

The reason it has been so hard to understand this is because the budget is something that everybody's eyes glaze over the minute we mention it.

Mr. Speaker, there is all sorts of rhetoric going around. I see people wearing the button "2002," like one side is going to balance in the year 2002 and the other side is not. That is wrong. The issue is not are we going to balance the budget 7 years out; the issue is how are we going to balance the budget 7 years out? Who wins? Who loses? That is going to determine what kind of a country we are.

Mr. Speaker, I think this debate is more important than any other debate we are going to have, because it is really going to set the country on a course for the next century. We are talking 2002, the next century. What kind of a country are we going to be? We say, "Well, what are we? We are America. What is America? America is the flag. What is the flag? The flag is America." Let us break out of that circle. What does America mean, and what does the flag mean, and what do we stand for, and how do we invest our tax dollars?

The huge fight between the two different sides of this aisle is whether or not we are going to have to whack away at that budget right, left, and sundry to do this tax cut; to do this tax cut for the top 1 percent of America's families. See, if we do this tax cut, the top 1 percent is going to be like winning the lottery. They are going to get \$13,628, if they make over \$600,000 a year. We know how they need it. They are having trouble buying all the new fancy presents they want.

Mr. Speaker, to do that, we are going to raise the taxes of the lowest 20 percent and, boy, the next 20 percent they are going to get a whole \$39 back. I am sure they are wondering right now how to spend it. Then the next 20 percent is going to get \$226 back. This is not going to mean anything to the average American family; especially when we turn around and figure out what we have to cut out of the budget to get this money to fund this tax rebate.

Again, that all sounds like Washingtonian blabbering. Let me try to put it on a family level. Let us assume an American family is sitting around their table working on the family budget for the next year, and assume they had too much debt, that they put too much on that plastic card that tempts us all every single day, and now they have got to figure out how they get rid of that debt. So, they are looking at every member sitting at the table. What are the decisions going to be? Where do they cut back?

Mr. Speaker, do you think there is an American family around that would say to the children, the 4- to 5-year-olds, "We are going to have to take you out of Head Start?" "That is it. It is nice, but you are not even going to get to start, much less finish school." That is exactly what we are talking about doing, throwing thousands of kids out of Head Start. I do not think any

American family would agree with that decision.

Mr. Speaker, do you think there is any American family that would say to the young people sitting at the table trying to go to college, "Well, that is it. We are pulling the plug on you?" I don't think so. Nor do I think they would do it to the elderly, nor do I think they would do it to anyone, just to send extra tax money to their rich uncle. That is what this is about.

NOT WHETHER TO BALANCE THE BUDGET, BUT HOW TO BALANCE THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. EHLERS] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, Just as the previous speaker did, I wish to speak about the budget deficit. However, contrary to what the previous speaker did, I wish to put politics aside and just talk about some of the facts that are involved.

Mr. Speaker, we currently have a national debt which, within a week or two, will exceed \$5 trillion, or more than three times the amount of the annual revenues of the United States of America.

Furthermore, over the past several years we have had budget deficits in the neighborhood of \$200 billion or more a year and, in general, they have been greater than 10 percent of the annual revenues of the United States of America.

Let us break that down into human terms, as the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] just did. That means that each and every man, woman, and child in the United States owes \$19,000 as their share of the Federal debt. Every man, woman, and child in this country. Every American child born comes into this world with a debt of \$19,000.

Currently, each of us, every man, woman, and child in the United States, pays \$1,000 per year, roughly, in interest alone on the national debt. In other words, of the amount of money paid in taxes to the Federal Government, roughly \$1,000 per capita goes to cover the interest.

Mr. Speaker, I pointed out a week or two ago that if any one of us as a family owed an amount of money three times or greater than our annual average income, and continued to spend 10 percent more than our annual income, and we went to a credit counselor because our credit cards had been cut off and we could not get any further loans, and we went to a credit counselor and said that we would like to balance our budget, but we wanted 7 years to do it, a credit counselor would say, "You are crazy. You are in trouble. You have to balance your budget this year."

Yet, Mr. Speaker, we as a Congress are proposing to balance the budget in 7 years and there are a number of Mem-

bers, many from the other side of the aisle, who say that is too soon; we need 10 years or 9 years or 8 years. I think 7 years is too long and I think Uncle Sam needs a credit counselor, someone who would shake some sense into our heads and say, "You need to balance the budget now."

Mr. Speaker, I think as a nation we have become addicted to spending money. We expect to get services without paying for them. I learned long ago that there is no such thing as a free lunch. We as a nation have to learn that. If we want services, we have to pay for them. If we are not willing to pay for them, then we had better go without the services. That applies across the board.

As I said, I was trying to put politics aside here and just deal with the facts. I would say that too many people in the debate here, and between the Congress and the White House, have gotten into political discussions.

The President, for example, tried to use Medicare to defeat our continuing resolution and scare the elderly about what might happen to Medicare. Some Members on the other side of the aisle continue their refrain about cutting Medicare to pay for tax cuts for the rich. We just saw an example of that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am also going to fault the Republicans, because I personally think that a number of things that we are seeking to cut are being cut too severely, and other things that are not being cut should be cut or should be cut more than they are. I think all sides have to work together and recognize the overwhelming nature of the budget deficit, and recognize that this has to be our top priority.

That is why I am delighted that we were able to reach agreement with the White House that we will, indeed, balance the budget in 7 years and that we will, indeed, work on this together.

Mr. Speaker, we have to do more than just reach agreement that we will do it. We have to work on the details. This House of Representatives has spent most of this year working on that specific issue: preparing a budget that will achieve balance in 7 years. I am proud of the work that has been done in this Chamber and in the Senate. We have sent that bill to the President. He has said he will veto it, and I suspect he will.

But then, Mr. Speaker, comes the real work. Not simply posturing to the public and saying we are going to injure the elderly by cutting Medicare, which in fact we are not, but rather we have to sit down together and negotiate in good faith and say, "Look, we have agreed to balance the budget in 7 years and the question is not whether or not we should; the question is how we are going to do it and what we are going to cut."

Mr. Speaker, that is going to take a very detailed and active and well-intentioned debate in the weeks ahead.

CONSUMER REPORTS LABELS GOP
MEDICAID PROPOSAL BUM DEAL
FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I would just say to the prior speaker that, in fact, that credit counselor would say, "You are crazy." Crazy that in a difficult time economically for our country, that we are about to provide a \$245 billion tax break for the wealthiest Americans. That is a free lunch for the wealthiest Americans.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent a lot of time in this Congress talking about the cuts in Medicare contained in the GOP budget. Democrats believe that those cuts go too far, too fast and would be harmful to the 37 million seniors who rely on Medicare for their basic health care.

But, it isn't just Medicare cuts which threaten the health security of our senior citizens. The proposed budget also makes deep cuts in Medicaid which put seniors and their families at risk.

Last week, the Consumers Union, better known as the publisher of Consumer Reports, warned that the Medicaid overhaul would add significant new financial burdens on husbands, wives, and adult children of nursing home residents that could force families into poverty. The group estimates that the \$163 billion in proposed cuts will cause hundreds and thousands of nursing home residents to lose their Medicaid coverage.

We all know Consumer Reports as the publication that tells us if we're getting a good deal or a bum deal on a new car or a new computer. This time, they've looked at the Republican Medicaid proposal from a consumer's point of view and have declared it a bum deal for American families.

Currently, Medicaid covers 60 percent of nursing home patients nationwide. The average cost of nursing home care is approximately \$38,000 a year. Without Medicaid, nursing home care would be beyond the reach of middle-income Americans.

According to the Consumers Union, families of nursing home residents can expect the following changes if these Medicaid changes are approved:

Adult children may be held financially liable for the nursing home bills of their parents.

Family assets including homes may be sold or seized by Medicaid liens.

No one is guaranteed Medicaid nursing home eligibility; States may set unreasonably low income levels so that thousands of people will be denied help in paying the high costs of nursing home care.

Families may be forced to spend their life savings for long-term care of a loved one.

A representative from the National Senior Citizens Law Center, Patricia Nemore, said of these changes: "Con-

gress is taking us back to a time when it was commonplace for Americans to lose their homes and their life savings to ensure that their husbands, wives, or parents had adequate nursing home care." She is right, this policy is wrong.

Yesterday, I met with people in my district who have parents in nursing homes. They told me that these changes would be devastating to their attempts to take care of their parents in their old age.

Jack and Patricia D'Urso of Branford, CT, have seven children and two parents, both in nursing homes. Without the help of Medicaid, they don't know how they would care for their parents. While comfortable in their retirement, they simply do not have the resources to pay approximately \$80,000 a year to pay for long-term care of two parents.

Zelda Cooper of Hamden, CT, has two parents receiving nursing home care. She could not believe that Congress would consider ending the guaranteed coverage that her family relies on and has no idea how she would care for her parents should they be forced out of their nursing home.

Now, my Republican colleagues have made much ado of late about losing their message on the budget. They theorize that the American people aren't with them because they haven't heard the Republican message. The opposite is true. The message is coming through loud and clear to the American people. In fact, the more the American people know, the less they like the Gingrich budget.

It's not a bad message that is hurting Republicans, it's bad policy. It is bad policy to ask families to hawk their homes to pay for the nursing home care for loved ones. It is bad policy to impoverish middle-income families to balance the budget. That's why Consumer Reports has labeled the GOP Medicaid proposal is a bum deal for American families.

□ 1315

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Rabbi Motty Berger, Aish HaTorah Yeshiva, Jerusalem, offered the following prayer:

In a sorely troubled world, filled with all too much hatred, violence, and human misery, we pray to You, dear God, for divine guidance; such guidance is needed for all of us, in and out of government, as we work toward a better day for all mankind. We pray to You, our Father, who taught us to love our neighbors and to seek peace, to imbue us with both the wisdom and the will to apply Your teachings in relations between nations as well as between individuals. Let us reflect on the enormous power available to mankind, power which we may use for good or evil, to build or to destroy. It is ours to choose: life or death. May we be inspired by the prophetic message, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts," and thereby choose life. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. BARR] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BARR led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOME TO RABBI BERGER

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

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Rabbi Motty Berger who gave the opening prayer of today's session of the House of Representatives. I was fortunate enough to meet Rabbi Berger several years ago at the College of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem where my wife and I enrolled in one of his courses on Jewish philosophy. During a time of tremendous transition in the Jewish community, I found Rabbi Berger to be an extremely perceptive speaker on topics surrounding the heritage of the Jewish people. He talked passionately about his desire to promote the continuity of Jewish traditions and values.

Rabbi Berger was born and raised in the United States and after graduating high school attended Ner Israel Rabbinical School in Baltimore. After completing his rabbinical studies, he went on to teach Jewish philosophy in Jerusalem and became extremely active with the Aish HaTorah organization. This yeshiva has dedicated itself to creating a warm environment that promotes Jewish unity. With that said,