

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.

□ 1930

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.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, shutting down the Government, harming innocent people, it is just not Government workers that are being inconvenienced, it is the elderly, it is children, it is our veterans, it is our veterans' hospitals.

If we opened this Government tomorrow, it would have absolutely no effect on negotiations that are going on on the budget. They could still trash the President. They could still have their negotiations, and you could go ahead with the business. There are a lot of people that are being inconvenienced and a lot of people are being devastated because of the shutdown of the Government. It is not just Government employees that are being inconvenienced, it is elderly, children, students, small business.

Mr. BONIOR. You are absolutely right.

Mr. HEFNER. Enough is enough. We need to open this Government and put people back to work and do the business of America that people sent us here to do and that the Federal employees were hired to do to go about doing the business of America.

Mr. BONIOR. The gentleman is absolutely right.

You know, when we had these im-passes before, we would move forward. We would move forward, and we would do our negotiations, and we did not lay off and close the Government down and cause the inconveniences and the heartaches that are happening all across America.

I thank my colleagues for their attention this evening.

DEVASTATION OF GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to basically express shock, if you will, tonight over the fact that the Republican majority here in the House continue this process of leaving a significant part of the Government shut down. I guess I was pretty much amazed before the Christmas recess, if you will, when we voted here on the House floor to give Speaker GINGRICH the power to recess the Congress over the holiday between Christmas and New Year's, and I suddenly realized that that meant that Government workers and the services that they provided would essentially cease to exist. The workers would be furloughed, and the services would not be provided between Christmas and New Year's.

When I heard yesterday that the Senate, after repeated requests by the President, that the Senate had finally gone along and decided that they were going to pass a continuing resolution to keep the Government going, at least for the next week or so, I fully expected that when we reconvened that I

would be coming back today to vote in the House on that Senate resolution and the Government would be up and running by tomorrow and even though the budget negotiations would continue, that at least we would not have the continuation of this Government shutdown. I guess I was very naive in assuming that.

When we came here today and we had a vote on the motion that the minority leader, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT], made to try to bring that Senate resolution up that would reopen the Government, the Republicans on the other side, almost all of them, voted to table that motion, and now we face the real possibility, based on this motion or resolution that has come up before the Committee on Rules again at the request of the Republican majority, that tomorrow we may go into recess again and possibly until January 23, which I guess is the day when the State of the Union address is given by the President, that the Government would continue to be shut down and the Congress would not be in session.

I wonder who the Members on the other side are listening to when they go home to their respective States or their respective districts. When I went home over the last week or 10 days, in my district office we repeatedly got calls from individuals, some of whom are Government employees who were not getting paid for the Christmas holiday or for the part of the time that they had already worked; others, people who were missing services, whether it was passports or Social Security applications or student loans or small business loans or whatever it was, and my phones never stopped ringing for the whole period of the recess from people who were paying their taxes but were not able to receive Government services and from Government employees, many of whom were asking how they were going to pay their rent, how they were going to pay their mortgage, how they were going to get through the next day.

So I think it is incredible and it really is shameful, the fact that we are now facing the real possibility that for the next 3 weeks this Government continues to be shut down because Speaker Gingrich, and particularly the freshman Republicans, want to hold the Government hostage to their own particular ideology on the budget, and the blame is squarely with the House Republicans, with Speaker GINGRICH and the Gingrich Republicans because as we know, the Senate, the other body, has already acted on its continuing resolution.

I am joined here tonight by several Democratic colleagues from various parts of the country, and we wanted to highlight, if we could, in the time that we have, the fact that the shutdown is affecting the quality of life for many Americans, particularly with regard to the environment, the EPA, which is one of the Government agencies that is

shut down, particularly with regard to the Superfund program, which we were told today is about to shut down completely for all practical purposes over the next 5 days, and also highlight some other areas where the Government, through its inspection, through its enforcement, provides for the health and safety of Americans but cannot do so because of the Government shutdown that has been put upon us, if you will, by the Republicans.

So I would like to now yield, if I could, to the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. HEFNER].

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

We heard in the last election, the campaign, the Contract With America, but I doubt very seriously if, during this campaign, if the people, who were campaigning as Republicans had said what we plan to do is to cut inspection in the workplace where people work, on the safety, and we are going to cut some of that and we are going to cut back on the inspectors for our safe water, we are going to cut back on the EPA, we are going to cut back on the funding for the FDA and all the other institutions and agencies that protect the food and water and air that we breathe, that we are so dependent on, I doubt very seriously if there had been the outpouring of support for the Contract With America.

But there are a couple of points that I would like to make, and as I said earlier, this is not just inconveniencing Government workers. One of the Presidential candidates made, I thought, a very crass remark when he said, "Have you missed the Government since they have been furloughed?" I mean, you are talking families, people that have children, people that have maybe their aging parents that are living with them, maybe people that are trying to support a foster child or whatever.

But there is one other area that is being very devastated to the American people, and you have thousands, thousands of people that would like to make applications for their Social Security, for Social Security disability, veterans' benefits, our VA hospitals. I have one in my district. They are short-handed.

□ 1945

They are short-handed. Some of the people that are deemed to be essential, they are either getting half pay or not getting any pay. So you are hitting individuals, there are real faces on these furloughs. There are thousands of people that are being affected by these furloughs.

I just would like to give maybe some of the people who have not been here as long as some of us have, we did not use to do business such as this. Nobody wants to do business as usual, and that is the standard cry around here, we do not need to do business as usual. We certainly need to make some changes.

But in the past, we have never gone to these extremes. I have been on the