

The President signed Public Law 104-56, and I would like to read that.

It says, "The President and the Congress shall enact legislation in the first session of the 104th Congress to achieve a balanced budget not later than the fiscal year 2002 as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office."

The fact is the President does not want a balanced budget. The President's extremist liberal agenda and the extremist liberal agenda of Democrats on this side of the aisle simply cannot go forward with a balanced budget, because their agenda costs more than the money that we have coming into the Congress.

That would leave us with two alternatives. We would have to increase taxes to support that agenda that the President insists upon, and continue to go deeper and deeper into debt, thus mortgaging our children's future, selling our children out. We have all heard the saying, "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me."

The President has introduced four budgets. None of them have been balanced. The most nearly balanced was \$87 billion in the red. Two of those unbalanced budgets came after he signed into law that he would balance the budget. His actions show that he is not a man that can be taken at his word. Character counts. When you say something, and then go on and sign into law something that you say you will do and then act in bad faith in these negotiations by refusing any attempt to reach a compromise, then that is character.

We are described, all of the Republican freshman, as extremist radicals. The fact is all we are asking for is a balanced budget in 7 years based on CBO numbers. That is all we are asking for. That is why that impasse is here. That is why the Government is not open. Everything else is open for negotiation. Everything. The level of tax cuts is open. Medicare is open. Welfare reform. Everything is open for negotiation. The only thing where we will not compromise is on balancing the budget, because we are committed to the future of this country. We are committed to our children and our grandchildren, and we want them to be able to have at least as good a life as we have had.

The President said he vetoed our appropriations bill because we cut Medicare too much. Let me take you back in history about 18 months ago when Hillary Clinton was proposing health care reform.

What was stated between Hillary Clinton and the President at that time was, "My opponents will say that I am cutting Medicare, but that's not true. All we want to do is to slow the growth in Medicare from 11 percent to between 6 and 7 percent."

That is what Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton said 18 months ago. Our proposal is higher and spends more money on Medicare than their proposal said only 18 months ago.

This is a transparent excuse to have vetoed the bill. This is pure and simple not wanting to balance the budget.

We have to face that, and we have to get the President to tell the truth about what his intentions are. At least he has to put something on the table so that we will have a point to negotiate from.

I urge all Members to continue on insisting on a balanced budget and, remember, everything else is up for negotiation once the President will give us a balanced budget to work from.

BUDGET DISPUTE IS INSANITY

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

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I had made some effort to stay out of this dispute to the extent that I could in terms of the debate, but several of my constituents have called and expressed severe concern about the direction that we are headed and concern that I had not been as vocal on this issue as they expected me to be as their Representative.

The people who called me are real citizens of this country. They are constituents of mine in my congressional district. They are a Federal prison guard who is continuing to work because he has a critical position in the prison system, and despite the fact that he continues to work, he is not now being paid on a timely basis. Although he acknowledges that he may be paid in the future, he asked me, "What should I tell my creditors in the meantime?" And I had no answer for him.

They are VA hospital employees who care for our veterans, and live in my congressional district and work at a VA hospital located in my congressional district, who continue to provide services to their patients at veterans hospitals but are not currently being paid.

They are people who had a real estate closing scheduled to close so that they could avoid a foreclosure on their house, and when they got ready to close, they were advised that the FHA had closed its doors and they could not close their loan.

They are people who had sought to go to England for a special training program, who were advised that they could not be issued a passport for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that they had been provided.

I had no answers for them, because I have thought that all along this dispute is absolutely insane. There is little if any connection between the continuing operation of the Federal Government and the resolution of the larger budget issue that we face.

Notwithstanding that, my Republican colleagues have succeeded in, as they always do, reducing this major dispute to a one-sentence simple-minded kind of expression—"Let's have a 7-year balanced budget."

Well, they told us that they were going to operate our Government, or

try to make it operate, like the private industry operates.

Well, I do not know of any private industry that can tell me how much income they are going to have 7 years from now. I do not know of any private industry that itemizes the expenditures that they will make 7 years from now. I do not know of any individual, either in this House or outside this House, who can tell me how much income they will have, CBO numbers or otherwise, 7 years from now.

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I do not know of any individual either in this House or outside this House that can itemize for me what expenditures they will make 7 years from now. So we have got this kind of simple-minded "there is something magic about 7 years" that my colleagues cannot live up to, and they have boxed themselves in and they are holding the American public hostage to their simple-mindedness.

So I want to call on my colleagues, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, to, please, come to your senses. This makes no sense. Let us open the Government. Let us keep negotiating about these budget issues and get them resolved and do what the American people sent us here to do.

IT IS TIME TO STOP POLITICAL RHETORIC AND ACCEPT COMMON-SENSE REFORM

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

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, in 1993, President Clinton and the Democrat-controlled 103d Congress thought they could reduce or end the Government's deficit by passage of the President's budget bill. That bill dramatically increased taxes on working Americans, but it will not end the deficit or balance the budget.

President Clinton was wrong. He has even admitted publicly he was wrong to have raised taxes. But his actions have not matched his words. President Clinton vetoed the congressionally passed Balanced Budget Act of 1995. The Balanced Budget Act of 1995 would have balanced the Federal budget in 7 years while reducing taxes on working Americans. The bill would have saved Medicare from bankruptcy and preserved this vital health care program for our nation's senior citizens, and the bill would have reformed the welfare system that has created a generation of Americans trapped in poverty and dependent on Government handouts.

President Clinton also vetoed several appropriation bills, including the Departments of Justice, State, and Commerce, and others. The President closed the doors of many Federal Agencies and Departments. The President has idled thousands of Federal workers, and the President has inconvenienced millions of Americans who are trying

to secure home mortgage loans, passports, financial aid and other important Government services.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the President to go beyond just an admission he was wrong. It is time for the President to stop the political rhetoric and accept common sense reform.

Mr. Speaker, there is an old saying that goes like this: "A wise man will change his mind, but a fool never does." In the current debate, it remains to be seen who will or will not change their mind.

The President and the 103d Congress passed a budget bill that raised taxes on working Americans in an effort to lower the deficit and balance the budget. It did not work. That can be seen in the fact that today we are spending \$500 million-a-day more than we take in in taxes and revenues. Yet the President has refused to change his mind and consider a new course, a course that will provide a balanced budget by the year 2002.

The President and the 103d Congress initiated the COPS Program. The President's program promised to lower crime rates and make our streets safer by providing Federal funds to State and local governments to hire 100,000 more police officers. Two years later, less than a third of the new police officers promised by the President are on our Nation's streets, and when the Federal funds run out, the State and local governments will have to foot the bill for these new officers. The President's plan is costly. It is another unfunded Federal mandate forced on the backs of States and local governments. This, too, is clearly a failed policy, and again the President has refused to change his mind and consider a new course.

Republicans in the Congress passed an appropriations bill for the Department of Justice. That bill provided some \$2 billion in trust fund money for State and local law enforcement block grants. Those funds would have been used to employ additional law enforcement officers; those funds would have provided additional compensation, equipment, or other necessary materials related to basic law enforcement services. Those funds would have enhanced security measures in and around our schools, and those funds would have established multijurisdictional task forces, particularly in rural areas that work with Federal officials for crime prevention and control.

Mr. Speaker, in short, that bill would have done what the President's bill failed to do. The bill would have returned money and decisionmaking to local police departments. The bill would have allowed them to make decisions on how to reduce crime in their communities, but again the President has refused to change his mind over a failed policy. He vetoed that bill.

There is another old saying that you can fool some of the people some of the time but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.

The American people are not fooled by the press conferences and political rhetoric being put forth by the President. Every day that this impasse continues, the public becomes more angry at the President and the Congress.

In December, the public was leaning towards placing blame at the feet of Congress. Now, however, the American people are dividing the blame between the President and the Congress.

Mr. Speaker, often political leaders will govern by poll numbers. The President peaked and missed his highwater mark in the polls by 3 days. With the President's failure to agree on a balanced budget concept that we as a Congress could have voted on this past Wednesday, it is now apparent to the public that the President is not sincere about balancing the budget.

This is not a situation where the President is winning or losing some political game. There are no points to be scored here. From now on, everybody loses.

Mr. Speaker, I say again, it is time for the President to stop the political rhetoric and accept commonsense reform.

THE EFFECTS OF FURLOUGHING GOVERNMENT WORKERS

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

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, when my Republican colleagues took over the majority of this Chamber, they declared that they were going to run Congress like a business. Now, let us just think about that for a second. If we had a business where the CEO of that business and the board of directors had a disagreement and then what they decided to do was to furlough the workers and pay them, all right, think about that.

There is no business in this country where there would be a disagreement between the CEO and the board of directors and they would furlough the workers and then pay them. And if you think about this for a second, if it was a publicly traded company and they decided to do that, what would happen in the market the next day? The value of that company would be destroyed.

Well, that is where we are right now. That is what has happened, and what has happened is totally indefensible.

I spent almost 3 hours on the floor yesterday evening, really involved in a dialog and debate with my Republican colleagues, and after 3 hours I still did not get an articulate answer, because there really is not. I mean, it is as crazy as it seems to people out there in America. It is as whacked out as it seems. There is no explanation. They can try to come up with an explanation. There is no explanation, except for irresponsibility, for what is going on. And we are starting to see real people and real just outrage at some of the things.

I just got a fax from a constituent, Gregory Inch, from Hollywood, FL, and I will read part of it or just summarize part of the letter. He is a double amputee, a veteran. Let me read a little:

In February of 1994, I was involved in an accident that resulted in amputation of both my legs above the knee. It took me and my family some time to get through the initial shock. One year later, after a lot of soul-searching, I got in touch with an organization that enabled me to attend college, the department of vocational rehabilitation. This organization helped me get back on my feet. I started Broward Community College with hopes of receiving a preengineering degree so I could transfer to Florida International University and receive my BA. On January 3, 1996, I went through the normal channels in order to continue my education, only to be informed that the Government shutdown caused the funding of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to stop, a shock to me and my family that almost equaled my disabling accident. Especially shocked was my wife, who has been working two jobs to pay necessary household bills while still in college. I am a registered Republican, age 27, married, a veteran, one child, who is having second thoughts on the way the government is handling the responsibility to society at large.

I could not say it better than he did.

Let me also mention another thing, a fax I got in today from my district also. I have two ports in my district. The Consumer Product Safety Commission employees who are at those ports to basically do inspections are not there, so when crayons are coming in from China into Port Everglades in Broward County or Port Miami in Miami are not inspected, the lead content is coming in without inspection. We are going to read about the disasters that occur at a future time.

I got a call today from the warden of a Federal correctional institution in my district, and the workers, the prison guards at that facility, are working, about 300 guards at that prison. They are working but not getting paid, and you can imagine the morale situation in a prison, a correctional institution where the guards are not getting paid, but in fact the prisoners are because the prison work program is getting paid. It is an unstable equilibrium.

Twenty thousand visas are given to come to the United States a day in our foreign embassies. They have not been given out for the last 20 days; 400,000 visas.

Now, I am glad that my colleague from Florida is standing because it affects his district as much as it affects mine. We have the good fortune of living in south Florida, where people from around the country and around the world visit. Every one of those people who is not getting a visa is dollars lost to our communities. The actual out-of-pocket payment that we are losing is over \$40 million a day of taxpayers' money of out-of-pocket costs for taxpayers of this country. Over the 20-day period, close to a billion dollars has been lost by taxpayers in this country.

In the previous shutdown, about \$750 million of outright waste, garbage, a multiplier effect of 4 or 5 times that effect has cost our economy. It really is