

The Federal Government, all governments, need to operate more efficiently.

But I have noticed over the years, particularly the last several years, when the criticisms have come, particularly about government, I do not hear the Republicans pointing their finger at big business and some of the actions they have taken, particularly on mergers and acquisitions and laying off hundreds of thousands of people. I do not hear them saying too much about that. But when it comes to government, about the inefficiencies of government, I sure hear a lot of criticism about government, but not about big business.

Maybe the time has come to get our priorities in order. Maybe the time has come when we ought not to have so much bickering and we should have less partisanship and less acrimony in our dealings with one another. Maybe we ought to have a little more respect for one another on the floor.

I know we have got a lot of new Members. We have got 73 new Republicans since January of 1995, and I know a lot of them think we have not accomplished anything, that everything we have done in the past is wrong. Well, maybe they ought to read our history books, all the way back to June and July of 1776 when at the Continental Congress in Philadelphia our Founding Fathers had to work out their differences in order to sign a document we know of as the Declaration of Independence.

Yes, we have got a lot of friction between the parties and yes, we have a lot of friction within the parties, and we are sure seeking a lot of that now, particularly between the House and the Senate. The Senate Republicans want to put the Federal workers back to work, but not the House Republicans. They want to continue this impasse. They want to continue this gridlock.

We Democrats do want to protect Medicare. Yes, we Democrats want to protect Medicaid and education and the environment. We do not want a tax on our working people. We want to do more for our students, knowing that they need an education in order for us to have a strong middle class for the future. That is why we have been so successful in America, is because we have had a strong middle class, and I assure you the Democrats are going to continue to fight for the middle class because they are the backbone of America.

I am part of a bipartisan group that is meeting now, and we have been meeting almost every day to somehow break this gridlock and this impasse that we presently have. We are talking about policy and substance. We are willing to sacrifice our political and partisan talk for real results.

I urge all my colleagues to work together in the next few days to deliver this important gift to the American people. Let us put the Federal workers back to work, let us balance the budget

within 7 years using CBO numbers. We can accomplish all those goals and objectives. But we surely should not have used Federal workers as whipping boys. It serves no useful purpose.

We have a job to accomplish. I know what I am going to do. I am not going to accept a January paycheck until other Federal workers are back to work, and I encourage others to practice the same policy. Maybe if we do not accept our paycheck, maybe we will get more accomplished quicker, faster now.

□ 1800

THE BLANCHFILL FAMILY OF  
CHULA VISTA, CA: ANOTHER  
GINGRICH HOSTAGE

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, I want to tell you very briefly the story of yet another Gingrich hostage. Mr. GINGRICH and company are not only shutting down the Government and shutting out Federal employees, they are causing real hardship for real American families, like the Blanchfills of Chula Vista in my district in southern California.

Michael Blanchfill served his country for 20 years as a Navy medic. Several years ago, as he was about to be deployed for Desert Storm, he was diagnosed with Huntington's chorea, a fatal disease.

Michael's wife, Loretta, has been forced to quit her job as a restaurant manager to care for her stricken husband. The Blanchfill's daughters, April and Rachel, also help care for their father, who can barely walk or talk. April has been inspired by her father's illness to study medical technology at Edutec Professional College, but now her studies are threatened because of the lack of funding due to the current shutdown.

The Veterans' Administration Hospital in San Diego should provide therapy for Michael, but now no doctor is available to treat him nor will the VA supply him with a wheelchair during this shutdown, nor will the daycare for Michael be provided. And, of course, no home care will be available to permit Loretta to return to work.

So Michael Blanchfill, a Navy veteran who served his country, desperately needs his country's help. As a medic, he was never taken a prisoner, but now he is a hostage, a Gingrich hostage to extremist demands.

Mr. Speaker and Mr. GINGRICH, let us focus on the real needs of real families like the Blanchfills. Let us pass the necessary resolutions now.

LET US REOPEN THE  
GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from North Dakota [Mr. POMEROY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, while I always appreciate the opportunity to participate in House debate, the format for this afternoon's participation comes not in the context of legislative activity geared at actually addressing the crisis that faces this Government today with the ongoing shutdown, day 20. No, regrettably, the only occasion for my ability to participate in debate this afternoon comes in the form of special orders, open format time for speeches, because no legislative business is presently occurring on the floor of the House.

How can this possibly be that no legislative business is occurring while the Government is shut down, and none other than the Senate majority leader, BOB DOLE, has led an effort and passed it unanimously through the Senate to reopen the Government? Senator DOLE said some very interesting things as that effort succeeded in the Senate. I am going to point to this chart, "Enough is enough. I do not see any sense in what we have been doing. I would hope that we would have quick action in the House. People have been gone from their jobs long enough."

In this morning's Washington Post, his quotes contain further elaboration, and again this is the Republican leader in the Senate talking about the shutdown, "It is not as through Clinton is wincing every day because the Government is shut down. It is not having any impact. If we had a point to make, we made it."

He goes on to say, again, Senator DOLE goes on to say, "I know it is sort of macho and all that stuff regarding the shutdown and the standoff and the crisis, but there are human beings out there who are suffering. There are not many rich people working for the Federal Government. They have mortgages to pay, they have vacation plans, they have all kinds of plans. They have illnesses."

Well, Senator DOLE is precisely correct, and this has raised holy hell with Federal workers all over the country.

But I do not want to just leave the impression that this is about the problems this irresponsible shutdown has caused Federal employees, because it has gone much, much further than that. The House Republican leaders, who have caused this shutdown, have told furloughed workers, "do not worry, you will be paid." Now, we know they have a cash flow crisis right now in the meantime, but they have been assured they will be paid for the days they are not working presently.

Now, there are a lot of other people who are not working today as a result of the shutdown who will not be paid. Every employee of a private contractor who is out of business because of this shutdown will expect no retroactive paycheck. We all know stories. I will tell you about being in Bismarck just a couple of days ago, Bismarck, ND, and there in the coffee shop was a person