

plans. The poor would sign up with one of these plans to get health benefits.

The GOP proposal would block grant Medicaid payments to state governments, which could then set up their own delivery systems.

The Clinton administration has also made a fuss over changes to Medicaid's long-term care program. At one point, the GOP planned to overhaul federal nursing home standards, replacing detailed standards with broad goals to be enforced at the state level.

But as governor of Arkansas, Clinton had proposed similar changes. In fact, in 1989, Clinton joined 47 other governors to urge an end to federal "micromanagement" of nursing homes.

Clinton complained that restricting eligibility for long-term care would throw 300,000 old folks onto the street. Of course, he had already tightened eligibility as part of his 1993 budget.

The goal then: "Restrict further the diverting of property to qualify for Medicaid," according to the administration's 1993 budget blueprint.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, what we have today is the President agreeing with us on the 7-year balanced budget, using CBO number. I think eventually when the President looks at the difference between his Medicare Program and Medicare and Medicaid and all the other programs, he really should accept the balanced budget of 1995.

STAND ON THE SIDE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized during morning business for 2 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, in World War II, my grandmother sent three of her sons off to World War. My father, the youngest one, remained at home with the promise of an aspiring artist, someone who would work and support the family, and he got an opportunity to be a commercial artist for a period of time.

Then the returning soldiers came home, most of whom did not look like my father. And so he was relieved of his job on the basis of the color of his skin.

Listening to that story and watching him work all those years in jobs that did not compare to his capabilities, I promised myself that I would always stand on the side of opportunity for all men and women, no matter what their race, their religion, or their ethnic background.

So when we came upon this crisis here in this country, shutting down the Government not just hurting Federal workers but for hurting Americans, 800,000 that had faces and lives and families, I promised that I would not leave this House floor, never would I leave it because I was going to stand on the side of opportunity for Americans.

I am glad to be a freshman who came here on the basis of reform and change and not to simply talk about partisan politics and discuss who is a Republican and who is a Democrat, but sim-

ply who stands for those who need an opportunity.

I am very proud that the Democrats started out early in the week and said we need to come together, we need to understand that this battle of the budget is not something about 7 years or 10 years, it is about humanity and people. It is about understanding Medicare and Medicaid, it is about my grandmother, who died before she was able to fully accept the privileges of having worked all her life and have good health care.

So we stayed here. My freshman Democratic class argued on the House floor Friday night that we should not leave until this problem was resolved. And we did not leave here Saturday or Sunday because we knew there was an opportunity for compromise and reconciliation, not for the scorekeepers but for the American people.

And so proudly as we stayed here Saturday, when the vote showed 361 to 32 voted to stay, but because, maybe, the Speaker had to get off the back of the plane, rather than respect the will of the House and stay in session. The Republicans were instructed to leave in droves. It was the Democrats who stayed here to compromise on a document that has captured the real spirit of what Americans want.

We have got a good CR. We have got a continuing resolution, but we have got one for the people. We have got one that provides for Medicaid and education and agriculture and national defense and veterans and the environment.

We have a continuing resolution [CR] that promises a balanced budget in 7 years which I will vote for. However this CR also has the opportunity now, through the President's and Democratic negotiations of listing priorities like education, Medicare, Medicaid, the environment among others which should be protected by which the budget process is to be guided. Now we can craft a new balanced budget with the right priorities. Let us continue to provide opportunities for Americans.

SENIOR CITIZENS' RIGHT TO WORK ACT OF 1995

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Kentucky [Mr. BUNNING] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Mr. BUNNING of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon with a very simple message for the senior citizens of America. To the senior citizens of America I say, you have not been forgotten by this Congress.

Republicans in this Congress have not forgotten the promise that we made to you to raise the unfair Social Security earnings limit imposed on those who want to remain productive after age 65.

Later today I will introduce the Senior Citizens' Right to Work Act of 1995. My bill will raise the earnings limit from the current \$11,280 to \$30,000 a year by the year 2002. As chairman of

the Social Security Subcommittee I want hard-working seniors to know that we will keep our promise. This time, we will raise the earnings limit.

First, immediately after Thanksgiving my subcommittee will take action on this legislation. Then, the esteemed chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. ARCHER—himself a champion of legislation to raise the earnings limit for over two decades—has promised that the Ways and Means Committee will act.

Finally, the majority leader himself has promised that the House will act on this legislation just as soon as the committee has finished its work.

My bill will fully preserve the financial integrity of the Social Security trust fund. That is important to tomorrow's retirees—our children and grandchildren. We must make sure that Social Security will be there for them as well.

And, with the help of the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HASTERT], who has worked so hard on this issue, there is no question in my mind that it will sail through the House.

And I have the word of the champion of this legislation in the other body, the Senator from Arizona, that it will enjoy the same speedy action in the Senate.

Finally, in "Putting People First," the President also pledged his support to raising the earnings limit.

To my colleagues on both sides of the aisle I say, Christmas is coming. Let us give America's seniors something they want and need.

Let us raise the unfair Social Security earnings limit and give hard-working seniors the best Christmas present of all. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, and if you would like to cosponsor this legislation—call my office at Social Security subcommittee.

FACES BEHIND THE NUMBERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. LEVIN] is recognized during morning business for 2 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, there are many key lessons of the last week. A key one is that we must have a balanced budget. Americans also care deeply about how it is done. They do want us to focus on the overall budget numbers.

They also want us to look at the faces behind those numbers, at the faces of 70 percent of Michigan seniors with annual incomes less than \$15,000 who would be hurt by doubling Medicare premiums as proposed by the majority; the faces of seniors who would lose quality care and choice of provider if hospital reimbursements were so drastically reduced as originally proposed, and those with private insurance to whom these costs would be shifted; at the faces of 8 million working people whose taxes would be raised by the

present proposal to cut the earned income tax credit by \$32 billion, those working people who have three or more kids, those with a small amount of Social Security payments or who are childless and earn less than \$9,750 a year; at the faces of 500,000 hard working families with incomes under \$29,000 who have a seriously handicapped child and would see their SSI benefits reduced by 25 percent; at the faces of 119,000 students in Michigan alone who might see the cost of education go up because of cuts in student loans.

It is not just the public that is concerned about the faces behind the numbers. More and more mainstream economists share this concern, as evidenced in the New York Times of yesterday.

Since coming to Congress, I voted for every major deficit reduction package signed into law by both Republican and Democratic Presidents. It is interesting that so many of those who now say they champion a budget, a balanced budget, were champions of the policies in the 1980's that were a substantial cause of raising the national debt by four times.

It is time to finish the job of balancing the budget and rightsizing Government. We must stop mortgaging the future, but we will get to the zero in the long run if we ignore the faces behind the numbers in the short run.

BACK TO WORK ON REPUBLICAN TERMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. WELLER] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, today's headline in Washington Times, a major national newspaper, really says it all. It is back to work on Republican terms. Clinton accepts 7-year formula.

That says a lot, ladies and gentlemen. The President has now made a commitment to the American taxpayer to balance the budget and to balance it over 7 years, using honest economic figures and honest numbers. Now that is a big concession on the President's part, and I want to thank the President.

I also want to thank the constituents, the hundreds of constituents that have called my office over the last few days, and in fact their calls were 9 to 1 in favor of the Republican plan to balance the budget over 7 years.

I also want to thank the 48 conservative and moderate Democrats who backed the 7-year timetable that Republicans have called for. It is reasonable, and the President now concurs, 7 years, and no longer.

We Republicans have laid on the table a reasonable commonsense plan which eliminates the deficit over 7 years. Our plan eliminates the deficit over 7 years using honest numbers. We save Medicare from bankruptcy, while increasing spending on Medicare by

\$355 billion over this period of 7 years. That is a 50-percent increase over what we currently spend.

We reform welfare to emphasize work and family and responsibility. And yes, we provide tax relief for working families. What that means for my constituents, Illinois taxpayers, is that the President has agreed to spend \$1 trillion less than he originally wanted to spend, and that means that America's children, particularly our Nation's children, will get to see a better economic future.

Now it is time to see the specifics of the President's plan. What is the President's plan to balance the budget over the next 7 years? Of course we do not want to see any smoke and mirrors. We want to use honest numbers. We want to see the details.

Two years ago, the President and the Democrats in this body, my friends over here on the left, gave us the biggest tax hike in the history of our country. What it meant to the people of the State of Illinois was a \$1,100 per capita tax hike in its first year alone, \$1,100 for every man, woman, and child in the first year.

The Democrats gave us higher taxes on Social Security benefits on my seniors and higher taxes on the motor fuel that my working people use to go to work. That was their proposal to eliminate the deficit.

Now we Republicans stood firm and every Republican opposed the Democrat tax hikes in 1993, and we continue to oppose Democratic tax hikes and want and insist on tax relief for working families.

Republicans have laid on the table a plan to balance the budget over the next 7 years, contains no tax increases. In fact, it provides tax relief for working families. We reform welfare and we save Medicare.

And the bottom line is by balancing the budget economists tell us that it is good for families because interest rates are coming down, lower mortgage rates, lower car loans, lower student loans. Frankly, that is what we are doing for the American people, is giving them a better future. Mr. President, it is time to show us your plan.

GOVERNMENT OPENS AGAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized during morning business for 2 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, the Government is back in business. That is good news.

It is good news for millions of veterans whose benefit checks and claims can now be processed.

It is good news for thousands of Medicare beneficiaries and thousands of head-start children who will get needed help from the Government. Child support cases can now be pushed. Good news.

It is good news for law enforcement—the FBI is now fully back at work—it

is good news for housing—mortgages can be processed and homeless funds can be released—and, it is good news for business and enterprise in America—so many of which were affected by the furloughs.

The image of a shutdown Statue of Liberty—one of the greatest symbols of what this Nation stands for—was perhaps the most dramatic example of the danger of a Government closed down.

It is for that reason, Mr. Speaker, that I want to applaud the President and all in Congress, House and Senate, Democrats and Republicans, who made this moment possible.

Our leaders worked throughout the weekend, pressing forward toward agreement, making sure that we could avoid a second week of—half the Government—off the job.

It was a proud and happy moment for me—last night, as a Member of Congress—when the House followed the Senate in passing the joint resolution which ended the impasse.

We have agreed to work toward a balanced budget in 7 years. That is good news.

I voted for the Democratic version of a 7-year balanced budget plan, and I believe, working together, we can achieve that important goal.

And, most importantly—in the days and weeks ahead—we will try to forge a budget that not only balances our money, but one that balances our priorities as well. A balanced budget that considers our seniors, our children, farmers, and our environment. That is good news.

Let us decide if we need a \$245 billion dollar tax cut. But, if we cut taxes, let us cut taxes fairly.

Let us make sure that any tax break we may enact, provides benefit to average Americans—those who work hard each day to make ends meet.

And, most importantly, if we develop a tax cut program, let us make sure that we do so without putting in jeopardy essential social programs.

I believe these goals are part of the agreement that was reached over the weekend. That is good news.

Mr. Speaker, with this agreement, we have time. But, we do not have much time.

As the budget of the United States has developed, we have witnessed the true genius of our system—a system of separation of powers—a system of checks and balances. Some power is given to the Congress and other powers are reserved for the President.

But, in the end, this system only works when it allows the Government and its employees to work. The Government is back in business.

The Statute of Liberty once again welcomes those "yearning to breathe free." And, the spirit of this Nation—the American people—have won a great victory. The work now begins.

I hope we will now do what is best for the people, rather than what is best for our party or our politics. That is what ended the impasse.