Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about why those two ideas do not belong in the Constitution, because although, as well-intended as they are, as needed as they are with respect to the adoption of that kind of a balanced budget, the fact is that they belong in budget legislation and not in the Constitution.

In order to create a budget, when the President creates a budget, what he does, and when the Congress creates a budget through the Committee on the Budget, of which I am a member, what we do and what the President does is, he relies on the CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, or OMB, Office of Management and Budget, or Joint Tax Committee, to come up with projections about what we are going to spend, what we are going to receive in revenues, and then to make recommendations about what the budget should be based on those things.

The fact is that all of those projections made by OMB, CBO, or Joint Tax are, by definition, wrong. They must be wrong, unless by some incredible, extraordinary chance of luck they should be on the dollar.

However, what we are asking in this constitutional amendment, the way it is worded, is that the President and the Congress should determine in advance what will be in balance, what will not be in balance, what exactly every agency is going to spend, and how much money we are going to raise. It is impossible to do that.

What we do know absolutely is how much money the Government has borrowed and what the debt ceiling is. This is the absolute brick wall that will stop, except with a supermajority. Remember, this is not a complete stop sign. It is merely a hurdle you have to go over. It is a 60-percent hurdle in order to continue this binge of deficit spending we have been on, but it is a very, very important hurdle.

That requirement, that you must have a supermajority, a three-fifths majority in order to raise the debt ceiling, that is the linchpin of this constitutional amendment from the spending side, because what it means is that you cannot deficit spend without a three-fifths majority. That is the one that will work.

Bill Barr, former Attorney General under President Bush, has made that clear in his testimony. Dr. William Nescanin, former head of the Council of Economic Advisers under President Reagan, has made that point, and other judicial scholars and constitutionalists agree that it is the three-fifths supermajority to raise the debt ceiling which is the true linchpin that will finally at least create the resistance that Thomas Jefferson talked about in 1789 to borrowing money.

Jefferson said in 1789 he had one concern about this Constitution that he had been so instrumental in crafting and then adopting. His concern was that it did not create any resistance on the part of the Federal Government to borrowing money. That is what this constitutional amendment will do, it will create the resistance of a three-fifths majority to borrowing more money and increasing the debt service, or increasing the debt ceiling.

What I am urging today, Mr. Speaker, is as we consider this balanced budget amendment there will be, I hope, in order a substitute that I took to the Committee on Rules yesterday, that is in all parts identical to the bill that was reported out, and I urge that Members will support that substitute that will be on the floor.

FORMER REPRESENTATIVE GINGRICH WOULD URGE ETHICS INVESTIGATION OF PRESENT SPEAKER GINGRICH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Oregon [Mr. DEFAZIO] is recognized during morning business for 2 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, there are those on the other side of the aisle who make light of the pending investigation on ethics of Speaker GINGRICH. I believe they do so at their own peril, and in contradiction of the position taken by Representative GINGRICH in July 1988.

In July 1988, Speaker GINGRICH, or at that time Representative GINGRICH, waxed very eloquent in a press release regarding the duties and the burdens of the Speaker and the duties and burdens of the House in investigating the Speaker of the House, and the fact that it should not be done by peers in the House of Representatives but in fact by an outside counsel, because it is so important to assure the integrity of that office.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are confronted with a situation where several Members, several Republican Members of the Ethics Committee, have past associations with GOPAC, the secret and multi-million-dollar slush fund which is the subject of the ethics complaint.

Here we are, we have members of the committee who have a conflict of interest, who should recuse themselves, but if they recuse themselves, only new members could be appointed by the Speaker, so the Speaker in effect would be appointing his own judge and jury.

There is only one way out of this for Speaker GINGRICH. That is for Speaker GINGRICH to take the advice of Representative NEWT GINGRICH in 1988 and appoint an outside counsel, so the American people can be assured that the integrity of this office is upheld and the integrity of the U.S. Congress is upheld without any possible assertion of undue influence.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Edwin Thomas, one of his secretaries.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Hallen, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 16. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President on the state of the Union.

□ 0950

CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. EHLERS] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I have given some thought to the events of the past week, the discussions and the debates. Through it all I am reminded of something I learned from my father years ago, and, that is, that great minds debate issues, average minds discuss events, and small minds talk about other people.

I have been dismayed that of all the many issues facing this Congress, particularly as we debate the Contract With America, that we find the other side, the minority party, concentrating on personal attacks on a Member of the Republican side.

Perhaps there is some basis for that, although I do not believe so. But the point I am making is, we have a number of major issues facing the Congress in the first 100 days and beyond. Furthermore, I believe the philosophy underlying the Contract With America deserves discussion and debate on behalf of the American people.

I believe it is important for us to engage in a dialog with the American people and discuss these issues with them, both Republicans and Democrats. I find it personally dismaying that so much emphasis during the 1-minute speeches and the 5-minute speeches has been concentrated on one particular person and one particular aspect of what that person has done.

I do not believe that this is behavior befitting the institution of the Congress. I believe that we have better things to do, we have more important things to do, and we have more important issues to discuss.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join in debating the issues that face this country, and the issues that are being presented to us daily on the floor.

There are certain things we can discuss during these 1-minute and 5-minute speeches which cannot or do not lend themselves very well to debate during the specific bills which are brought before the body. I think that we should take the opportunity during these 1-minute and 5-minute discussions to in fact debate the philosophy underlying this. I would also like to see more discussion about foreign relations