

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