

protect the environment and education, but now it is abundantly clear that is not really what they are all about. They are insisting on the level of tax cuts or tax breaks, mostly for wealthy individuals and for large corporations, that would make devastating cuts in Medicare and Medicaid. They are saying that, "We want to use those cuts to pay for a tax cut or tax breaks primarily for the wealthy Americans."

It really seems to me at that point there is not much more the President can do.

There was an article in the *Star Ledger*, which is the largest circulation daily in my home State of New Jersey that I just wanted to quote from briefly today in the time that I have left because I think it says it all.

It says that, "We need an agreement on a balanced budget, but we don't want a budget agreement at all costs," which is essentially what the Republican leadership is asking for, and I quote from the *Star Ledger*. It says, "The cost is too great if the budget agreement includes a tax cut benefiting mostly those in the upper income brackets, as this Republican one does. In fact, there is no reason for a tax cut at all. Balanced budgets and tax cuts are goals that work at cross purposes. The cost is too great if it means turning over Medicaid, medical care for the indigents, to the States. That would mean ending the right to medical care for those who can afford it least and are most vulnerable. It would be a great leap backward for this country. And the cost is too great if it means slashing Medicare to the point where the cost to the aged for their premiums becomes painful, which is what is proposed in this Republican budget. If there continues to be no national health care program, then some cost adjustments must be made in financing Medicare to prepare for the crush of retiring baby-boomers in the next century, but to include the overhaul in a political budget that is meant to work against aid for the indigent and the elderly is not the proper context. The cost is too great."

And that is what I would say to my colleagues on the other side. We would like a balanced budget, but we cannot have it at this great cost to our priorities.

AMERICA'S MOST TRAGIC MORAL FAILING OF THE MODERN ERA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. STEARNS] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, 1 day after the 23d anniversary of *Roe versus Wade*, many people were up here to recognize this fact, to address one of the most important and divisive moral issues our Nation faces.

Abortion clearly stands as America's greatest and most tragic moral failing

of the modern era. In the last century America was called upon to address the moral blight of slavery. And we did it. Though the struggle was great and tore the country in two, good ultimately triumphed over evil and the scourge of slavery was banished from the land. In this century we face a different fight—the fight against what anyone with a moral conscience can only consider the taking of a human life. Will America rise to this new challenge? Will we come to our moral senses? Only time will tell.

But we can say this: Whatever happens, those who believe abortion is simply wrong will continue to take their case to the American people. Although the courts still consider abortion a legal right, that doesn't make it a moral right. And although any change in the legal status of abortion may still be a long way off, there are still measures we can take not to combat this crime against humanity.

It is my belief that political change in America only happens as a result of cultural change. Until we change America's culture—until America regains a commitment to the sanctity of human life—all our efforts will produce little change. We need to argue our case forcefully. We need to convince America by the power of our ideas and by the depth of our passion that abortion deserves no place in any society that would call itself civilized. We condemn Hitler for the slaughter of 6 million Jews. We condemn Stalin for the murder of 20 million Russians. We condemn Pol Pot for the extermination of 1 million Cambodians. But we raise nary a peep about the 1.5 million innocent children who are killed on our own shores every year. My colleagues, I ask you: Where is our conscience? Where is our shame?

Now our foes on the other side of this debate refuse to admit that what is at stake in abortion is a human life. No; they insist that abortion is just a medical procedure intended to terminate a pregnancy. The fetus to them is not life. It is not even potential life. It is merely a blob of tissue, or worse, a parasite that needs to be excised from the victimized mother. Abortion is solely about the so-called rights of the mother. The rights of the unborn child are never part of the equation, because for them the fetus has no rights.

But I have a question for the pro-abortion forces in this country: How can you be so sure? How do you know the fetus is merely human tissue with no claim to personhood? How do you know abortion is not, in fact, the taking of a human life? Their answer, of course, is that they just know. Never do they produce any evidence that the fetus is not a human life. They simply assume that the fetus is not life. And after all, what other choice do they have? The only way they can feel comfortable morally is to pretend what they advocate is the surgical equivalent of having a tooth pulled.

In his book "The Unaborted Societies," the moral philosopher Peter

Kreeft poses this analogy for abortion. Pretend you're a hunter going off into the woods with your friend, but you get separated. Now you're alone hunting for deer and you hear something rustle in the bushes in front of you. You can't see what it is, but you know something is there. What do you do? Do you shoot, hoping the noise is caused by a deer and not your friend? Or do you play it safe and hold your fire until you're sure that it's not your friend? My friends, the abortionist faces the same quandary every day of his life. He can't say for sure that the fetus is not human. But does he play it safe? No, he takes a chance that the fetus he is aborting is really a human being. He literally risks that he is a murderer.

We all know there are deep divisions within our society over abortion. But the one thing I hope we all can agree on is that it is morally risky at best to practice a procedure that even an abortionist must admit could be murder. But it is up to us, my colleagues, to make these arguments, to persuade the country that it is best to err on the side of caution when contemplating abortion. If we do not act, who will? If we do not speak up on behalf of the unborn, will they speak up for themselves?

But I have hope. I believe we are beginning to turn the corner. Congress, through the hard work of Representatives like CHRIS SMITH, BOB DORNAN, and HENRY HYDE, has finally succeeded in passing the first legislation ever that would prevent a particular abortion procedure from being used. I speak here of the so-called partial-birth abortion, a gruesome act whereby the fetus is delivered right to the base of the skull, at which point the abortionist plunges in a pair of surgical scissors to facilitate the evacuation of the brain. The baby, of course, is then fully delivered, but dead. In this act of barbarity, only 3 inches separates a legal abortion from murder. But of course, we all know it is murder anyway.

Unfortunately, the Clinton administration has promised to veto this bill, despite bipartisan support. This is interesting, because even the President has said his goal is to make abortion safe, legal, and rare. Well, here was a chance to make it a little rarer, and what did he do? He promised a veto.

But I wonder something? Why does the President want abortion to be rare? If it is just a harmless medical procedure that improves the lives of women—as the President believes—then why should it be rare? In his world abortion is a good thing and therefore it should be plentiful. But the reality is that even the President knows the American people are uncomfortable with abortion. He knows that even if he sees nothing wrong with 1.5 million abortions, the majority of the American people do.

Fortunately, America's moral climate is changing. Americans never thought legal abortion would be used for anything other than extreme cases.

But now they realize they were sold a false bill of goods. Now they realize that abortion, far from being used to save the life of the mother, is little more than a convenient form of birth control for countless women. It is my contention that had Americans known that, they never would have consented to legalizing abortion in the first place.

Simply put, abortion detracts from our national greatness. As Alexis de Toqueville said in his pioneering study of American democracy more than 100 years ago: "America is great because America is good." If we lose our goodness, our greatness is sure to follow.

I think most Americans realize this, which is why abortion troubles them. But as with all great public debates, we must reinforce our truths again and again. Together, we can make a difference. So let's make a commitment, right here and right now, that we will labor to restore America to greatness by restoring it to goodness. And do we really have any other choice? Basic morality demands that we who possess the power to speak, stand up for the rights of those who lack the power to speak for themselves.

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GOP MOVING THE GOAL POSTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOODLING). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, in November, House Budget Chairman JOHN KASICH said this about the budget negotiations: "Frankly, we don't ask for a lot. We ask for nothing more than a commitment to do this in a 7-year period. The priorities within that 7-year plan are negotiable."

The Republican leadership in both House and the Senate echoed Mr. KASICH's sentiments and asked President Clinton to produce a 7-year balanced budget using the economic assumptions of the Congressional Budget Office. That's all we want, they said, and then we can negotiate the details.

Well, the President has done his part. He has given Republicans a 7-year balanced budget using CBO numbers. But now, Republican leaders want to move the goal posts in the middle of the game. Now, Mr. KASICH and the Republican leadership in Congress say they will not negotiate on the budget priorities.

The budget negotiations do come down to a question of priorities. Democrats and the President want a balanced budget that protects Medicare, education and the environment, and includes a tax cut for middle-class families. The Republicans want deeper cuts in Medicare, education, and the environment to help pay for a larger tax break that goes primarily to upper-income families and large corporations. And they want a backroom deal on Medicare. That is wrong.

Yet, despite our differences, a balanced budget is in reach. Both sides of the aisle have produced plans that will get us there. We will never all agree on all the details. However, if we can produce a balanced budget that protects Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment, it will pass this House, it will pass the other body and it will be signed into law by the President.

My Republican colleagues said that if the President gave them a 7-year CBO budget, they would negotiate. The President has done that. It's time for Republicans to keep your word and get back to the negotiating table.

For 220 years, this democracy has worked. Let's make it work again. Government shutdowns and threatened defaults on our debt—these tactics are an affront to democracy. It's time to put away the blackmail schemes and put America on the track to a balanced budget that protects our priorities: Medicare, education, environmental protection, and a tax cut for working middle-class families.

Thus far, this Congress has been the least productive Congress since 1933. Will that be the legacy of the 104th Congress? Or, will we rise above partisan politics and do what's right for the country?

FARM LEGISLATION FOR 1996 NEEDS TO BEGIN NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. EWING] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I come here today to talk about something that is basic to America and basic to this country, and something that we need to take action on, and that deals with farm legislation for 1996.

We need to take action now, because even while you may have been snowed in here in the Nation's capital and winter holds its grip across this Nation, it is but a few weeks until we will be going to the fields in my district in Illinois, and, yes, across the whole Nation. It is time that we take action.

Unfortunately, the farm bill for 1996 and the next 7 years, which contributed \$13 billion to deficit reduction, was vetoed by President Clinton when he vetoed the Balanced Budget Act. So since there has been no agreement with the President on a true balanced budget and it does not appear that one is going to happen, we have got to take care of agriculture policy, food policy for this Nation, just as we would our military policy if he had vetoed that bill also.

We need to do it in a bipartisan way. Agriculture and agricultural policy has, for the most part, always been a bipartisan effort. We need to do that, and I am sure that the gentleman from Kansas, Chairman ROBERTS, is working in that regard, and the gentleman from Texas, ranking member DE LA GARZA, is also very cooperative. But we are

late, and now is the time to take action; we cannot wait any longer, and be doing what is good for the country.

What are the options? Well, of course, if the President would agree to a balanced budget that this Congress could approve, we could put it in that act. As I said, that is not probably going to happen.

We could do it as an independent bill, or we could attach it to the next CR, which I feel certain will be passed, and we could pass it on to the President, and hopefully he would sign it.

Now, another option is to extend the farm policy that has been in effect up until October 1 of last year. But, see, that policy does not contain the reforms, the market orientation, that we had in the new bill. It is counterproductive to go back and extend old policy, which really decreases the amount of investment we are going to put into our food policy and our food programs in this country. It is tired old policy. It is time to retire it. We need to move on.

The final option is we could go back to a 1949 act, and that is not practical at all. Certainly legislation in 1949 does not now cover the needs of agriculture today.

Finally, on this issue, let me say that the Secretary of Agriculture is considering retiring some of the CRP ground, the Crop Reserve Program. This program has been very beneficial to the environment, and I think that we should ask the Secretary to go very slowly in releasing millions of acres of ground, some of which should not be put back into cropland, to be put into crops. We should not overreact the first time in two decades that we have decent commodity prices and farmers across this country have a chance to be profitable. As we move with the new farm bill out of government-controlled agriculture, let us not kill the goose before it has a chance to lay a golden egg. I would ask that the Secretary of Agriculture take the very limited option in reducing CRP ground, and let us follow the pattern and see what happens before we get into it too deeply.

GIVE FULL ATTENTION TO STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE TONIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I am just here to hope that this body tonight can listen to what the President says and we can come together and not have another shutdown of the Government or not declare a default on the debt, which would be the first time in the history of this great Republic.

This House floor has all the ambience of downtown Sarajevo before the Dayton agreement. I do not know what we do, whether we load everybody off and send them to Dayton. Maybe there is something in the water that can get