

Republicans will seek to balance the budget. Overwhelmingly, both parties join in saying, yes, we want a balanced budget. The President wants a balanced budget. He said it many times.

In reviewing the document that the President submitted to this Congress, the only difference is that it incurs hundreds of billions of dollars of budget deficits for the next 7 years. That is not balancing a budget. Maybe in Washington spending \$115 billion more than we have next year is balancing a budget, but in real America, in the real business community that is bankrupt. That is out of business.

So as we approach the season of Christmas, the Speaker and Members of Congress have committed to staying here as long as it takes. That is not good news for families. It is not good news for anyone that Congress would work in session through Christmas. But I think we must honor the tradition of this House.

When we run for elections we tell voters if they will send us to Congress, that we will do the heavy lifting; that we will bring back a balanced budget and restore fiscal unity and dignity to this Nation. So we cannot just say, oh, well, it is almost Christmas. We have to be home. We have to leave Washington. We cannot be here. We cannot be away from the house, our districts, because certainly the balanced budget can come later.

This is a milestone in our Nation. This is a unique opportunity. As Mr. GINGRICH says, this is gut-check time, whether we have the fortitude to bring down overspending or do we want to just keep playing games.

We have heard the Medicare scam, and many people have talked about it, but we have seen the tapes, we have seen the visuals of Mr. and Mrs. Clinton saying we should bring it down to 6 or 7 percent a year. Well, we are doing 7-plus percent a year in Medicare spending per recipient. So it is not a cut. We know that. We have proven that. We will go on to the next issues.

Wasting taxpayers' dollars, though, is legendary around this process. We have appropriators, authorizers, the Committee on the Budget, all working somewhat together and then, at times, apart.

Mr. Speaker, I had an interesting opportunity to kill the gas turbine this year, which was an exciting year for me and an exciting project for me, because it had spent hundreds of millions of dollars a year. Always killed in the Senate, denounced by three Presidents, but here in the House it survived year after year. We killed it here in the House, went over to the Senate and killed it there, and, finally, the gas turbine no longer finds its way into our budget. The same Government that had the Department of Defense procurement system paying \$450 for a hammer.

We just heard from one of my colleagues, the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. TIAHRT], talking about Secretary O'Leary's trips. As I recall, we started the Department of Energy during the

Carter administration because we had a gas shortage, a crisis, and they wanted to make certain that the thermostats would stay at 78 degrees. Now we are traveling the globe trying to seek out whatever we are trying to look for and spending hundreds of millions of dollars to do it.

I think the Cabinet Secretary needs to reexamine her priorities, reexamine why the Department was created and show some leadership and some frugality and not spend the taxpayers' money as if she is, in fact, a corporate executive on the shareholders' nickel.

Yes, Congress has failed to act. Many people look back at the Reagan years and say, oh, it is Reagan's fault for running up massive deficits. Hey, the buck stops here in Congress, folks. The buck stops here in Congress. The Congress are the appropriators. They are the authorizers. They are the check writers. They are the fiscal clearinghouse for this Nation. So Congress has to accept the responsibilities.

The President submits a budget, and we have sure seen his. It does not look like it is going to reduce the debt, but, no, he gets a chance to submit it and he gets a chance to veto, which he has done.

I was proud today, Mr. Speaker, when we came to the securities legislation, that a number of our colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, overrode his veto. We are sending him a message that it is time to start working and stop vetoing messages and then sending hollow bills back to this floor suggesting he is committed to deficit reduction.

We have a lot of problems in America and we have a lot of problems we can solve together, and I think there has been a great bipartisan spirit on a number of issues. But I do think it is time for all of us to end the charade, end the political games, end the characterizations and assaults against the Speaker, and on both sides of the aisle. The Republicans do not need to fire missiles over to the Democrats, and I think the Democrats need to cease and desist.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK] talk about the exonerations of the Clintons. The same thing is happening to the Speaker on the numerous charges being filed by the other side of the aisle, in order to tie up the process, in order to try to impugn his reputation and trying to do a number of things.

So I think if this Congress is serious about Christmas, about the holidays, and about the future of this Nation, that we will put aside personalities and get down to balancing the budget initiative, and we will work on it successfully, like we should. We have all voted for it, we have all supported it, and now let us do the heavy lifting and provide the leadership necessary in order to pass it.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. MILLER of California., Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to exchange special order times with the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK].

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COBLE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman?

There was no objection.

FRESHMEN REPUBLICANS DO NOT CARE ABOUT FAMILY VALUES

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

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the previous speaker said that this was not about ruining the holidays for the families of Federal employees; that that really was not important and what was important was a balanced budget.

I think that that shows such incredible lack of respect for those families, for their relationships with their children at a time of the holidays, for their religious beliefs. I think it shows such an incredible lack of respect for our families and our religious beliefs. This is more than shopping days. This is a religious holiday. It is a time when we gather with our families and we think of our fortunes and our misfortunes, and we take stock of the year we have and the year we look forward to and we pay respect to our God.

The suggestion somehow is that that can all be held ransom, that can be held ransom and somehow that will make the negotiations more serious; that, apparently, the Speaker of the House of Representatives is incapable of negotiating unless he has a hostage. He shut down the Government a month ago because the President of the United States would not talk to him. Now he is shutting down the Government because the President is talking to him.

Last night the President agreed to sit down with Senator DOLE and with Speaker GINGRICH, they would roll up their sleeves and they would negotiate a balanced budget that would be scored, the numbers would be guaranteed so it truly came into balance by the Congressional Budget Office.

They walked out of that office with that agreement: and, apparently, the Speaker brought that back to the Hill and the freshmen Republicans told him, no; that that was not good enough to release the Federal hostages; that that was not good enough to let people enjoy Christmas; and that was not good enough to put people back to work.

Maybe we were wrong. I assume that the President assumed that when the Speaker said he wanted to negotiate vis-a-vis the President, that he assumed he had the authority to negotiate. The President was speaking for the Presidency, the executive branch and the people he represents. Senator