the Government."

BOB DOLE said, "I don't see any sense in what we've been doing." America sees no sense in what we have been doing.

OPEN THE GOVERNMENT AND CONTINUE SERIOUS BUDGET TALKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. METCALF). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. LOWEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the previous speaker, my colleague, for saying that this just does not make any sense. I was in my office this evening. I really had not planned to come down, but I was listening to so many of the speakers who kept talking about how they were shutting down the Government and waiting for the President to take action.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the President and the Speaker have been meeting around the clock. I spent a weekend just a couple of weeks ago meeting around the clock trying to work out a balanced budget. I have been in this House now about 7 years, and I have never been part of a time like this. It is really an embarrassment, and I imagine that the people who are watching are embarrassed.

We want to work together in balancing a budget, but I cannot see why closing down the Government, causing such pain to so many people, helps us accomplish that purpose. There are meetings going on.

I have been receiving calls from constituents in my district, and last night the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON], my friend, and I were talking about this issue, and I mentioned the fact that at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Veterans Hospital in Montrose they were having a bake sale in order for the employees who were working there, over 1,400, to get the carfare to go to work. Many of them work from paycheck to paycheck.

Mr. Speaker, the VA Hospital in Montrose is the largest Federal agency in Westchester County. They are deeply affected by this shutdown. The 700 beds in the hospital are full of many elderly patients, including one World War I veteran about to celebrate his 100th birthday.

The hospital also cares for 75,000 veterans on an outpatient basis. Many of these are also elderly. The 1,400 dedi-

cated employees of the Montrose Hospital received 1 week of pay for 2 weeks of work, and they do not know when they are going to get paid for the work that they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, as we know, many of the employees at the FDR Veterans Hospital are veterans themselves. So, by holding employees hostage, we are penalizing men and women who served our country along with other Federal employees.

This week, in fact, the hospital employees were forced, as I mentioned, to hold the bake sale. In talking to them again this evening, they still do not know how they are going to survive. It is hard to believe the veterans who are working in a veterans hospital have to be subject to such indignities.

They cannot get fare to go to work. They cannot pay for gas or their MetroNorth train passes. And I know it may be very difficult for some of my colleagues to believe this is the case, but it is true. There is also a food drive being started in the local community to help needy employees.

I spoke with Lisa Jackson, a registered nurse. She told us, and the local paper in fact, that so many of the employees are living paycheck to paycheck, and today I also learned that many of the hospital's vendors who are not being paid may soon be forced to stop making deliveries of important supplies. If vendors stop making deliveries to a veterans hospital, they would then have to close down portions of the hospital and some patients would have to be discharged.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to share with you this story, because listening to speaker after speaker so sanctimoniously telling this body that they have to shut down the Government to get their way and balance the budget their way, it does not make any sense. I thought we were all adults. I am a mother of three children, and it sounds to me like children standing in a corner saying, "I am going to hold my breath and turn blue if I do not get things my way."

We should be opening the Government. Democrats signed on to a resolution to make it clear that we all support opening the Government now. What we really need is only 20 votes over there on the Republican side to join us so we can open the Government and continue the very serious discussions about balancing the budget.

As we have shared before, this is a battle, this is a serious discussion about the basic priorities of our country. The President has made it clear that he wants to balance the budget in 7 years, protecting Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment.

Now, there are differences of opinion. I understand there are about 80 Republicans that said they will not compromise on a tax cut of \$245 billion. Well, I would hope as we conclude, my colleagues, that we can continue to talk, to share our different views, but let us open the Government now and

continue serious discussions about balancing the budget.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE SITUATION WITH OUR NATION'S BUDGET AND THE NATIONAL DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I have with me the gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. SANFORD]. We are going to talk tonight about the situation with our Nation's budget and our national debt. The gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is also going to be speaking with me.

I think the first thing that we wanted to do, Mr. Speaker, just to get off the issue of reopening the Government, because that is very important, we are talking real people, real jobs, real mortgages, real paychecks and real grocery bills, and so forth. Speaking for myself, I want to get these folks back to work. So, I am in favor of trying to get the Government up and going again, get these folks back on

the job, and yet at the same time, I do not want to back down from the 7-year balanced budget.

But having said that, I hope I can erase as many of the Democrat comments as possible. Mr. Speaker, I would yield now to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX].

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to add my comments on this. As we speak, the Republican conference is meeting for just that purpose, to try to get all the important Federal workers, all the Federal workers back to work, not only for the sake of their families and the good work they are doing, but also because we want to make sure in fact that the services they perform, passports or Social Security or veterans matters or any other agency, gets back to work and takes care of constituents and also takes care of their families.

Mr. Speaker, all we are trying to make sure of on the balanced budget is to make sure the House and Senate wants to have one; the President wants to have one; let us get together on the details and find the common ground. That is what they sent us here to do, not to have gridlock or one side finger-pointing at the other, but actually to make sure that the job is done in a sincere way.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I think what is interesting about doing that job is that we not lose sight of the prize, and that prize is actually getting to a balanced budget in 7 years and using real numbers to get there.

Back on Monday, I spent a couple of hours in front of the Kmart in Myrtle Beach talking to folks, and what was interesting about those conversations was that people over and over and over again said, "Hold the line," because if we look at this budget, what we are looking at is \$12 trillion. \$12 trillion. It is called extreme.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 7 years the Federal Government spent \$9.5 trillion. Over the next 7 years what is proposed is spending \$12 trillion. Basically, for too long talks in Washington would go along to get along and there were plenty of slaps on the back. And now what we have said in essence is let us hold the line here. This is what we are hearing from folks at home, is that \$12 trillion over the next 7 years is enough.

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Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. What is interesting, if the gentleman would yield, is that fact that we can balance the budget, making sure we provide vital services to our constituents while still maintaining increases for Medicare, increases for Medicaid, increases for education, increases for the environment, and increases for child care. All we want to do is eliminate the waste that has gone on for years in duplicative programs.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, here is a certificate, a Federal Reserve note, that was sent to us, and I believe all

Members of Congress, Democrat and Republican, got it from the Old York Foundation. What they said, this was done in the name of the late Seymour Durst. I am not familiar with him, but what he said is this is a \$5 trillion note. Every Member of Congress has this \$5 trillion note for a \$5 trillion debt that we are passing on to our children and our children's children, and we will continue to do so if we do not do anything about it.

What the gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. SANFORD] says is that 1994 was an election not so much to throw the bums out but an election to stop politics as usual, as you have said. I think it is important for us to think about the size of our national debt and just a couple of numbers that are absolutely terrifying.

This is the number as of November, \$4,984,800,213,988.31, and it increases at a rate of \$2,207,000 each day, which the gentleman from Texas [Mr. THORNBERRY] says is enough to buy McDonald's Big Mac extra value meals for every person in the United States and in Mexico. He goes on to say that with the annual budget of about \$4.6 trillion, we as a government spend \$4.4 billion each day, each day that we are here, which the gentleman from Texas [Mr. THORNBERRY] points out that this is \$50,736 each second. That is what the Federal Government spends. These numbers are important because the debate here is about Government spending. That is what we are debating. We are debating the size of government.

Mr. SANFORD. What is interesting, if the gentleman would yield, about that particular number, a carry with me a quote, it is from Sir Alex Francis Taylor, a Scottish historian a little over 100 years ago.

His quote was a democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It only exists until the voters discover that they can vote for themselves largesse from the public treasury. From that moment on the majority usually votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy and is generally followed by a dictatorship. The average age of the world's great civilizations has been 200 years.

These nations have progressed through this sequence: From bondage to spiritual faith, from spiritual faith to great courage, from great courage to liberty, from liberty to abundance, from abundance to selfishness, from selfishness to complacency, from complacency to apathy, from apathy to dependency and from dependency back again into bondage.

What I think is startling about that is as you look across the time line of history, Rome, it was the largest place in the world at that time, collapsed in 476. The Byzantine Empire came on its heels and yet collapsed in 1453. The Italian Renaissance, as great as it was, came to an end in 1550. The Spanish

empire controlled a quarter of the entire known world and yet came to an end around 1588 with the sinking of Spanish Armada.

The point is, you could go through a lot of parallels and in every instance each of those nations, each of those civilizations reached a crossroads in which they had to decide do we stay in this awfully comfortable cycle of upward spending and upward government consumption, or do we go back to what made us a world power in the first place. That is what those numbers I think suggest.

Mr. KINGSTON. It is always far easier to increase spending, add 3 or 4 percent, 10 percentage points each year and just keep on spending. That is why this process this year is so difficult and so long. But generally speaking, we are trying to increase the Federal budget 3 trillion new dollars over the next 7 years, and the President wants to increase it \$4 trillion over the next 7 years, so we are debating \$3 trillion versus \$4 trillion directly in new growth. We are not cutting and we are not freezing the budget.

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX].

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. I appreciate the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] taking the time to have this special order because frankly the American public will benefit, I think, from not only having a balanced budget but having the workers return to work and providing the services.

But what the benefits are, that some may not realize, and Alan Greenspan has pointed this out, by being able to have a balanced budget we will be able to reduce the expense of interest, which thereby will reduce the cost for college education, home mortgage, the expense of health care, all of those things that we have as yearly regular expenses. That is going to help working families, help senior citizens, help our children make sure they can have the American dream.

After all, every other government, whether it be State, county or local, has to balance its budget just like families do. What we are trying to do is over a period of time, working with the President, to come to an agreement whereby we can have a balanced budget and everybody has a chance to have the American dream, have their own home, and people will have a job that is of great worth.

Mr. KINGSTON. The gentleman is correct. If we realize the scope of this disaster, of a tremendously expensive debt, and then we look at the benefits of balancing the budget, to give specifics on what the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is saying, that on a 30-year home mortgage the average interest rate will drop 2.7 percent, and on a 30-year mortgage of \$50,000 that means a family will save over \$1,000 annually or \$32,000 over the life of a loan. Car loans will drop 2 percent, which means on a \$15,000 car the average family budget would save about \$900 during

the life of the loan. Sending children to college, the same thing.

But the other thing, though, that is very important is that businesses will expand, jobs will be created and economic opportunity and prosperity will follow.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. If the gentleman will yield, what is very exciting I think for the American public is, not only will it be new jobs but it will not be Government created jobs. These will be private sector jobs that really will spin out other allied industries, creating more private sector jobs.

Back on education just for a second. I think it is also important to note that this Congress in a bipartisan fashion is moving ahead with additional programs for student loans and grants, such that legislation which many of us have cosponsored would create 100 percent tax credits for employers who provide their employees with college education, and to change the law back so that it is not considered taxable income to the employee who is receiving the educational benefit and hopefully being with a company for some time and bringing that benefit to others.

So we are looking for ways to improve the quality of life, improve education, improve the environment, improve Medicare, improve Medicaid. That can all be accomplished in this budget picture where we have already seen an increase of \$71 billion in the areas I have identified.

Mr. KINGSTON. If we have established that it is disastrous to leave the debt out there, we have established there are great benefits to balancing the budget, then what is the problem? Because Speaker after Speaker from both sides of the aisle have come to the well today and said we support a balanced budget and certainly the President does.

Let me read some quotes, though, make sure that we are talking about the same President, June 4, 1992 on Larry King Live, President Clinton speaking: "I would present a 5-year plan to balance the budget."

Then on his "Putting People First" campaign brochure: "Our plan will cut the deficit in half within 4 years and assure that it continues to fall each year after that."

May 19, 1995, Bill Clinton, New Hampshire, radio interview: "I think it can be done. Well, it can, first of all it can be done in 7 years."

Later on that day, also in New Hampshire: "I think it can be done in less than 10 years. I think we can get there by a date certain." That was in May.

October 1995: "Well, I think we could reach it in 7 years. I think we could reach it in 8 years. I think we could reach it in 9 years."

The reason why I say that is not to ridicule the President. Good Lord, everyone in Congress, everyone in America says things and changes his or her mind from time to time. In this case he did it over the same interview, in a 20-minute period, but even then some people are entitled to change their mind.

But here is what George Will said, and this is his column but it was in the Savannah Morning News. It says, "Clearly the President does not want a balanced budget any more than he wants to end welfare as we know it. So he is vetoing Republican plans that would balance the budget more slowly than he as a candidate promised to." Then he goes on to say, "He said 5 years, they say 7 years, and he probably will, it will depend on who talks to him last, and he'll veto it," and he will probably, George Will is saying, he is probably going to veto our welfare reform, which we will talk about welfare reform in a minute, but there is a welfare bill on the President's desk right now and we hopefully will get his signature on it.

But what I wanted to point out is that it is time now to have a balanced budget on the table.

You two are freshmen and you have been called radicals, and yet it is interesting to me that as candidates you had a written outline of a campaign plan, as did President Clinton. As newly elected freshmen, you followed the plan, unlike newly elected President Clinton. And then you did the plan and got criticized for it, and the criticism is coming from people who did not follow their own campaign speeches to balance the budget.

So you have been here a year, you said you were going to do something, you did it, and now you are saying, "I have done it, now come on, the rest of you all," but we are not seeing it.

It is very frustrating to the process. Again, I am not trying to get into this big partisan thing. But it is so hard to negotiate when there is not a counterproposal on the table.

I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. SANFORD. I would think two thoughts on what the gentleman has just been saying.

One would be, there was a question as to why would the President be doing this. I think it is awfully easy inside the Beltway to lose sight of the decided benefits to balancing the budget.

JACK, I do not know if you saw the article in today's Washington Post, but there was an article talking about, it reads, "On Balance, Budget Deal Could Offer a \$1,000 Bonus," and it talks about a study by several economists and it looks at the three benefits that would go with balancing the budget. One would be our children would not have to pay debt in the future because we would have not added another \$1 trillion worth of Government spending, the economy would grow more, and we would see lower interest rates.

But here in the Washington Post it is talking about a \$1,000 bonus per family for balancing the budget. So I would say that one of the reasons probably the White House has gone back and forth on this number is it is easy to lose sight of those future benefits.

As to your second point about being one of those radical freshman, I think

it is awfully interesting to move away from the talk, because there is plenty of talk in Washington, DC, and simply look at the numbers. And how radical is this budget, because what is interesting is if you go from simply the last 7 years, the Federal Government spent \$9.5 trillion, and what is proposed in this budget is spending of \$12 trillion, which is roughly 2.5 percent annualized growth each year.

For instance, take some of the programs. With Medicaid, we spent \$443 billion over the last 7 years, and what is proposed is to spend \$791 billion over the next 7 years.

Mr. KINGSTON. If the gentleman will yield on that point because I am glad you brought up some of the specific program differences. Because one of the things that we are not debating here is what are the differences between the Democrats' plan, or lack of plan to some degree, and the Republican plan.

One of the big differences that we hear is that the Republican budget cuts Medicare. As the gentleman just pointed out, and let me get him to repeat those figures.

Mr. SANFORD. On just Medicaid. I will get to Medicare. For instance, with Medicaid we go from spending \$443 billion over the last 7 years to spending \$791 billion with this proposed budget over the next 7 years. With Medicare we go from spending \$926 billion over the last 7 years to a proposal that suggests we spend \$1.6 trillion over the next 7 years.

Mr. KINGSTON. It is interesting that the gentleman would bring that up, because here is a December 6, \$1 million check and an offer made by the chairman of the Republican National Committee, Haley Barbour. What he said is if any Democrat can prove the rhetoric that Republicans are cutting Medicare, I have got a \$1 million check waiting for you one block away from here at the Republican National Committee, just come show us where Medicare is being cut.

Although the rhetoric has not stopped, nobody has collected \$1 million.

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Just think about it, if you were a Democrat, if you could prove that Medicare was being cut, you would be such a hero and getting the million dollars to boot, but nobody has come to claim that check, which is almost a month old now.

Mr. SANFORD. I know my colleague from Georgia knows these numbers better than I do. When you actually look at the Medicare on a per capita basis, look at how we go from spending \$4,800 per beneficiary to moving up basically at 7 percent a year to \$7,100 a year in 2002, it is remarkable to see that kind of yearly growth.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Would the gentleman kindly yield for a moment? I certainly will not take advantage of the length of time that you have, but

you did indicate that nobody has claimed it. I will be happy to try and claim the money as far as the Medicare is concerned.

But I do not want to engage in the kind of verbal jousting that I think has characterized some of the debate.

Mr. KINGSTON. If I could reclaim, and I will yield back to you, I am glad to hear that because, you know, so much of the jousting, and both sides can admit some guilt here, is totally based on fantasy and what sounds good on a 30-second sound bite rather than what is real.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I quite agree. So my question is a serious one on that leading to the other question about balanced budget, which I am also serious about.

I think the reason that the argument starts over Mr. Barbour's offer and then goes off into the ethereal on Medicare is that the argument is not about whether or not there is increased amount of money in the Republican proposal or in Mr. Clinton's original proposals, for that matter, but whether or not, given the expansion of the base population that will be in need of Medicare and Medicaid, whether that will be sufficient to cover the basic needs regardless of how much you are able to rein in the overall expenditures on hospitals, nursing homes, pharmaceutical needs, et cetera. That then becomes, if you will, just allow me another 10 or 15 seconds, that then becomes an argument over different economists making projections as to what the need will be vis-a-vis the population of the United States, the aging population of the United States, the requirement in social security benefits as the baby boomers come in and the number of people contributing to it goes down, et cetera, those kinds of things. That gets into the realm of sheer speculation.

Mr. KINGSTON. Reclaiming my time a second, that is a good point, and that is why our budget goes from \$4,800 to \$7,100 per person with anticipation of the population increase, \$4,800 to \$7,100, which again is not a cut.

Now, one of the questions is, OK, is that enough? Let me finish now. Is that enough? Well, I can say this, if we do not act to reform, preserve and protect Medicare, the April 3 trustees report has already told us it is going bankrupt. So while we cannot tell you with absolute certainty that going from \$4,800 to \$7,100 is going to be perfect, we can tell you with certainty based on the trustees report of April 3, 1995, that Medicare is going bankrupt in 7 years.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. If you will be so kind, then why would we want to take any money out of that fund? Why would you not want to, if you are increasing the money from \$4,800 to \$7,100, I will not dispute that, that there is an increase in that number? I would argue that I do not believe that is going to be enough, based on our experience in Hawaii, and so on. That is my view and some others. I mean, economists have a job explaining to

other people why they do not have jobs. Right. So one economist will tell you one thing, and, you know, we are victims of that as much as we are beneficiaries.

So why would you want to take any money out of Medicare at this time, \$270 billion, \$240 billion, whatever it is? Why would we want to take money out?

To the degree we want to count savings as a result of tightening up waste, fraud, and abuse, tightening up the amount that we are willing to pay for hospital care or doctor's fees or pharmaceutical needs, et cetera, to the degree there is a savings, let us suppose, again for honest conversation sake, that the \$270 billion that is proposed for savings is actually savings, would we not want to have that savings reinvested in the system? Are you counting the \$270 billion toward the \$7,100?

Mr. KINGSTON. If the gentleman from South Carolina wants time, just speak up.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I will not take much longer. This is your time.

Mr. KINGSTON. I think these are very good questions and they are valid. As you know, Medicare inflation has been 11 percent a year. Regular medical inflation is between the 4- and 6-percent range.

What our plan does is try to slow down that increase of inflation and growth or growth due to inflation each year and get it down in the 6- to 7-percent range, which the gentleman knows is what Mrs. Clinton called for in 1993.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Which we have already achieved in Hawaii.

Mr. SANFORD. If the gentleman will yield, I think what is interesting about the numbers, and I mean you are looking at a 49-percent increase over 7 years, you are looking at an increase two times the rate of inflation, but you are touching one of the holy grails in politics, and I think the significance of that is that typically the way that Washington has been hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil, as it relates to anything that might be at all controversial, and clearly Medicare is; but you have got a trustees' report that says if you do not do something you guys are going to have a real problem, that it will go bankrupt, period.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Then, excuse me, why would you not then want to take the \$270 billion out of it? Why not apply it toward the \$7,100?

Mr. KINGSTON. Reclaiming my time, let me make correct the terminology to the degree that we are not taking money out of that. What that \$270 billion figure represents is the projected growth at the 11-percent inflation rate range, and for us to have private sector inflation rate in the 4-percent range and public Federal health care and Medicare at 11-percent range is totally inefficient. What we want to do, as a way to reduce that growth rate, is to increase the competition and replace that 1964 model with a 1995

model which will save and protect and preserve Medicare.

Mr. SANFORD. If I might interject just prior, I think the significance of that, though, is that you look at, I mean, Medicare right now is the equivalent of the only gas station stop on a very long and lonely stretch of interstate, and what is being proposed with this Republican plan is basically rather than that one gas station where, sure enough, you can count on getting gas but you may not get the lower price or best service, is having six or seven little gas stations so you begin to have competition, which begins the working of the marketplace which directly affects price.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I appreciate you yielding the final time. I think you would be able to make, not you personally, but we would be able to make this argument back and forth in a way that could resolve this issue a lot better, then, and I think would be understood more easily and accepted, perhaps more importantly, by the American people as a whole, than if we kept that argument within the Medicare-Medicaid-Social Security syndrome and got rid of the tax cuts. I think if people were not making the association between cuts and/or additions arguments that are made in Medicare and Medicaid, in the context of a tax cut, if we could remove that tax cut from the context, I think that this argument would reach a different level of not only civility but of understandability and perhaps even acceptability within the country.

Mr. KINGSTON. I appreciate the gentleman's comments. I would be quick to say, unfortunately, it is Members of your party who have linked the two even in the face of their own trustees saying that Medicare is going bankrupt in 7 years.

You know what, I was reading an article about President Clinton, who has not had an agenda this year, has finally found a cause to be, and that is the agenda of fear on the old folks, saying that Republicans are going to do all kinds of things to the elderly, as if we do not have parents, as if we do not have grandparents. And so I am glad that the gentleman is forthcoming, and I will say this, that I was asked by a reporter the other day, "Well, isn't the balanced budget going to be an election issue if you do not solve something?" And I said it is going to be an election issue whatever happens. And it was in 1994, it was in 1992, it was in 1990, and it will continue to be, as will all Federal Government spending.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I am very grateful for your yielding the time. I hope at some point when I am discussing the balanced budget issue, perhaps you could be on the floor, and perhaps I could yield time to you so we might further the discussion.

Mr. KINGSTON. I am always happy to yield time to the distinguished weightlifting gentleman from Hawaii.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Many thanks. I send you my aloha.

Mr. KINGSTON. We wanted to touch base also on this tax issue because I think that it is important to talk about it because we have heard so many times that it is a tax break for the rich.

Now, President Clinton said as much as President Clinton says anything that he supports a capital gains tax cut. Then, of course, he immediately said a disclaimer, saying, "I am not sure how much or when," or whatever kind of Clintonesque comments he would qualify something with.

But let us assume that the capital gains tax cut is OK. So what do we have now that we are giving to the middle-class taxpayers that has horrified so many of the folks on the other side of the aisle that is a tax break for the rich?

This is it, a \$500-per-child tax credit. Now, who is going to get the benefit of that? Eighty-nine percent of the people who get benefit of that have a family household income of \$75,000 or less.

Now, look at this, 4 percent of the people who benefit from that have an income of over \$100,000. Now, there are Members of this body who like socialists more than they like successful people who have earned and lived the American dream, and I think that is too bad. We need to have successful people in our country, and we cannot constantly use them as a whipping post for all of our frustrations because maybe not everyone knows how to make that money. So 4 percent of the people who are going to get a \$500-per-child tax break have an income of over \$100,000, and I believe we have capped it anyhow at \$110,000 down the road.

But, you know, what I am saying, that 89 percent of the people who are going to benefit have a household income of \$75,000 or less. Does that sound like a tax break for the wealthy?

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. It does not. Further, what made the middle-class tax reform such a viable proposal, which had bipartisan support in the House and the Senate, is that it also had some other significant items that helped other individuals across the board, an adoption tax credit of \$5,000 to help families adopt children. It also called for a seniors' earning limit increase. Right now seniors under 70 cannot make more than \$11,280 without deductions from Social Security. Our proposal would take it up to \$30,000 a year.

Mr. KINGSTON. Let me interrupt you one minute. As I recall, President Clinton increased taxes on Social Security in 1993.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. That is correct.

Mr. KINGSTON. What you are saying is we are repealing the Clinton Social Security tax increase.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. And as well allowing the seniors to earn more than \$11,280 a year without having a bite out of social security, both.

Mr. KINGSTON. I guess since the Democrats voted for that social secu-

rity tax increase, that is why they do not want to vote to repeal it?

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Obviously, I could not explain that to you as to reasons of other persons. I think the proposal has a lot of merit. It also called for elder care tax cut, two new IRA's for individuals and couples, and I think, frankly, with the infusion of the capital gains tax reduction for individuals and businesses, what we are going to have here is growth of businesses, growth of savings, and growth of jobs, all of which are pro-economy, and pro-people, and so it is the populist idea that has been embraced by Republicans and Democrats alike as well as those who are financial experts on Wall Street and on Main Street.

Mr. KINGSTON. I think one thing that is interesting, as we talk taxes, two things about the administration, first, as a candidate the President promised a middle-class tax cut. That was part of his platform. That was one of the main planks of his platform as a candidate in 1992. Speaking in Houston, TX, October 17, the President said, "Many people are still mad about the 1993 budget," and they think he raised taxes too much. Now I quote, "It might surprise you to know that I think I raised them too much, too," the President said.

So, you know, here we have a candidate who said he was going to give a middle-class tax cut; then we have a President who 2 months ago said, "I think that I raised taxes too much."

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. That is what gives me hope that we are going to come to a settlement here. We are going to get a balanced budget. We are going to make sure programs like Medicare, Medicaid, the environment, children's programs, education, will, in fact, be there for all Americans, but not with the waste we have had over the last 20-30 years, with the unbridled spending which duplicates much of what is happening in our local districts, and none of the waste that has come from having bureaucracies upon bureaucracies to the extent that we are definitely spending too much.

□ 2045

Mr. KINGSTON. I want to talk about some of the unbridled spending after the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. SANFORD. Just on the subject of taxes, I hear it a lot at home. You are talking about Main Street. What is interesting is to think the National Taxpayers Union estimates that all of us spend basically the first 6 months of each year working to pay for the total cost of Federal, State, and local governments. If you actually break that down on a daily basis, it means that everybody goes to work in the morning, they spend the entire morning working for somebody else, they break for lunch, and then they get to spend the afternoon working for themselves and their families. What I am hearing from folks is that does not make common sense.

What I think to be even worse, you look at how that is going to impact children. It takes every single Federal income tax filed west of the Mississippi simply to pay the interest on the national debt. And if that was not bad enough, what is worse is how it looks for our children.

A child born in America today will pay \$187,000 in taxes to pay for their share of interest on the national debt. Viewed another way, generational accounting says to keep our Government solvent, they would have to pay an 82-percent tax rate if we stayed on the course we are on. So I think when we talk about these tax rates, they are fairly alarming numbers that I think impact everybody's lives.

Mr. KINGSTON. I think it is important also to point out that in our budget process, not only do we repeal that 1993 tax increase on Social Security, but we also increase the earnings limitation. As the gentleman knows, senior citizens are only allowed to make a certain amount of money at the age of 62. This increases that threshold from \$11,000 to \$30,000 over a 7-year period of time so seniors can remain working, productive, and not be penalized on their Social Security that is also in the budget.

We mentioned spending. I wanted to make this point on spending. One of the programs that the President has said he is prepared to go to the mat for is his AmeriCorps Program. I know there are a lot of good things that happen through AmeriCorps. But here is a Savannah Morning News article, an editorial, about the volunteers. It says that the volunteers working for AmeriCorps are making approximately \$18 an hour. It says that the program is already bigger than Peace Corps ever was, just in its first year of operation. It has become a costly Great Society program that relies too much on government and not enough on society to solve its own problems.

The General Accounting Office, which is nonpartisan, reports that the average participant in AmeriCorps is supported by \$25,000 in Federal, State and local taxes. That is more than private sector jobs.

It talks about some of the good things that they do, feeding the hungry, helping the elderly and so forth. And then this article says but those AmeriCorps volunteers are paid only about \$9,000 for their \$1,700 of community work, with approximately \$1,500 of that going to college expenses. The rest of the \$25,000 goes to the bureaucracy.

This is the President's idea of efficient and effective spending? Going to the volunteer himself is \$7,500, and the balance, well, minus the college tuition, is going to the bureaucrats. That is what we need to change in Washington. If it is a good program, certainly the President should want to try to reform it and change it.

Mr. SANFORD. Where I grew up back in South Carolina, volunteering was actually volunteering. Aside from having philosophical questions about being

paid to volunteer, I think it goes back to what Davy Crockett said on the House floor, again more than 100 years ago, and that was this whole notion of there are a lot of good things we would like to do for other folks, but when we are spending other people's money to do so, I think which have to pause a real long time.

Mr. KINGSTON. That is exactly right. Here is another example of a good program that went bad, the Earned Income Tax Credit. Now, the Earned Income Tax Credit, the idea was to get people off of public assistance. But since they would not be making as much in the private sector immediately as they were when they were on welfare basically, then you give them a tax credit so they would have extra money for housing and food and insurance, and so forth.

I think that is very noble, and Ronald Reagan supported it, and TOM PETRI, who is one of our best members of our conference, has been a champion of that in the past.

But in 1993 that program was expanded, and expanded rapidly, and here is what some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are doing to capitalize on the fact this is basically free money. This is an actual mailing that went out to constituents of a Member of Congress. Listen to this.

Put some money in your pocket. The Earned Income Tax Credit. You may be eligible for as much as \$2,258 tax credit. See details on back. Come clean. Your money. Did you work in '94?

What is ironic about this is you don't even have to work now under the Clinton changes, you can prefile and get your money advanced before you actually do the work. It says you are eligible if this and that. "Even if you do not owe income tax, you can get EIC. Want more information?" Call another toll-free number, the IRS.

I have deleted the Member's picture for decorum purposes, but it has a picture of the Member of Congress. It has his address, and it has his office number, and so forth.

So obviously what Members of Congress are doing with the Earned Income Tax Credit are not doing this as a champion of the poor. This is a paid brochure. It is a public money giveaway. The bottom line here is not to help the poor; the bottom line is to keep people in Congress and keep the poor dependent on them. "Hey, you want your check? Send me back to Congress." That is totally wrong and totally against the spirit of what a public assistance program is.

Mr. SANFORD. I would simply agree with the gentleman in that there are too many things with the way Washington works that do not reward savings, they do not reward investment, they do not reward hard work, and a lot of things in essence are tied to feeding people in essence with a spoon, keeping them tied to the government knot, rather than having them out there. Again, what we need to reward in American society is initiative.

Mr. KINGSTON. Here is another example of a program gone amuck. This was sent to me by Mr. E.R. Lott of Folkston, GA. It is a copy of a letter to the editor by Brenton Bradbury in Jacksonville to the Florida Times Union.

It said,

An expensively dressed woman came into my office a few days ago to rent a house I had advertised in the paper. I took a chance and rented the house to her, despite her bad credit, because her income was good. She paid the month's rent and a security deposit, a total of \$1,130 in cash.

What makes this situation remarkable is that this household's very substantial income, expected to exceed \$46,000 this year, is derived entirely from the Government and welfare programs. This 36-year-old mother of four teenage children also has her elderly disabled mother living with her. One of the teenagers is retarded, one is pregnant. When I added up the various income amounts listed in the rental application, I was astounded, then angry.

I telephoned the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services and learned it is all perfectly legal. Their monthly income includes two welfare checks totaling \$1,510, an Aid to Families with Dependent Children check for \$214, food stamps worth \$440, a Housing and Urban Development housing check for \$550, Medicaid benefits worth \$550 a month, and a projected \$426 per month from AFDC when the daughter's new baby arrives.

He goes on to say that, "In addition, they will have a housekeeper come in twice a week at a cost of \$242 a month that is paid for by the government."

It goes on and on and on. But it says their household income is \$46,784.08, and it is all legal.

Then Mr. Bradbury concludes, "Ever wonder where your tax dollars are going? This is out of control. This is something that is scary."

Now, I know we could make the case and others will make the case that this woman deserves every penny of it, and perhaps she needs or the baby needs some of this money. But \$46,000 a year? Basically by taking advantage of government programs?

This is the real world, this is a real world case. Any Member of this House who wants a copy of that article, I will be glad to send it to them. But this is where your money is going. This is why we are trying to reform government. We are trying to do this not maliciously. We are saying, you know, you can help people, but you do not have to give it all away to do it.

Mr. SANFORD. I think this is what really gets underneath the skin of folks back home, these kinds of horror stories. I think what we also have to remember, we proposed fairly radical welfare reform, which I think is absolutely needed. But at the same time, I think what we are doing is preserving that hand-out element to welfare. In other words, when people are really down, what we have said is we are not going to abandon them.

To give you an idea of that, again, the budget is constantly talked about as being extreme, extreme, extreme. Yet, over the past 7 years, we spent \$492 billion on welfare. What is proposed here with the next 7 years is \$878 billion on welfare. That does not seem extreme to me. It seems to me it preserves the helping hand nature, but it ends that hand-out nature.

Mr. KINGSTON. Also, what our program does is lets States have some flexibility. I was in Savannah talking to a caseworker a month ago, and he said, you know, I could use some flexibility. If you combine the WIC program with AFDC, I will have some money and more latitude to help the people who need it, and you can get rid of some bureaucrats and I can do my job better.

I believe we need to have State flexibility, and that is what the block granting is all about. The other thing our program does is says if you are able to work, you have to work. If you are disabled, you have 435 Members of Congress who want to help you out. But if you can work, we believe it is time.

Remember, again, we have a \$4 trillion debt, almost 5, and again, we are spending \$50,000 per second as a Federal Government already. It is time to get these things under control.

Now, another program that the President does not want to reform, does not want to give an inch on, is the student loan program. I have a September 24 article written by Joseph Perkins, which also was in the Savannah Morning News. He talks about the White House, President Clinton's visit to Southern Illinois University. He talked to student leaders at a round-table.

There was press there, his PR press, which we know is the network news, surrounding him to show this real live thing. But what Mr. Perkins says, unfortunately, the White House carefully screened all the students who were let in the room so the only people who got to talk to the President were the ones who were in complete agreement. He said there was one guy, a 24-year-old William Karrow, president of Southern Illinois Graduate Student Council, who had the audacity to suggest that maybe the President was picturing a distorted picture, and the White House bounced him out of the room and he was asked to leave the room.

So on the evening news, the President got the kind of coverage he was looking for, carefully selected adoring students promising that he would fight to protect their loans from the GOP.

Now, here is what Mr. Perkins says about the Republican plan. Student loans will actually increase 50 percent over the next 7 years. They will go from \$24 to \$36 billion. Now, in addition to that, Mr. Perkins goes on to point out that Pell grants have increased to the highest level, and he talks about the TRIO Program and the supplemental education opportunity grants going to \$583 million, the TRIO Program, which

is flat and goes strictly to basically disadvantaged students, \$463 million.

This is what is happening with student loans. The Republican Party is not trying to rip the guts out of student loans, but the President will not even admit that there are problems with it. For example, as you know, the direct loan program lost \$1.5 billion last year. We are just trying to correct it and make it more efficient. But at the same time, we are trying to increase student loans 50 percent.

Mr. SANFORD. I think what you are really getting at is the relatively gradual nature that is being proposed. Again, what we are talking about is overall Federal spending still going up by 2.4 percent each year. To give you an idea in relative terms of where that stands, take, for instance, right now our deficit is basically 2.2 percent of the whole economy. In France, it is about 2.5 percent, and in Sweden it is about 7.5 percent.

As you know, those countries have proposed cutting back on the size of their government. But what is interesting is we proposed to do this over 7 years. France has proposed to do it over 2 years. Sweden has proposed to do it over 3 years. What that means is the slowing of the rate of government that they are proposing, or the cuts in government they are proposing, are eight times as great in Sweden, and three times as great in France.

So, again, it goes back to, I think, the reasonableness nature that you were getting at.

Mr. KINGSTON. But, you know, a speaker earlier tonight, the gentleman from California [Mr. DELLUMS] raised a very good point, and his point was that this is a profound debate. I agree with him. This is a profound debate, because we are talking about two different visions of government.

Now, the gentleman from South Carolina earlier tonight talked about ancient civilizations that had fallen because of financial problems, and so forth. But the other thing that they have fallen, or the other consequence has actually been war, civil wars, internal strifes, coups, assassinations, and so forth.

I am proud we are not doing that in America. But when I draw that parallel, I am not totally off the farm here, because we are talking about a fundamental change in government. We are talking about shifting power from one group, basically a group in Washington who wants to handle and control everything, to another group outside of Washington, and those people are your neighbors, your associates at work, the folks at the grocery store, people that you see on the city streets. They are regular, normal people.

□ 2100

And what we want to do is go back to a time in America where those folks control their own destiny, their own towns, their own communities and make their own decisions.

I think there is an exciting opportunity out there to let, for example, the counties, and I represent 22 counties in the First District of Georgia, and I know the gentleman has multiple counties in South Carolina, to let our own counties control our own poverty, our own health care, our own ways of doing business. Does that mean that Government will be gone at \$12 trillion over the next 7 years? There is no way.

The Federal Government is not going away, but the Federal Government is taking a step back and saying, hey, maybe there is a lot of brilliance back home.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. SANFORD. I think what the gentleman is getting at is balance, because I think what we both recognize is that over the years the Federal Government has done a lot of good things, whether that is with helping in cleaning up some of the rivers that were burning not that long ago, or whether it has been with educational programs, or bringing us out of the Great Depression, or bringing us through World War II. The Federal Government has done a lot of good things, but the pendulum has swung too far over here, and what I hear from back home is it has done a lot of wonderful things, but it is too far over here, because we want a little greater hand in educating our children.

We want a greater hand in how we spend the hours of our day. We want to have a little greater hand in deciding a whole host of things; and, therefore, we just have to bring the pendulum back over here a bit, so that we at the individual level or the county level or at the State level are making those decisions rather than the bureaucrat in Washington.

Mr. KINGSTON. That is right, and when the gentleman thinks about, well, the Government is getting out of this, there are 163 different job training programs. Now, if we cut 25 of them out or 20 of them out, the headline would be Republican party cuts out 20 job training programs. They will not say there are 143 of them still around. And yet, in addition, there are a lot of State programs and even local programs.

The EPA. We are getting a lot of criticism now for cutting EPA, and we have not passed that bill. These things are being negotiated. But recently I had the opportunity to talk to the National Association of State EPA counterparts. I do not know the exact name of their organization, but these were folks who were basically State EPA directors, and I thought, man, I am walking into a lion's den, but here is what I found.

No. 1, I found capable, intelligent, bright people, people who were close to the polluted river, close to the smokestack that was putting the dirty air in the atmosphere, and they were very much on top of the situation. They had a lot more hands-on experience than people in Washington.

No. 2, what I found is that they were not afraid of the EPA stepping back,

because 20 years ago, or over 20 years ago now, when the EPA was started, their organizations were not in existence, and they have grown over 20 years. There is a lot that has come forward in the States in terms of environmental cleanup, in terms of health care, and in terms of poverty and so forth.

So just because the Federal Government is withdrawing its horns every so slightly in certain areas, it does not mean that there is not a presence of pollution enforcement or helping poverty programs or public assistance benefits and so forth. And yet that is what we are charged with over and over again. It is an absolute distortion of what really is going on here.

Mr. SANFORD. I would agree.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude with this. Our vision is to have a balanced budget. We are not cutting the budget and we are not freezing it. We are increasing spending 3 trillion new dollars over the next 7 years. The President wants to increase it \$4 trillion over the next 7 years. We can negotiate that. That is the American part.

Mr. SANFORD. I would say, in the midst of that debate, I have talked to folks back home, and they get awfully frustrated with the seeming fractiousness over Washington, yet what I tell folks at home is let us keep it all in perspective. We can look at a place like, for instance, Cuba, and we look at any kind of disagreement basically being squashed because there is a dictatorial rule, or we look at a host of places around the globe and we see people solving problems with guns rather than with words. And what we have going on right here, as messy as it is, I have heard that saying, that if one likes sausage, do not watch it being made. I guess the same is true with democracy. But what we have here is everybody yanking on the level of government control that was afforded them by the Founding Fathers; the Congress with its power to appropriate, and the President with his power to veto, all within the confines of a system that the Founding Fathers created. I think that is kind of exciting.

Mr. KINGSTON. That is right, and we are debating, along with the 3 trillion new dollars versus the 4 trillion new dollars, we are debating the role of government and releasing power out of the hands of Washington bureaucrats and empowering citizens, friends and neighbors, and putting it on the streets and in the cities and counties all across America.

The benefits of what we are doing, if we can balance the budget in 7 years, as Alan Greenspan said, interest rates will go down. If interest rates go down, we will have lower home mortgages, lower student loans, lower car payments, but probably most importantly is that we will have more jobs and more prosperity in the economy.

Now, this is a very difficult process. We are going to go through with it. As

we started out saying earlier, we believe that it is time. It is timely to get the Federal Government employees back to work. We want to pay those folks who are working. We want to get the ones who are not working back on the job, and we think that is the right thing to do.

We want to move that issue from the table, or speaking at least for myself, so that we can get to this focus on the 7-year balanced budget. I am hearing a lot of people saying, of course, I support a balanced budget, but they did not vote for it and they have not cosponsored one. There are Democrats and Republicans who have voted for a balanced budget and have cosponsored one, but there are a lot who have not.

I do not believe a Member has the right to come to the well and say they support a budget if they do not have one at this point, because the people of America pay us \$134,000 a year not just to criticize what the other side is doing but to bring our own ideas to the table. If Members have their own ideas, they can criticize mine, but if they are just sitting there criticizing without a plan of their own, maybe they should return some of their paycheck permanently.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we yield back the balance of our time.

REPUBLICANS' GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AFFECTS THE COUNTRY'S MOST VULNERABLE CITIZENS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. METCALF). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, before my colleagues and I get started this evening, I would just like to make one comment about the commentary of the prior speaker having to do with the earned income tax credit, a program that, I might add, was started by President Ronald Reagan. And to refresh people's memories, he was a Republican President of the United States. President Reagan started the program to help to keep working families off of welfare.

I might also remind my colleagues of the words of another Republican, Mr. Jack Kemp, and these were his words in October of 1995, and again I quote. "I hope you guys", making reference to the Republicans, "do not go too far on removing the EITC, because that is a tax increase on low-income workers and the poor, which is unconscionable at this time."

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, would my friend yield for 30 seconds?

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I want to finish my commentary and then get into our program, so I want to finish what I am going to say here.

I might also say that it is interesting that in the tax break package that is being offered by the Republican majority in this House that there was an-

other Ronald Reagan program called the alternate minimum tax. For those who do not know what the alternate minimum tax is, this is a tax that the richest corporations in the United States pay.

President Reagan, with very good thought and vision, put this into practice, because oftentimes the richest corporations in this country, when they took all of their deductions, would find that they had a zero tax obligation. He thought, as did others, that it would be unfair to have that occur, that the richest corporations in the country would not be paying some portion or a fair share of taxes the way that ordinary Americans pay their taxes. So he put in a 20 percent rate, and the Congress approved of a 20 percent rate on the richest corporations in the country.

Into that tax package that the Republicans are proposing, the \$245 billion tax break package, the alternate minimum tax is repealed, repealed, which means that, once again, if this passes and is law, that the richest corporations in the United States will have a zero tax obligation. It is a \$17 billion windfall to the richest corporations.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my Republican colleagues about that, and I also want to remind the listening public that what Mr. Kemp says, that tampering with the earned income tax credit, which the Republican package does in cutting the earned income tax credit, is an increase on taxes for working families at the same time as my Republican colleagues are decreasing taxes for the richest corporations in this Nation.

No wonder the public said to the President of the United States, 60 percent of the public said veto Mr. GINGRICH's budget bill and do not balance the budget on the backs of seniors and Medicare and Medicaid, and on students and education, and on working families with being unfair to them in terms of taxes.

My colleagues are here tonight so that we may have an opportunity to talk about something that is on everyone's minds, everyone's lips, and it is in all of the news. And what we have tried to do is to organize a special order tonight on behalf of the millions of senior citizens in this country and their families who are sitting at their kitchen tables tonight struggling to cope with the impact of the Government shutdown. Day No. 20.

Our seniors, including many of this Nation's veterans, live on fixed incomes. They do not have money to fall back on when their benefits are cut off. Now, these vulnerable citizens have become pawns in what is a very, very cynical political game being played by House Republicans, who are refusing to open the Federal Government, despite what they tell the public. They had the opportunity to open the Federal Government 12 times, the latest was yesterday.

Let us be clear about what is happening here. The President of the United States, the Democrats, responsible Republicans all agree that it is time to end the Government shutdown and it is time for Speaker GINGRICH and the right wing extremists in the House to stop holding America's seniors hostage to their political games. It is power politics at its worst, is what we are watching.

BOB DOLE, and I don't have the quote up here, but I will get it, BOB DOLE, the Republican majority leader of the other body, wants to reopen the Government. He said enough is enough, and he is right. He is absolutely right. He said that this has gone about as far as it can go. We need now to put people back to work.

I don't want to misquote the majority leader. This is what he says. "I don't see any sense in what we have been doing. I would hope that we would have quick action in the House. People have been gone from their jobs long enough. Enough is enough."

□ 2115

And that quote was on January 2, 1996.

Now, how are seniors affected by the shutdown of the Federal Government? That is what my colleagues and I are here to talk about tonight. In my own district, the Third District of Connecticut, the Veterans Hospital in West Haven Connecticut cannot now legally pay for anything. They must depend on vendors to continue to provide, without payment, food, hearing aids, glasses, medical supplies, ambulance services and all of the lifesaving treatments provided our Nation's veterans.

Mr. Vincent Ng, the director of VA Hospitals in Connecticut, said "We will do whatever is necessary to care for our patients. We hope our contractors will support the needs of the medical centers during this crisis situation so that we will be able to maintain our full standard of patient care."

Our Nation's veterans should not be forced into paying for the failings of this Congress. Men and women who have put their lives on the line for this Congress and for this country deserve better than that.

Mr. Speaker, it is just not the veterans who are being hurt, but those who care for them as well. One VA employee called my office today to explain that he had received a paycheck of one week's pay and two weeks' worth of deductions. He called because he does not have any money for food. We made a reference for him and we directed him to the nearest food bank, to the nearest food pantry.

He is not alone. The plight of the VA employees in my district prompted Mayor Richard Borer of West Haven, CT, to make a public plea for donations to the local food shelters to help feed workers who are now not being paid. The people who care for our veterans deserve better.

The crisis facing our elderly veterans extends to every single State in this