

use Federal employees and their families as hostages during this budget debate. To harm innocent families is morally wrong. Even Ebenezer Scrooge showed some compassion at Christmas-time, but Christmas has come and gone. Yet speaker GINGRICH and his band of extremists in this House have continued to furlough hundreds of thousands of Federal employees. No telling how many Tiny Tims across America have been harmed as innocent victims in this play.

Tonight let the American people be very clear about facts. Fact No. 1: Yesterday Senator DOLE in the other body voted unanimously to pass a resolution to put Federal workers back to work immediately. As Mr. DOLE said, and I quote, "Enough is enough."

Fact No. 2: If this House would simply take the Dole resolution, passed unanimously in the Senate, and pass it in the House, it would take 15 minutes to do so. After that 15-minute vote, the President would sign it, and within hours hundreds of thousands of Federal employees would be back to work and be earning a paycheck and servicing our Nation's senior citizens and veterans and students who need loans in order to better themselves.

Fact No. 3, and this is a sad fact but a true one: Today in this House Speaker GINGRICH and a band of his supporters chose not to even let this House have a vote on the Dole resolution to put the Federal Government back into operation and to put Federal workers back to work.

Speaker GINGRICH basically denied the democratic process today. In doing so, he harmed hundreds of thousands of Federal employees and the many millions of people that they serve, including our Nation's veterans who put their lives on the line for this Nation.

There has been a lot of talk about statistics during this budget debate. In the next few moments, I just simply want to put a human face on the victims of the Gingrich plan to shut down the Federal Government.

One letter from my district said this. I had a phone call today from a woman veteran who is being set up for a bone marrow transplant for breast cancer. She wondered if she would soon hear about her VA claim. I tried to explain to her about the furloughs at the regional office.

Another letter from my district:

Dear Congressman Edwards:

I am a medical administration specialist at the Waco VA medical center. I'm also a single parent with a teenager at home and a child in college. I just received a \$78 paycheck. I've had to borrow money from my mother to pay my rent. I don't know how I'm going to pay my daughter's college tuition payment that is due now.

She goes on to say,

It is obvious to me that the honorable Speaker and his staff have lost sight of the human face of their actions. We're not faceless. We are someone's wife, husband, brother, sister, son, daughter. When we are held hostage by the whims of Washington legislators, our hardship radiates out into the community.

Another letter from a Government employee in my district:

Dear Congressman Chet Edwards:

I am a government employee with the Veterans Administration. This government shutdown has caused me great hardship. I am unable to purchase my insulin medication for diabetes.

Let me repeat that, my colleagues:

I am unable to purchase my insulin medication for diabetes. I have had to borrow money for food and medicine. My rent has to be paid by the first of the month. My landlord, who ironically is owned by the government, is the housing authority, and they are going to charge me \$25 for the first day and \$5 every extra day that I do not have money to pay my rent.

Mr. Speaker, that is the face of the victims of this needless, absolutely unproductive Federal shutdown, and there are many more faces throughout the country. In the days ahead I have every intention of letting this House know of the victims from these games that are being played.

GETTING OUR FINANCIAL HOUSE IN ORDER

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

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I was elected to the statehouse in 1974 and began service in 1975 and I could never understand how Congress would be able to spend more than it raised in revenues and deficit-spend. I knew that on the State level we had to balance our State budgets.

I vowed when I was elected in 1987 that my first priority would be to get our financial house in order and be part of that effort. There was a small group of us, only 30 at the time, who voted for a budget that the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. KASICH] introduced which began to do that, and each year we saw that number increase. Finally this year we saw a Congress that over 300 Members voted for a balanced budget amendment.

But it would be kind of silly to vote for a balanced budget amendment and not be willing to vote to balance the budget, and we set out to balance the budget. It was a long and an arduous task in which we spent the last 11 months to in fact balance the budget in 7 years. We submitted that budget and it was vetoed by the President.

We are asking the President of the United States to do the same kind of heavy lifting that we have done and tell us where his priorities are and where he would spend and where he would cut. I do not disagree that the President might have a problem with where we spend on Medicare, Medicaid, school lunch, student loans. He may have differences. He may not agree with the tax cuts that we have suggested in the next 7 years, all of those are issues that are open for dialog and debate and need to be debated.

The issue is, when? When is he going to submit his balanced budget, a budg-

et balanced in 7 years, scored by real numbers of the Congressional Budget Office, which is not a partisan office, it is not a bipartisan office, it is a non-partisan office.

And so we are now in a position where the President has, which is his privilege, the ability to take the 13 different budget items and agree to the ones that we have passed, and the 13 budget items, any of those that he does not agree with, he can veto. He has vetoed the Interior bill, the Commerce, Justice and State and the VA-HUD bill.

My colleague was right in pointing out that the Veterans Administration is not functioning. It is not functioning because we provided a budget and the President decided to veto it. We have not yet presented him the Labor-HHS bill. That is in the Senate and is now filibustered by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who are in the Senate. We have not given him the District of Columbia bill and the Foreign Operations. But all the other bills we have given him.

So we have a shutdown. I contend that this is not an issue of Federal employees or even the reduction and disruption of some services. It is an issue of whether finally after 30 years of deficit spending we are going to get our financial house in order.

When I was first elected to the statehouse, our debt was \$350 billion. Our debt has grown now to \$4.9 trillion. It is about whether we finally, after so many years, are going to get our financial house in order and balance the Federal budget and in the process save our trust funds, particularly Medicare, from insolvency starting this year and bankruptcy in the seventh year.

We have heard criticism of our budget, that the earned income tax credit, a credit that goes to people who pay no taxes, is being cut and yet we know it is going from \$19.9 billion to \$25 billion in the next 7 years, the school lunch program, which under our plan goes from \$5.1 billion to \$6.1 billion, or our student loan which goes from \$24 billion to \$36 billion. Only in this place when you spend 50 percent more like on the student loan program, going from \$24 billion to \$36 billion, do people call it a cut. Or Medicaid that is going from \$89 billion to \$127 billion. Or Medicare which is going from \$178 billion to \$289 billion.

We have put in tremendous new money under our Medicare program. For instance, it goes from \$4,800 to \$7,100 per beneficiary in the 7th year, a significant increase. Ultimately we have a disagreement with the President on Medicare and Medicaid. He may have other priorities. The simple fact is this Government would get started in 6 hours, those parts that need to be funded that are not would be funded in easily 6 hours if the President did one thing that he promised to do at Thanksgiving, and I thought when the President gave his word, he meant to keep it, and he gave his word

that we would balance the budget in 7 years using real numbers. We are still waiting for his balanced budget proposal.

I know the Government is shut down, but I know ultimately that we are going to have to get our financial house in order, and I am willing to stay as long as it takes to do that.

REPUBLICANS HOLD GOVERNMENT HOSTAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a quick comment on the comments of my colleague, the last speaker, who knows very well that there have been unbalanced budgets in this country under Republican Presidents, but never has there been a shutdown of the Government of the magnitude that we see today.

What we see here is a political ploy. It has very little to do with balancing the budget but it has to do with trying to hold hostage this Democratic President. It quite frankly is politics of the very worst kind, and I believe that the American public has some understanding of what is going on here.

Mr. Speaker, last months Speaker GINGRICH shut down the Government because he did not like his seat on Air Force One. Now the Gingrich Republicans in the House of Representatives are at it again. This time they are holding the American people hostage in order to blackmail the President into agreeing to their massive cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment, all to pay for a tax break for the wealthiest Americans.

Make no mistake about it, this has been the Speaker's plan all along. As long ago as April of last year, the Speaker threatened to shut down the Government in order to get his way on the budget, and I quote him: "I don't care what the price is," the Speaker said in April. "I don't care what the price is."

It is this kind of childish philosophy that has isolated the Gingrich Republicans from responsible Republicans in the United States Senate who have joined Democrats in calling to open up the Government and put the employees back to work again.

"Enough is enough." That is the quote from the majority leader of the other body in announcing that he has had it with this legislative blackmail scheme. Enough is enough. That is how the American people feel. Enough is enough for the 600,000 senior citizens who are losing their Meals on Wheels because of the Republican Government shutdown.

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Enough is enough for the small businesses that are facing layoffs because they have not received the small business loans that they were promised,

and enough is enough for the Federal employees who serve the public every day and who now have been betrayed,

Think of the Federal employees, of the Social Security office once located in the Murragh Federal Building in Oklahoma City. In April they survived the worst terrorist attack in our Nation's history, and today they are the target of political terrorists and are being forced to work without pay.

The Republican Party claims to be the party of fiscal responsibility, but this Government shutdown is costing taxpayers \$50 million a day, \$50 million a day. Thus far, the shutdown has cost hard-working taxpayers \$550 million. That is right, taxpayers are paying hundreds of millions of dollars, and they are receiving no services in return. That is not fiscally responsible. That is not responsible at all under any set of circumstances.

Thus far, the House of Representatives has had 12 votes to reopen the Government, and only two Republicans have had the courage to join Democrats to end the irresponsible politics of the Gingrich Republicans and in order to reopen this Government.

Enough is enough. That is what the public wants is for this Government to open and not to be having a gun pointed at the heads of Federal employees or at the President of the United States.

Let us get serious here. We are sent here to do the work of the people, and that is to carry on the Government of this country every single day, and if the Gingrich Republicans who are, for political reasons, only keeping this Government shut down, at great cost to the American taxpayer, at great cost to the American public in terms of the services that we are bound to provide to people in this country, and they put their faith and trust in all of us who serve in this body, and we dare not turn our backs on the American public in the way that the Speaker of this House has, and the Republican leadership.

Woe to those who do this, for the public will turn its back on you.

THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, over a year ago the House Republicans promised us a revolution, but what they did not tell us is that they were going to take hostages.

But here we are. We are into day 19 of this Government shutdown. Federal workers and their families all across America and beyond are being held hostage. Meals on Wheels, a program for our seniors, that is being threatened. Small businesses are losing income because of SBA problems with the Small Business Administration, and private-sector employees are being laid off because of the Government

shutdown, from cleaning up Superfund sites, and other environmental catastrophes, and the people who have got the contract to do those cleanups are being laid off.

Half a million people are working today not knowing if they are going to get paid. And we have got about 260,000 Federal workers who are not on the job.

Medicare and unemployment claims are not even being processed. So if you worked hard and you were laid off, how do you think those people from AT&T feel when they picked up the paper and read that 40,000, 13 percent of their work force, are going to be laid off? And then you turn the paper and you go to page 2, and there is the Federal Government not even going to process your unemployment claims.

Environmental waste cleanups, nursing home inspections are being interrupted, and in one case a foreign government is threatening literally to shut off the lights at the U.S. Embassy because we have not been paying our bills. Forty million dollars a day down the drain, all because a small band of extremist Republicans in this House cannot get their way, so they are going to close it all down, all because a small band of extremist Republicans who do not represent the majority of America, in fact, they do not represent the majority in Congress, they do not even represent the majority in this House, are trying to force their will on the American people. These are people who do not like the Government, and they do not like the people who work for the Government. That is who we are talking about here.

You know, who are the people who work for the Government? They are our men and women in uniforms, our troops overseas who are guarding our embassies all over the world, they are the police that are protecting the men and the women and the children of this country, protecting them in their neighborhoods. They are the teachers who are teaching our young people. They are the people at the Department of Education who are processing Pell grants so your kids can get a higher education, so they have an opportunity to live in this great country and make a living for themselves. They are people who work in our national parks, who provide this wondrous enjoyment of one of the great gifts not only in this country but in the world. These are the people that are being affected.

The Senate Majority Leader, the Republican, Mr. DOLE, was right, "Enough is enough." He is fed up with the antics of what is happening on this side of the aisle.

People have been gone from their jobs long enough. It is time that the House Republicans stop messing around with other people's lives. End this shutdown and open this Government.

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

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