

far as the eye can see are no longer acceptable, that while we must be concerned about programs that fund the present, we must also reflect our concern by our actions on programs that impact the future of our country.

That, of course, is what we attempt to do tonight. So, Mr. President, I hope that within minutes our leadership will be in place and we can consider these important CR's to move the Government forward, to allow the Federal employees out of hostage, if you will, and back to work by Monday morning.

I think it is important for our country that we do so. But while we do it, let us not lose focus on the reason we are here; and that is that the White House has flatly refused to produce a balanced budget. That is now their obligation to do so. We have done so. We have done so in a responsible manner. It may not be a balanced budget that all of us agreed to, but it was one that clearly for the first time in decades demonstrates the priorities of Government under the kind of spending limitations that we believe are clearly necessary to get our debt and our deficit under control.

I hope the Senate will act responsibly tonight, as I believe the House has done this afternoon. With those comments, I yield the floor.

Mr. FORD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

FUNDING THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I was interested in listening to my good friend from Idaho. And, you know, the devil is in the fine print. I have heard that earlier in my life: The devil is in the fine print. You can talk about the CR that comes over here. That is the continuing resolution that pays employees. I hope that we will put Federal employees back to work. Well, that is fine. I want them to go back to work, too.

I do not think anybody likes to pay people for not working. That was what the majority leader said the other day, that he grew up in Kansas, and he felt like if you worked you got paid, if you did not work, you did not get paid. So I support his position.

But in this continuing resolution that is coming over here we are going to pay the employees retroactively, and we are going to pay them for coming to the office. But we are not funding the necessary ingredients for them to work.

They talked about the DEA agent. They had a drug bust, and he wanted to go. They needed him—several of them. They did not have any money to buy gasoline to put in the car under this continuing resolution. That does not make sense to this country, boy, that you say, "Go back to work. We're going to pay you, but you can't do anything."

Look at the schedule of the leadership in the next 25 days: Iowa, New

Hampshire, Minnesota, Texas, Florida, all over the country. I do not think that is working here, trying to work out the budget.

Let us just be sure that the American people understand what this continuing resolution does. It sends Government employees back to the office. It pays them retroactively, to sit there and do nothing. Employees cannot make a long-distance phone call, cannot buy gasoline for a car, cannot do the things that the American people would like for them to do, that they have been shortchanged in the last 21 days. In my opinion, I have never heard so much of a continuation of the same thing, same thing, same thing.

I watched the House as they spoke this afternoon, and all the President has to do is agree to a 7-year balanced budget with CBO figures and everything will be all right. Well, the President has agreed to a 7-year budget, balanced budget in 7 years. He has agreed to that. No. 2, he has agreed to CBO figures. There is no problem with that.

Now, what is the problem? The problem is, how do you get there?

My Republican friends want to cut or reduce—however you want to say it—Medicare by \$270 billion. We think that is wrong. They want to reduce Medicare, want to reduce education, want to reduce the environment. To do what? To get to the point of giving a \$245 billion tax cut. That is the whole fight—to give a \$245 billion tax cut.

Now, who is going to get it? If you owe taxes, as I understand it, and you have children under 18, you can get a credit. But if you do not owe any taxes, you do not get any refundable tax. Therefore, you do not get anything. If you make too much money—hopefully, we will give some kind of tax break to those under \$100,000. We stood here on the floor not too long ago and asked if you would put a limit in the bill giving a tax break to those that made a million or less. We even lost that.

Now, when you send the budget to the President, when he has agreed to balance the budget in 7 years, to be using CBO figures, but to get to a \$245 billion tax cut, you put 80 percent of the cuts on 20 percent of our population, the lowest 20 percent, and you give 80 percent of the help to the upper 20 percent of income, Mr. President, as we say down in my part of the country, something about that "ain't" right.

I want to tell you, the so-called middle income—I know a family where the man worked for the railroad. He retired. They shifted that to a Social Security payment rather than a railroad retirement payment. He had a few thousand dollars in the bank, had a house with no mortgage on it, and Social Security checks coming for he and his wife. He thought he was in pretty decent shape. Lo and behold, he and his wife both had to go to a nursing home. They had too much money to draw Medicaid. So they kept paying and kept paying and kept paying, and finally they had nothing left. Nothing. They had to go on Medicaid.

Now, in this budget that the Republicans are attempting to pass and say the President ought to accept, it says to their children, "You use up all your money to pay for mom and dad before we trigger in Medicaid." A lot of people around this country, Mr. President, that are making \$35,000 to \$45,000 a year, they have children, they are trying to educate them and all that, and lo and behold, their parents are in the nursing home, they are drawing Medicaid, they get the Social Security check. You take about all of it, with the exception of \$10 a week for personal items, which is all the individual has left out of the Social Security check. You say to them that your kids have to pay, and they are trying to educate their children, trying to make ends meet, trying to pay a mortgage on the house and all that—the Republican budget did that. To get to what? For a \$245 billion tax cut that will go to the upper 20 percent of income.

If that is the kind of budget that you want the President to sign, then I hope he never does, because there are too many people out there that would be hurt by this type of budget.

I represent Kentucky, born and bred there, and proud of it. We had a Senator that came here that made quite a mark. His name was Henry Clay. Henry Clay was called "the Great Compromiser." He knew how to compromise. But Henry Clay said that compromise was negotiated hurt—negotiated hurt. If you are going to hurt a little bit, let everybody have a little bit of hurt instead of some having a whole lot and others not having any. Negotiated hurt—let everybody hurt a little bit. I do not think you would have any objection to that.

Just take the farmers in the next 5 years. The Senator from Idaho understands farming very well. But the President has offered a \$4 billion cut and the Republican budget takes about \$14 billion. Just take \$10 million off of the tax cut, you still have \$235 billion; instead of taking a \$270 billion reduction in Medicare, just take the \$89 billion that the President offered.

Talk about real numbers, let us put real numbers in front of real faces and real places. That is how you are going to understand the numbers. It is all numbers. It is all dollars. What will you do to the individuals and the families, the young and the elderly, by just looking at numbers? There are faces and places behind those numbers, and we have to have that part of the discussion when we come to talking about the budget.

When you talk about real numbers, let us talk about real people. Let us talk about real places. Let us talk about real hurt. Let us talk about being fair. Let us talk about being compassionate. That is the kind of country we are. That is the reason we are strong. We reach out not only to our own but to others. That has made us the leader of the world.

To come in here and say we are going to say to the President that we will

give him a clean CR when he sends us a budget that is certified balanced by CBO and signed off by the Speaker of the House, I know what Senator DOLE would say if he was President of the United States, and a Democrat Speaker over there—I know what he would tell him. I think you do, too.

So let us look at the budget that the Republicans gave us. If you were not using Social Security, you would be \$106 billion short—\$106 billion short—in the year 2002. But when you dig in and use the Social Security numbers, you get down to—I do not want to answer any questions.

Mr. CRAIG. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. FORD. Happy to yield for a question.

Mr. CRAIG. The question is, have not the Democrats used the Social Security trust fund figures in numbers just the way the Republicans are currently using them? We learned—

Mr. FORD. Not for the last 12 years.

Mr. CRAIG. Yes, you have, Senator.

Mr. FORD. The President of the United States signed—the President is responsible for that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senators will address through the Chair.

Mr. FORD. It is awful hard to address through the Chair.

Here on December 15—Mr. President, we talk about never wanting to offer anything. What bothers me is that on December 15, the President offered some numbers based on a budget he had submitted previously. He eased toward the Republican side on December 15; the Republicans eased toward the President on December 15. They moved closer to each other on discretionary cuts, on Medicare, on Medicaid, on welfare and EITC. I thought that was negotiation. That was on December 15.

Mr. President, we have agreed to a 7-year balanced budget. We have agreed to the CBO certification. Now let us get down to trying to figure out how we help our young kids and give them an education.

They talk about increasing the Pell grants. Sure they did, but they forget to tell you they cut off the bottom half. It is the way you use the words. So you increase Pell grants by \$100, but you cut off from \$600 down. A lot of people get by on \$600. That is all they need. That is all they should be given. But if they do not need more than that, they do not get anything. They want to get an education; just need a few dollars.

So this is the kind of budget that the President of the United States has said no to, has said no to.

So, I hope we will just leave this rhetoric behind us and look at where we need to work, and that is Medicare, that is Medicaid, that is education, that is the environment; and that we put a face on it instead of the numbers and we put a place instead of the numbers. And once we decide the faces we want to help and the places we want to secure, then we can put the numbers with them. I think then we will have a budget.

But the President, in my judgment, is trying to protect those people who are being hurt so severely by the Republicans saying "We won't give." It is not here, it is over on the other end of the Capitol Building, but "We won't give unless we get the \$245 billion tax cut." In April the Speaker of the House said, "We're going to shut Government down." Lo and behold, it did. But we have had bills vetoed before under Republican Presidents and we have offered a continuing resolution, we have continued Government while we sat down and negotiated those things that were objectionable to the Republican Presidents and we finally arrived at something that could be sent to the President that we agreed upon and he could sign. That is where we ought to be now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished President pro tempore, the Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business. There is no pending business at this time.

THE CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today in support of H.R. 1643, which will return all Federal Government employees to the workplace, and restore their paychecks. This bill will also reopen many important Government services which were closed due to President Clinton's veto of various appropriation bills.

It is regrettable that the President has permitted the budget situation to deteriorate. Let me remind my colleagues that this Congress enacted a balanced budget plan which the President also vetoed. At that point, he assumed an obligation to provide the Congress with his budget proposal. Yet despite his many promises to do so, and the statutory requirement of November 20, 1995, President Clinton has failed to submit a real balanced budget.

Mr. President, for years I have made speeches in this great Chamber, and cast my vote in support of a balanced budget. I have introduced balanced budget amendments in numerous sessions of Congress, including the 104th Congress. On July 12, 1982, a balanced budget amendment was brought to the floor. As chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I was pleased to sponsor and guide that important measure to passage. On August 4, 1982, 69 Senators voted in favor of the resolution. While a majority supported it in the House, it failed to receive the necessary two-thirds vote. In March 1986, the Senate voted on another balanced budget amendment. It was unfortunate that the Resolution failed by one vote. Last session, the balanced budget amendment again failed by one vote. However, I am confident that we will yet pass the balanced budget amendment during the 104th Congress and call on the President to support that effort.

With or without a constitutional amendment, this Congress will enact a budget which protects the security, health and safety of our Nation, provides quality Government services, and eliminates harmful deficits.

Mr. President, this bill brings employees back to work with back pay. It also provides targeted appropriations, through the end of fiscal year 1996, for critical Government services. Enactment of this measure will remove the issue of the Federal Government shut-down and allow us to focus on the larger objective of the balanced budget agreement.

Mr. President, in closing, I commend the majority leader, Senator DOLE, and Senator DOMENICI, the chairman of the Budget Committee, for their leadership and continuing efforts to resolve this important issue. I call on the President to keep his promise, to stop the gimmicks, and do the right thing for the future of our great Nation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CONSTITUENTS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, the Senate hopefully will be hearing from the distinguished majority leader and Democratic leader, as they are now returning from the White House. I am continuing to review the actions taken by the House. I am hopeful that these actions will reach a compromise, a position whereby the Government can return to provide the services to the people of this Nation. But I am going to withhold my approval until I read each word and study every comma and period in it. I am still working through that. But I felt at this time it would be appropriate for me to have printed in the RECORD a number of communications, just a sampling of the communications that I have received throughout this day in my office, together with, I think, some very fine editorial review by the newspapers in my State.

I will first include a letter written by a Mr. Paul T. Gernhardt, who writes:

I know you and your staff are quite busy so I will keep this short and to the point. I am not at all pleased with your handling of the budget process. You are not helping anyone's cause and are directly responsible for a great deal of unnecessary harm. People are beginning to lose their businesses, homes, and financial standing as you squabble between yourselves. As a business owner I just cannot understand your actions—there is no justification whatsoever.

As "constitutional officers" you have certain privileges, benefits, and opportunities (including protecting your own pay). However, you also have obligations. These include conducting the business of government in a professional and competent manner. At this point you are not fulfilling the responsibilities you agreed to assume. One of your primary duties is to pass a budget. This is not something that came up suddenly—waiting until well past the last moment solely for political gains is undignified and unprofessional.

I have to accept my share, as a Member of this body, of such criticism. I