

absolutely in a quiet room, no one there, no one there, because there were very few employees in the building. Now, that person works for a private contractor. They were there, but others have been laid off, as many, many employees of private contractors have been laid off all over the country.

There is no provision for addressing these people. They are simply out of luck.

Then we get to another very important category, veterans' health care. Imagine if you were lying in a hospital bed critically needing medical care, but also acutely aware that those providing the care were not being paid.

Now, my office checked with the Director of the VA center in Fargo, ND, and he told us that the sick count is going up; fewer and fewer employees actually coming in under these circumstances. He said they are calling in sick, and he is worrying about filling his rotations.

Imagine the concern for the veteran, the hospitalized veterans in our VA system watching this inactivity in the House today and wondering what kind of health care they will get tomorrow, whether the person providing the medical services they so desperately require, doing it without pay, will even show up tomorrow to give the care that is critically needed.

Another major area is housing. You know, many, many housing loans are supported by an FHA guarantee or a VA guarantee. These programs process every single day 2,500 mortgages for FHA and an additional 1,000 for the VA system all over the country. You have got people who have counted on moving, counted on closing real estate deals and getting into their new locations, maybe some of them have even abandoned or made plans to abandon the apartments in which they are presently residing, contemplating timely loan closure, and guess what, the Federal Government is shut down because House Republicans do not agree with BOB DOLE that we need to reopen this Government, and they are out of luck.

Another dimension, there are people struggling with bills, veterans qualifying for these low-interest veterans' loans they want to refinance. There has been a favorable turn in interest rates. They want to refinance. They are up against the wall in terms of monthly cash flow, but guess what, Government shutdown, applications stacking up, nothing being processed, no refinancing, stick with that high interest rate.

The passport dimension of this has raised heck all over the country; unemployment applications; SBA loans. The list goes on and on and on, and that is why Senator DOLE told his colleagues in the Senate, "Enough is enough."

I say to my colleagues in the House, enough is enough. Let us reopen this Government.

A BALANCED BUDGET IS MOST IMPORTANT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas [Mrs. MEYERS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I think the fact that we have closed Government down is difficult. It is very important for a number of people, but I also would like to say that the importance of getting a balanced budget in this country is even more important.

The budget that we have produced puts money back into people's pockets. It leaves choices to governments, to State and local governments and to individuals. It reduces spending and ceases the mortgaging of our children's future. It ends a number of programs that have absolutely crippled this country. It ends entitlement to programs where funding just continues to go on and on and on.

I do not know if everybody knows what an entitlement is. But an entitlement is a program where we define certain parameters in the law and then if you fit into those parameters, you are entitled to money. And we have a number of these entitlements.

We do not even appropriate specific amount of money. We just say such sums as may be necessary, and we have said to young women that we will give them \$18,000 a year if all they will do is just have two children out of wedlock, and then we have promised them they are entitled to that \$18,000 a year.

Some of these entitlements absolutely demand that we change them, and it is tremendously important that we do this. The President has simply not cooperated and not followed through with what he said he would do.

At this point in time, I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON].

Mr. KINGSTON. I thank the gentleman for yielding and wanted to make some points that we have heard a lot of speeches about let us reopen the Government.

I want to say to my friends on that side of the aisle, I think there is certainly a good argument for it. We are talking real people, real paychecks, real mortgages, and so forth. I think we need to address that.

I wish they would also have equal ferocity to the debt they are passing on to children. If a baby is born today, he or she owes \$187,000 as his or her part of the interest on the national debt, \$187,000 above and beyond local, State, and Federal taxes.

Now, you know, you talk about compassion. What about the legacy of debt which people do not seem to be worried about passing on to kids? What we are hearing is, of course, "I supported a balanced budget." Well, they do, but not every one of them voted for it. You know, here is, we had the "yes" votes from GEREN, HALL, MONTGOMERY, and PARKER when we had the Balanced Budget Act, so from the side over there we only had four "yes" votes. That is fine.

A lot of them are saying, "Well, I support the coalition budget." I would say, if you support the coalition budget, then that is very good, too, and that is progress. But there is still a lot who do not support the Republican budget or the coalition budget and are coming down here saying, "Of course, I support a budget." Well, where is it? Hello? The budget negotiations are going on. Go ahead and put your budget in any time now.

We want to get the Government working again. We want to reopen it. But you cannot do it when you have got one side who will not come to the table. So I think it is very, very important to say, OK, you know, let us try to get beyond the Federal Government, you know, and the shutdown, and let us get back to the balancing of the budget.

We have a debt right now that is almost \$5 trillion. We spend \$20 billion each month in interest on the debt, and I hope that we see some of the urgency that we are seeing on, you know, reopening the Government, I hope we see the equal urgency on let us balance the budget. I think we should have both. I think we should get the Government reopened. But I think we should rush most importantly to balance the budget. I hope our friends would see that.

I know the gentleman from Texas wanted us to yield some time. I do not control the time, but if the gentleman would yield, what I would say is we often yield to you but do not get yielded back. So if we do, if the gentleman decides to yield to you, I would appreciate it if you would reciprocate back and let me have some of your time so that we can have a dialogue if that is what the gentleman desires.

Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would just say for a moment that I think a lot of people out there are thinking we could get the Government open again, we could get the people back to work, it is just a matter of numbers, why do they not just split the difference in what they want to do with Medicare or Medicaid?

The point that I am trying to make is that it is not just a matter of numbers. It is a fundamental, a totally fundamental difference in the way we view Government, and essentially it does not mean that either are wrong. It means that the Democrats believe in rather a larger role for the Federal Government. The Republicans believe in a more limited role for the Federal Government, and you cannot get there with all of the entitlements.

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TIME TO PUT AMERICA BACK TO WORK

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

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, if I could yield for 30 seconds to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to respond while the gentlewoman from Kansas, Mrs. MEYERS, was here, because she made a comment. I wanted to just share for the record that as we talk about young people having children, I think we would be remiss if we did not see opportunities that we have here in Congress where we can intervene, and we have not done that.

I know the gentlewoman did not mean to scapegoat innocent children who happen to be born out of wedlock. We could have an opportunity in the Medicaid discussion itself to fund prevention, but we do not do that. Currently we wait until they get pregnant, and then we are able to say, oh, look what is happening. We do not spend money to provide teenagers with family planning and to make sure we intervene in a positive way. That is something we could have the responsibility for.

I just want to put in the record that the gentlewoman and I are held accountable for that.

Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas. If the gentleman would yield for 30 seconds, I would say my main concern is that programs that we initially started and have carried on, that we tried to help people, and instead they have become an incentive for people to join the welfare system. They have become too generous and they have become an entitlement, people know they are there, and they have been abusing the system. That is what I am trying to end.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, if I might, I believe in the House absurdity begets absurdity. This shutdown is obviously one of the most absurd things I have seen. It clearly has accomplished nothing, although it has provided a great deal of hardship, not only for Federal employees but American taxpayers as well.

Last week the senior Senator from Texas, my colleague in the other body, Mr. GRAMM, made a comment asking if anybody noticed whether or not the Federal Government had shutdown. I would take a moment of the House to mention two people who I think did notice that the Federal Government had shutdown. One is Molly Scott, who deals with the contractors at the veterans hospital in Houston, who are not getting paid. Nor is Ms. Scott getting paid. In fact, her apartment house is about to start an eviction notice against her, and her 9-year-old disabled son can no longer go to day care because she does not have any money to pay them.

But it turns out Mr. GRAMM also noticed, because 2 days ago his campaign for the presidency was capable of picking up a check for \$4 million from the Federal Elections Commission, which is a so-called entitlement under the law. So it appears that the absurdity of how this Government is being run under the Republican leadership is one where people who go out and work for a living, who have a contract with the Government to work for them, do not

get paid for their time, and therefore they cannot pay their creditors; and people who are running for political office can get paid. That certainly makes no business sense, but if it is revolutionary, I think that would be correct.

Let us address a couple of questions about why we are here. This all started when this House under the Republican leadership failed to finish its business, its constitutional business, by October 1, 1995. We did not send any appropriation bills to the President by the beginning of the fiscal year. So far now, 3 months into the fiscal year, we have sent only 10 of 13.

We all know that the process of Government under the Constitution is one of give and take. The fact is that you send the bills to the President, the President can veto or sign those bills, and you work them out. It happened with Ronald Reagan when he was the President and had a Republican-controlled Senate and Democrat-controlled House, it happened with President Bush, and it has happened throughout the history of this Nation.

But to add insult to injury I think is the fact that this Republican leadership decided earlier this year that we would adjourn for the month of August when we had not finished our business. Now we are in this mess. Now they are talking about adjourning until the President gives the State of the Union address without taking care of their business.

There is just simply no excuse for that. We have heard the stories about people, like the folks like Dick Clark, who is with the University of Texas Health Science Center at the Texas Medical Center in my district, who has NIH grants to do research, and they are looking to let people go. Or the businessmen in Houston trying to sell U.S. goods and services overseas, but they cannot get passports to get out of the country to do it.

The fact of the matter is we tried to address this issue. Two weeks ago we tried to bring a compromise budget to the floor using the coalition budget scored by the CBO which actually would add less debt to the Nation and less debt to my children and your children and our grandchildren than the Republican budget, and you blocked it just like you blocked the CR.

Let us do our work. Let us put the country back to work. Let us stop this childish behavior, just like Senator DOLE has said in the Senate.

COME TO THE TABLE, MR. PRESIDENT, AND BRING A BALANCED BUDGET WITH YOU

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

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I do not doubt that the American citizens are very disturbed about what they see happening in Washington. They are probably wondering, when are the lead-

ers of Congress and the President of the United States going to get together? Is this not a negotiation just as a labor-management negotiation would be?

The fact is, it is not such a negotiation, and that is unfortunate. It should be. The congressional leaders want it to be. The congressional leaders went in with a plan, a budget that had been overwhelmingly approved in both Chambers and had been sent to the President, and which he vetoed.

The President has had no plan. The President, who has signed on the dotted line to say "yes, I believe in a seven year budget," and "yes, I want that to be scored by the Congressional Budget Office," something he had advocated in this Chamber several years ago in a State of the Union Address. But when the President left town and went abroad, his agents came up with no plan.

Finally they submitted a little plan. That little plan was \$400 billion in deficit. Now, if you have a \$400 billion deficit every year, you are going to add \$1 trillion to the national debt essentially in 2½ years, and that will mean we add \$4 trillion in a decade to what is already a \$5 trillion national debt.

Now, when the President came back, quite correctly, he got away from the aides having the discussion, and meetings were held at the White House. The President participated, the Speaker of the House participated, and the majority leader of the Senate participated. That was all very well. Some days they seemed to be making a little progress. But never has the President submitted a balanced budget. And he probably never will. He has not kept his end of the bargain. He has not kept his word.

Now, in a labor negotiation with management, both sides would go in with their wish list, if you will, and there would be an honest discussion of those wish lists. There would be a discussion of the priorities, what is important to the workers, what is important to management. For the latter, it might be the loosening up of work rules. For labor, it might be additional benefits and an increase in wages.

Unfortunately, this Congress-President negotiation has not been what every labor-management negotiation in America is like. It has been one side—the congressional leadership—coming to the table prepared to bargain with a plan about which they are willing to have an argument. But the other side—the President—has no plan. The other side has no real options, no real offering, to solve the problem.

I think the American people, who are disturbed by gridlock between the executive branch and the legislative branch, want to see their leaders sit down and work it out. Yet that is not happening, and it will not happen until the President comes to the table with a plan.

Unfortunately, on the President's side, some people are still saying, "Well, why do we need a balanced