

Serve your Presidency, not your reelection.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAMS). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak up to 10 minutes as in morning business, ending before the 12 clock deadline.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE BUDGET

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, we have heard much debate this morning, I think healthy debate, about the budget that is working its way through the House and through the Senate. I sit on the Budget Committee. This afternoon we were told by the Republicans that we will have our meeting where we will then act on the budget bill. As a matter of fact, we are going to meet in about an hour and a half.

I worked very late last night and I never got a copy of the budget. I started work very early this morning and I do not have a copy of the budget. And the American people need to understand that this budget is not just about numbers. It is about changing laws.

For example, in that budget, national standards for nursing homes are repealed. Changes in the laws are made so it will cost students more for college loans. Tax laws are being changed so the working poor will have to pay more taxes. Indeed, 51 percent of the people of America will pay more taxes because of this budget. And they all are on the middle-income to the poor level of our society. Champagne bottles are being chilled in penthouses all across the country—except in those where someone has a conscience. Because if somebody can explain to me why people who earn millions of dollars a year deserve a tax break, I am ready to listen, when we are trying to balance the budget.

The attack on elderly in our country is extraordinary. When I was growing up I learned some basic values. My parents said you have to work hard, you have to play by the rules, you have to respect your elders and honor your children.

This Republican budget is a slam at every one of those values. We are attacking the working poor. We are raising taxes on people who work so hard to bring home \$30,000 a year or less, and we are hurting those people. Honor work? We are cutting \$270 billion out of Medicare. We need to cut \$89 billion, we are told by the experts, to make it sound and whole. But the Republicans are cutting \$270 billion out of Medicare

and funneling it into the tax cut for the rich—the Republican funnel plan.

Medicaid—repealing nursing home standards so it is easier for nursing homes to make more money, folks. That is what it is about. Why else would you do it? You do not have to be very old to remember the days in the 1980's when the scandals erupted about nursing homes. We found our senior citizens were being drugged, overdosed on drugs so they could be controlled in the nursing homes. They were being scalded in hot baths. They were being sexually abused. They had bedsores. They were lying in their own excrement.

Well, I made a pledge to my magnificent and beautiful mother, whom I love, a few years ago who spent her last days in a nursing home after she had spent down every penny she had, and all of her dignity, that I would not let this budget go by without telling the American people the truth, that the profits of the nursing homes will not be put over the well-being of the elderly in our society, those who have given birth to us, those who have nurtured us, those who worked so hard so we could get an education. My mother never graduated from high school, and she sacrificed so both her children could go to college.

Is this what the American dream is about? Is this what family values is about? Well, maybe it is popular to vote for that budget. Maybe I am out of step. Maybe compassion is out of fashion. Maybe respecting your elders is out of fashion. Maybe believing in your children is out of fashion. But not for this Senator. Six million people voted to bring me here, and I am going to stand up and I am going to fight. If it is popular, it is, and if it is not, it is not. That is OK, too.

The Republicans have put their budget on a fast track—no time. You tell me why we have to be on Friday afternoon waiting for the numbers when we could take this budget home over the weekend, examine it, and know what the heck we are doing on Monday morning. I will tell you why, folks. They want this budget to slip through with the least notice possible. They do not want the American people to understand it. And President Clinton is going to veto it. He is going to veto their budget. He is going to say no to their budget. And he might do it in the name of his mother, a nurse who healed the sick, a woman who died of breast cancer, who believed in the values of this society. He is going to veto this budget. This budget is not in any way including those American values that we learned when we were growing up; to honor our elders, to believe in our children.

Do we have to do this to balance the budget? We do not. That is not even an argument. I voted for two balanced budgets in the Senate—one by Senator BRADLEY and one by Senator CONRAD. As a matter of fact, they cut even deeper into the deficit than that which the

Republicans have produced. But they contained within them some values—family values, American values, compassionate values, commonsense values.

So this is not about balancing the budget. We all want to balance the budget. We all voted for various amendments that would do that. It is about how do you get there and who gets rewarded and who gets hurt. I know this is a cynical time in America. I know it is a cynical time. When a Republican stands up, they do not believe the Republican. When a Democrat stands up, they do not believe the Democrat. Look at the numbers. Read the law. That is why they are rushing these things through. They do not want you to see the numbers. They do not want you to read the law. They do not want you to know the nursing home standards are repealed. They do not want you to know they are going to charge people who are waiting for their child support a fee to collect that child support. Imagine. A woman is desperate for her child support. They finally get it. They are going to make them pay a fee. For what? To give \$5,500 a year back to people who earn over \$350,000 a year. Have they no shame? Have they no values?

We have a funnel Medicare plan. It funnels the money from Medicare right to the hands of the rich. We have a Medicaid plan that I call the Dr. Kavorkian plan. I am not doing it to scare people. I am do it doing it because it is the reality. I told you what these nursing homes looked like before. And I will tell you, when faced with that choice, what would you do?

We put a lot of pressure on NEWT GINGRICH, and he finally changed the spousal impoverishment law that he tried to do away with. We are looking at whether or not he really saved it. But can you believe they were ready to do that, too? They were ready to say to an elderly man who put his loving wife of 60 years into a nursing home that he could not keep his house, he could not keep his car, and he could not keep his \$1,200 a month; the Government was going to go after it before his wife could get help in that nursing home. Family values? I do not think so.

So I am going to walk into that Budget Committee this afternoon, and I am going to talk about the values that I have as a daughter of an immigrant mother who never went to high school but who is as smart as anyone in this Chamber. I am going to talk about the sadness I feel that America is turning its back on who we are and what made us great as a nation. But I am also going to fight.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.