

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, earlier today during a one-minute I mentioned that what I see going on in this Congress and this House is just pure lunacy. You know, under Webster's Dictionary, lunacy is intermittent derangement. I recognize that here. It is insanity. That has been mentioned here. Great or wild foolishness, a lot of that, and a widely foolish act.

There is no question in my mind that what has been going on in this House of Representatives since the December 15 is lunacy. You know, I can remember back when I was a young person we had a name for people with lunacy. They called them lunatics. There is no question in my mind that in this House today we have got a whole bunch of lunatics. They do not understand really how this government is supposed to operate.

They do not understand that under the forefathers, this government, under our Constitution, was developed as a tripartite, three-body, system. We had the Congress, the Supreme Court, and the President. They are coequal. One is not better than the other. One is not supposed to be more powerful than the other.

Then in a range of appropriations, they gave the House the power; taxation the same; the power to initiate legislation, only the House. But then they gave the President the power of veto, and they said if you want to override that veto, it takes two-thirds of each house to do it.

That is the way this Congress had operated for over 200 years, until 1995. In 1995, our imperialistic Speaker, Speaker GINGRICH, and the radical Republicans decided that is not the way that this government should operate any longer. Oh, no. We are not going to do that anymore. If we do not get our way, on our so-called, and I say so-called, seven-year balanced budget, if the President does not sign it, which he did not, he vetoed it, then we are not going to appropriate funds for various agencies of the government, which they have not, Labor, HHS, D.C., foreign aid, or if the President vetoes it, then we are not going to pass a continuing resolution to fund the government while we negotiate with the President. We are just going to shut the government down.

That is what has happened. And, lo and behold though, these people that suffer from this disease of lunacy now also suffer from a disease of irresponsibility, because they say it is not our fault. We did not do it. They are not man enough to accept the responsibility of what they decided, to run the government by shutdown. Oh, no, it is the President. I heard the majority leader just this morning on TV; it is the President's fault. The President is shutting the government down.

The President does not appropriate one penny. Folks, he has no power under our Constitution to appropriate one penny. He can only sign a bill. If he decides to veto it, then the House has

the right to try and override; if not, then pass legislation continuing it. Like I say, that is what we did under Reagan, while I was here, under Reagan, Bush, Carter before him, everybody.

That is the way it happened. But no, not under this group. No. Shut the government down, but do not accept responsibility. Place the responsibility somewhere else.

I even had some of these freshmen tell me earlier, before we broke for Christmas, that this is just the start, too, folks, because next year they say when we do the appropriation bills, if the President does not sign it and he vetoes it, there will not be a CR, there will not be another bill, we will just shut it down. And guess what? When I said, you know, this one we have here, this is back in December, it may last for several months, they said good. Good, we save that much money. We will not be spending the money.

What kind of government is it where people say it is good to tell people you have got to work, but you are not going to get paid? That is what happened. That is happening today. Or those of you who do not work, you are going to get paid?

Not only that, at the same time, they keep getting paid all the time. And they do not do anything. We have not done anything in this House for a month.

#### HOW MUCH GOVERNMENT CAN WORKING PEOPLE AFFORD?

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

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as Congress and the Clinton administration continue negotiations to balance the Federal budget, I am reminded of the question I heard from residents in Georgia's Third District last week: How much government can working people afford?

I want to repeat that question: How much government can working people afford?

Today the combined Federal, State, and local taxes consume nearly 40 percent of the disposable income of working Americans. Federal taxes place the harshest burdens on taxpayers. In 1994, the average American family turned over 25 percent of its income to the Federal Government. That compared to just 2 percent in 1954.

During the 1950's and the early 1960's, the Federal Government managed to pay for the national defense, build a nationwide Interstate Highway System, deliver our mail, and provide other vital government functions while living within its means. Today the Federal Government spends \$500 million per day more than it collects in taxes and revenues. We are \$4.9 trillion in debt. Interest on our national debt is the third largest single item in the Federal budget, topped only by Social

Security and the national defense outlays.

Federal entitlement programs are responsible in large part for our national financial predicament. Today working Americans are paying the bills to provide health care to the elderly, the poor, and the disabled. Today working Americans are paying the bills to fund numerous Federal welfare programs that create a lifestyle of government dependence. Today working Americans are paying the bills to subsidize various Federal programs for farmers, students, cities, counties, States, businesses, and the list goes on and on, which brings me back to the question I heard from my constituents: How much government can working people afford?

We Americans are a fair and compassionate people. We believe in providing the benefits of Federal programs, such as Social Security and Medicare, for which people have paid for and earned. We also believe in helping those who want to help themselves. We are providing the programs that will help those citizens in our society who have encountered difficulties. But we must reform those programs that encourage government dependence as a way of life for millions of Americans.

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Mr. Speaker, working people pay the bills. They provide the funds to pay for all Federal programs and they must pay for the Federal debt and the interest that accrues because of irresponsible deficit spending.

While Democrats criticize tax breaks for fat-cat corporations and businesses, who do they really think pays the corporate taxes? The working people of this country, Mr. Speaker. That is who pays corporate taxes. Corporate taxes are built into the cost of products and services purchased by consumers.

When a consumer goes to the store and buys a product or purchases a service, he or she does not get two receipts for that product or service. They get one receipt for the item and within that one receipt are all the taxes that have been paid on that product. Instead, this consumer has only one receipt rather than two. No receipt for just the tax portion of the profits earned on the sale of that item.

American workers pay the bills for all government programs and for all services. How much more government can they afford?

Mr. Speaker, I urge President Clinton to join Congress in our effort to preserve Medicare, to change welfare, and to provide tax relief for working Americans and pass a 7-year balanced budget. This is the only way we can provide a Federal Government that working people can afford.

#### WE ARE OUR BROTHERS' AND SISTERS' KEEPERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I think the question that we all are facing is a simple proposition; that we all are brothers' and sisters' keepers. We have heard from those who want to follow the current pulse of America that most Americans are not concerned about this business here. In fact, we find that maybe about 80 percent of the Federal employees are, in fact, working. So all that we are doing here is creating noise and disturbance.

But I know America better, and I know what the fabric and the heart of Americans are all about. Americans are caring people, and we are wise people as well, and we recognize that a government defaulted and undermined and demoralized is not a functioning government, and that is what we have today.

We have it because the Speaker of this House has refused to accept the responsibility of governance. It is all right to campaign and to share with those who would listen to your political philosophy and tag it as a contract on America, or a new day for America, or a new deal, but it is the next thing to translate those activities into governance, into making America work, into making this country function and to be responsible for this country's future.

Mr. Speaker, there are faces to this tragedy, this Government shutdown, and so today I am filing a continuing resolution that will allow this Government to open today and to fund most Government operations at 90 percent funding, and to pay those furloughed Federal employees. Because I know what the responsibility is of legislators and this House that has the power of the purse strings of this Nation.

First, it was to pass appropriations bills before November. This was not done by this Republican majority. But then it was to have a sense of humanity and dignity and believing in the integrity of this Congress, which is to not allow the least of our brothers and sisters to be able to go without food, like those in my community working at the Veterans' Administration Hospital. Employees that, in fact, are not able to pay their rent. They are being evicted and their child, a disabled individual, is not able to go to that particular day care.

Or another person who calls and says, and she happens to be in a Republican Member's district, but calling and pleading with me, she needs food to eat now and her child is in need of constant medical attention. She still has medical coverage, but she will not be able to pay the premiums.

Or another NASA employee that says help us get back to work. And then a senior citizen, likewise in a surrounding area, but calling me out of pain, saying the cuts the Republicans are proposing to make in Congress are terrible and a grave injustice to the disabled and the elderly.

What about those small businesses which have become the backbone of

America, particularly as corporate America is downsizing, AT&T eliminating 40,000 jobs. Well, let me tell my colleagues, we are losing some \$40 million a day in being unable to help our small businesses under the Small Business Administration; 225 small businesses are not being able to receive loan moneys so that they can keep their doors open, and so they can hire people and create jobs for America.

I think it is important today to ask that this continuing resolution be passed. I am also going to make an inquiry into the Department of the Agriculture because many of our citizens need food stamps, and we need to have a waiver of requirements to help people stay away from the brink of disaster.

And last, we have a situation where our States do not know what to do. Many who are not able to get unemployment insurance, the doors are closed because the moneys coming from the Federal Government are no longer here. We are in a constitutional crisis. This Nation is frankly being brought to its knees and we are bleeding.

And now, as we have said in times past about stop the bleeding when there has been violence among our youth, we are doing violence to Americans, and I simply cannot believe that we live in a nation where someone would say, "I have got mine, you get yours."

I ask the Republicans to join me in my continuing resolution to open the doors of this Government until January 19 so that we can discuss the philosophical differences, but we can stop the bleeding. And we can ensure that we have the kind of humanity that would allow this citizen to get food to eat, and disabled children to go to the day care that they need.

Mr. Speaker, it is time now for the politics to be put aside. We have to govern, and we have to govern for all of America.

#### SPEAKER GINGRICH MAY RECESS HOUSE SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, first, I want to go over a resolution which has raised the eyebrows of a number of our colleagues here that the House leadership filed with the Committee on Rules today. It has been described as a resolution which will allow the House to go on vacation or recess until the 23d of January, and I wanted to make the point to my colleagues, because I think there is genuine concern about this, that that is not what the resolution does.

It says that the Speaker may declare a recess subject to the call of the Chair on January 5 through Tuesday, January 9; and then the Speaker may declare a recess subject to the call of the

Chair from January 9 to January 12, and it goes on from January 12 to January 16, and from the 16th through the 19th, but it does not call for a recess. It gives the Speaker the power to make the call on that, and I wanted to assure my colleagues—

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KINGSTON. I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the gentleman, if this passes until when, until January 23d?

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I would tell the gentleman, no, this is the 5th.

Mr. HEFNER. But it would be a continuing. He can only do it for 3 days, and then he has to have the authority to do it for 3 more days. Is that the understanding?

What I want to get at is how many legislative days would from now, until when, the 23d or whatever, how many legislative days would that entail? I say that for this reason; for people that would be filing discharge petitions or what have you.

Would the gentleman explain to me exactly what it does one more time.

Mr. KINGSTON. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I will show the gentleman the wording on this, because as it was described at the Chair to me, I was confused about it also.

As I see it, it goes on a week-to-weekend, week-to-weekend time period, and it would give the Chair some discretion, yet, at the same time, we would not be going on vacation or recess unless the Chair had that—

Mr. HEFNER. What I want to get at is, we would have what, in essence, would be a recess for 2 or 3 weeks, but there would only be 2 or 3 legislative days that would be counted, if somebody wanted to file a discharge petition or what have you here in the House. Am I correct?

Mr. KINGSTON. Reclaiming my time once again, I would say to my learned colleague, who has more experience at this than I do, that I am not certain how this impacts discharge petitions, and I assume the discharge petitions he is referring to are ones that affect the continuing resolution. Am I correct on that?

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I understand the discharge petition has to lay for, say, so many days, but they have to be legislative days. Under this we could be in recess for 3 or 4 days but we would only have 1 legislative day.

Mr. KINGSTON. Is the gentleman saying discharge petitions specifically?

Mr. HEFNER. I want to know how many legislative days it would entail if this authority was granted and the Speaker exercised it, as is his authority to do that.

Mr. KINGSTON. As I read this, it allows the Speaker to declare a recess subject to the call of the Chair through the 9th, and then goes on from the 9th to the 12th and the 12th to the 16th.

Mr. HEFNER. And he would have to do it again on the 9th through the following week.