

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Missouri, Mr. EMERSON, for bringing this to the House's attention.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important day. It was not that many years ago that I left this Capitol Hill as a page in the other body. Actually, it was many years ago, 1967, about the same time the gentleman from Mississippi was leaving.

Mr. Speaker, though I learned a lot in my 4 years, I remember a lot of things: I still get lost in the Rayburn Building, moving around in my first weeks here. But I keep running into pages who keep me on the straight and narrow as I make my way about.

Mr. Speaker, pages still work many hours. I do not think people appreciate the long days that they put in. School starts at 6:30, they have to get up before that. They have long days, and longer days since the session began, sometimes into the evening. So, after getting their studies at night, a 12-hour day is not unique in the life of a page. It is very exciting, but it takes total commitment.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend their knowledge and their industry and the commitment they have shown just in the 3 weeks since I have joined this body. I think the test is going to be for them to build on the basis of knowledge that they have obtained here. They have been given an opportunity to observe and serve in a way very few ever have. It will be a defining moment in their lives.

I hope many of them will seek public service and find the same kind of commitment many of us have, but at the same time find the kinds of joys you can get from serving other people which brought many of us into public service.

I know some of these individuals will return in the future to this House. It is a sad time to see some of them go. But I know that when I left here, I had hoped to return one day. So the fact that I can make it will inspire others. It is an achievable goal.

I thank the gentleman from Missouri for bringing this to the House's attention.

Mr. EMERSON. I thank the gentleman from Virginia for his contribution.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, let me wish all the pages all good things. I hope you will achieve your life's goals and ambitions and that your lives will be filled with good health and happiness and success.

Work hard, and do the very best you can. I hope that this experience has been for you everything that we hope it has been. I think as you get older and reflect back on it, you will probably find it is one of the best experiences you could ever hope for.

Mr. Speaker, I say to all the pages: "God bless you all, God speed to you in your future endeavors."

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOSS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. OWENS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. CHAMBLISS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. CHAMBLISS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. VOLKMER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. VOLKMER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. DORNAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. DORNAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

MAKING TOUGH DECISIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. TUCKER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I first would like to associate myself with those remarks by my colleagues and congratulate the pages also. They certainly do a fine job here on the floor of the House. There were some things in my colleagues' comments that I thought were somewhat remarkable and worth mentioning and worth underscoring when they talked about the bipartisanship with which this House has, last night, passed a balanced budget amendment. Also the bipartisanship in the whole democracy, contextually, in which the gavel was passed from Mr. GEPHARDT to Mr. GINGRICH.

Certainly this is highly reflective of and symbolic of the kind of democracy that we so wonderfully enjoy here in the United States of America. Whether we like something or not, whether we voted for something or not, the majority rules, and so it goes.

Last night, Mr. Speaker, I did not support the balanced budget amendment, but, thank God, we live in a country where I can say that democracy had its will and its way. As to the reasons why I did not support it, they are precisely because it did not prohibit things like Social Security being on the chopping block. In other words, it did not take Social Security off the chopping block. So everything is on the table, Social Security and other things are on the table.

The other reason I did not support it is it allows for a three-fifths rule, which would allow for a minority to have control over whether or not you are going to expand budgetary outlays.

Certainly, from my standpoint it was unconstitutional and it provided a scenario under which you can have minority controlling a House that I believe should be controlled by a majority.

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But nonetheless the majority did make that decision, and so the majority ruled, but it brings me to the point, Mr. Speaker, of what I would like to talk about today, and that is precisely how important it is for this House to weigh out what it does.

Last night a lot of people were happy about the balanced budget amendment passing, and to them I say, "Congratulations." They certainly did a lot of hard work, persons like my colleague, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STENHOLM].

But the rather interesting excitement and inebriation, if my colleagues will, that they experienced last night, I just hope that they continue to feel those feelings of joy after they wake up from that moment of inebriation to the sobriety of the reality of what they have done, for indeed, Mr. Speaker, we are going to make some very hard choices in the months ahead for how we balance the budget, and my reason for not supporting that amendment was precisely the same reason that I say today, that we must not balance the budget on the backs of the poor and the needy.

The balanced budget amendment is only a prelude to what we are going to be dealing with very shortly when we start talking about welfare reform. It is going to be another tough choice, another very difficult decisionmaking process through which and by which we are going to have to ask the difficult questions. How can we come up with the right solution, by the right means?

And so, Mr. Speaker, what we are saying is, "You can have a right goal, and you can have a right objective in mind, but we can't accomplish it by the wrong means, and certainly everyone in this House talks about welfare reform and the fact that we need to overhaul the system that is arguably antiquated and that has some indicia of fraud and abuse, and we understand that, and it's not only the Members in this House that believe that, but the surveys show and are very replete with information that all of America, just about, feels that welfare is in need of an overhauling. But we have to look at some of the specific points about welfare, and we need to be very, very careful."

Mr. Speaker, as we start reforming and retooling our welfare system so that we can be fair to the welfare recipients, and be fair to this country, and indeed be fair to the principles of democracy, let us start off, first of all,