

The voters elected a Republican majority to disassemble the big Government bureaucracy that the Democrats built up over the last 40 years.

Republicans are keeping their promise with the American people through the Contract With America, despite the delaying and occasionally obstructionist tactics we see on the other side of the aisle.

We are working to reduce the size and scope and cost of government.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest to the President that for his State of the Union Address tonight he should just read the Contract With America. These are the issues concerning the people, and these are the issues they want to hear the President support tonight.

□ 1220

FREEDOM OF SPEECH STIFLED

(Mr. KLINK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, for 24 years I was a journalist. I did stories on and about murderers, rapists, drug dealers, politicians that were in trouble, even police officers who had crossed the line. And I was threatened many times, told not to carry a story or threatened if I was to move forward.

Never in 24 years was my freedom of speech stifled until last night. And it did not happen in a dark alley, it happened on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. Only two Members of the minority side were allowed to speak last night about a very controversial issue, and they were only given 3 minutes.

Never in my time in the House have I seen this. 202 Members were told, "You can't speak, you can't debate."

In all those years when I was threatened, in all those years when someone tried to stop the debate, the free flow of ideas, I learned one thing about it: that they were afraid of the exposure of that idea. They did not want to have a debate. And when you are afraid of debate, it shows the weakness in your philosophy and a weakness of where you are coming from.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think we have got to continue pushing for our rights to at least have a debate on these issues, win or lose.

THE CHOICE IS CLEAR: SMALLER, MORE EFFICIENT, LESS COSTLY GOVERNMENT

(Mr. WICKER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, in the last election people gave this Congress a specific mandate: they want a smaller, more efficient and less costly government. This week Members of this body will have the opportunity to begin fulfilling that mandate by voting

"yes" on a balanced budget amendment.

I believe most Members would agree that this Government is too intrusive in our lives. By forcing ourselves to balance the budget, we can begin downsizing the Federal Government.

The choice is clear, and the American people know it. If you want smaller, more efficient, and less costly government, then you will vote for the balanced budget amendment with tax limitation provision. But if you want to maintain the status quo of intrusive, big-government solutions, then you will vote against this amendment.

I urge my colleagues to vote with the American people and for the balanced budget amendment.

LET US WORRY ABOUT THE BUDGET NOW, NOT IN 2002

(Mr. MASCARA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MASCARA. Mr. Speaker, as a former county commissioner and an accountant, I know what it means to balance a budget. I have balanced 16 of them. I know what it means to make sure that the numbers add up correctly. It means sitting down and setting priorities, deciding whether to build bridges, build a jail, or to build new drains down Main Street. It means seeing if revenues equal the needed outlays, and it means doing something about it if they do not.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle would like us to believe that the budget can be balanced by magic. They say if we pass a balanced budget amendment and it goes into effect in the year 2002, well, we will worry about it then somehow. I say we had better worry about it now. We have to start laying out a roadmap that will lead us to the balanced budget. We must let the American people know now what they are in for; namely, some very tough times and very difficult decisions. My friends on the other side of the aisle say we just cannot predict what will happen in 5 years. I have been predicting for years as a county commissioner what will happen 20 years later.

MORE ON UNFUNDED MANDATES

(Mr. WELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, soon the House of Representatives will wrap up debate and vote on H.R. 5. But since debate on the floor began, it is clear the bill's opponents just do not get it. The supporters of unfunded mandates continue to argue that if there was no big brother, a Federal big brother, America's children would be subjected to all sorts of horrible things. They seem to be saying Washington cannot trust the State Governors and legislators with these responsibilities. Well, the taxpayers know better.

It is time to change that same mentality that has governed this town for the last 40 years. State Governors and elected officials were chosen, and the taxpayers are being belittled by Members of this body for those choices.

Apparently, the only people who know how to clean the water or take care of the children are those whose credentials are backed by the Federal bureaucracy. How unthoughtful to those State and local officials and to the voters who decided to change to a new way of thinking at both the State and Federal levels. It is time to give local officials a little credit and adopt the unfunded mandates legislation.

BOOKGATE

(Mr. BECERRA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, we have heard a growing number of conflicting and disturbing reports over Bookgate, the Speaker's book deal. Here is the bottom line, though: If the Republicans want to close the books on this episode, it is time for them to open up the books to the book deal and accept the call for an independent counsel to investigate these mysterious dealings.

Some Republicans are hoping that this issue will quietly disappear. But, Mr. Speaker, it will not go away, for a simple reason: America does not know what there is to "go away."

As recently as last week, the Speaker and Republican leaders met with media moguls in this country, including tycoon Rupert Murdoch. Murdoch is pushing the Congress to eliminate the ban on foreign ownership of America's TV and newspaper companies. Murdoch's publishing company, by the way, was the one that gave the Speaker the \$4.5 million book deal. Do not forget also that Murdoch and his lobbyists had a private meeting with the Speaker prior to the announcement of that lucrative book deal. Last week's meeting could have been just a friendly get-together, or there might have been a lot more to it than that.

It is time to, Mr. Speaker, open up the process and find out exactly what did happen.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, the people of this country spoke last November. But it is apparent to anyone who is paying attention to what is going on in this House that the Democratic Party is doing everything they can to derail the Contract With America. They are proposing hundreds of amendments to slow down the process. All I want to say is that it is the