is very expensive, and Medicaid also pays for home services for the frail and the disabled.

□ 1245

They want to cut Medicaid. They want to cut Medicaid and then send it to the State and say States can do it.

Well, I have been in the State government for 10 years as a State senator. They cannot do it if they do not have the money. So shaving this money and sending down the so-called block grant is no solution, because the States, in fact, under their new program, would be able to cut their funds.

This is not a balanced budget, not morally. It is an accounting device. But we want a balanced budget both from an accounting standpoint and a morally balanced budget that is fair to all Americans.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOODLING). With respect to a prior speaker, the Chair would remind the Member to refrain from reference to demagoguery of the President or other Members.

CASTRO'S CRACKDOWN ON DISSIDENTS AND INDEPENDENT JOURNALISTS DURING JANUARY CONGRESSIONAL VISITS TO CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, last week two Members of this House, a gentleman from Massachusetts and a gentleman from New Mexico, went to Cuba to meet with Castro. One told the press he was looking for flexibility on Castro's part to help him oppose the sanctions bill that the Congress is currently pursuing against the Cuban dictatorship. The other said he was seeking the release of some fugitives from American justice now in Cuba. I will now briefly outline some of the ways in which Castro reacted to these congressional visits and treated dissidents and independent journalists in Cuba just during these last few days.

JANUARY 14

Raul Rivero, Cuban poet and president of the independent Cuba Press agency, was arrested.

Juan Antonio Sanchez Rodriguez, another independent reporter, arrested in Pinar del Rio.

Jorge Adrian Ayala Corzo, president of the Democratic Renovation Party, was arrested.

Rafael Solano and Julio Martinez of the independent Havana Press were arrested.

JANUARY 15

Gladys Linares, Miguel Andres Palenque, Orlando Morejon were arrested.

Bernardo Fuentes, an independent journalist in Camaguey Province, was arrested.

Abel de Jesus Acosta, member of the Pro-Human Rights Party in Villa Clara Province, was arrested by State Security Lt. Boris Ruiz, his home ransacked and his motorcycle confiscated.

Jesus Zuniga, of the National Conciliacion Movement, was arrested.

The parents of Yndamiro Restano, were detained and interrogated for over 14 hours. Their son Yndamiro Restano, is the president of the Bureau of Independent Cuban Journalists who is out of Cuba on a visitor's permit due to a petition made to Castro by Dannielle Mitterand. They were told that if the bureau does not cease its work, they, as parents of Restano, will be faced with long-term detention and their son will be banned from returning.

JANUARY 16

The gentleman from Massachusetts arrived in Cuba. That day a meeting by the opposition umbrella grouping Concilio Cubano was disrupted in Havana by state security agents. Participants including Elizardo Sanchez and Marta Beatriz Roque were threatened with arrest.

Alberto Perera Martinez, vice-president of the Bloque Democratico Jose Marti was arrested.

Lazaro Gonzalez, president of the Pro-Human Rights Party, was detained and threatened.

JANUARY 17

The gentleman from New Mexico arrived in Cuba.

Jose Miranda Acosta, a political prisoner in a dungeon known as Kilo 5½ in Pinar del Rio was tortured by having water drops fall throughout the day and night into his cell. He has been sentenced to 15 years of confinement, without family visits, due to enemy propaganda. As a result of his imprisonment, he is practically blind and suffering from extreme malnutrition. Miranda has had his food poisoned in the past as punishment for a 72-day hunger strike in 1994, which he carried out to try to draw attention to his case.

JANUARY 18

Olance Nogueras, vice-president of the Bureau of Independent Cuban Reporters, was detained after asking a question at a press conference held by the gentleman from Massachusetts in Havana.

Eugenio Rodriguez Chaple, president of the Democratic Bloc Jose Marti, was run off the road and injured by state security while on his way to meet with French Embassy officials.

Leonel Morejon Almagro, Concilio Cubano member, was detained and told that his family would suffer serious consequences if he continued to participate in Concilio and that the Interior Minister Colome Ibarra was giving him his last chance.

JANUARY 19

Both Congressmen returned from Cuba.

That day, Roxana Valdivia, an independent journalist was questioned at state security headquarters in Ciego de Avila and threatened with exile or prison for disseminating enemy propaganda.

During the days of the congressional visits, the thousands of Cuban prisoners of conscience continued suffering the same savage brutality that they continue to suffer to this very moment. Col. Enrique Labrada continues to receive electroshock torture at the Mazorra institution for the mentally ill. Labrada was sent there after staging a pro-democracy protest last year. The Reverend Orson Vila remains in prison for preaching the word of Christ. A 30-year-old writer, Carmen Arias, remains in a dungeon for sending a letter to Castro asking for free elections, as do Sergio Aguiar Cruz, Francisco Chaviano, Omar del Pozo, and thousands of others.

Upon his return one Congressman declared that Castro is very flexible.

The other Congressman said that he had gotten Castro to reduce the amount of dollars that Castro charges some Cubans who are leaving Cuba, and that that constitutes a humanitarian gesture.

Mr. Speaker, what will it take for the world to help Cuba free itself of its tyrant?

Imagine if this were happening in apartheid South Africa or Pinochet's Chile.

CONSIDER PRIORITIES DURING BUDGET CUTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I was very surprised and disappointed when I saw that the Republican leadership walked away from the budget negotiations with the President about a week ago.

Frankly, I thought that the President went very far, maybe even too far, just before we adjourned 2 weeks ago when he not only agreed to a balanced budget, which we all support, but agreed to a 7-year budget, put it on the table, agreed to put forward a budget that was based on CBO estimates. The President essentially did everything the Republicans asked for as part of the negotiation and, instead of reacting and saying, OK, now we have a 7-year budget and it is CBO and it uses our numbers, instead of sitting down and saying now we can work out the differences over our priorities and still protect Medicare and Medicaid and the environment and education, instead they said, ''No, that is not good enough. We are going to walk out. We don't want to have any negotiations.'' That is incredible.

We have gone on now for, I guess, about 6 months, and all during that time the Republican leadership has said that they supported the priorities of Medicare and Medicaid and also to

protect the environment and education, but now it is abundantly clear that is not really what they are all about. They are insisting on the level of tax cuts or tax breaks, mostly for wealthy individuals and for large corporations, that would make devastating cuts in Medicare and Medicaid. They are saying that, ''We want to use those cuts to pay for a tax cut or tax breaks primarily for the wealthy Americans.''

It really seems to me at that point there is not much more the President can do.

There was an article in the Star Ledger, which is the largest circulation daily in my home State of New Jersey that I just wanted to quote from briefly today in the time that I have left because I think it says it all.

It says that, ''We need an agreement on a balanced budget, but we don't want a budget agreement at all costs,'' which is essentially what the Republican leadership is asking for, and I quote from the Star Ledger. It says, ''The cost is too great if the budget agreement includes a tax cut benefiting mostly those in the upper income brackets, as this Republican one does. In fact, there is no reason for a tax cut at all. Balanced budgets and tax cuts are goals that work at cross purposes. The cost is too great if it means turning over Medicaid, medical care for the indigents, to the States. That would mean ending the right to medical care for those who can afford it least and are most vulnerable. It would be a great leap backward for this country. And the cost is too great if it means slashing Medicare to the point where the cost to the aged for their premiums becomes painful, which is what is proposed in this Republican budget. If there continues to be no national health care program, then some cost adjustments must be made in financing Medicare to prepare for the crush of retiring baby-boomers in the next century, but to include the overhaul in a political budget that is meant to work against aid for the indigent and the elderly is not the proper context. The cost is too great.''

And that is what I would say to my colleagues on the other side. We would like a balanced budget, but we cannot have it at this great cost to our priorities.

AMERICA'S MOST TRAGIC MORAL FAILING OF THE MODERN ERA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. STEARNS] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, 1 day after the 23d anniversary of Roe versus Wade, many people were up here to recognize this fact, to address one of the most important and divisive moral issues our Nation faces.

Abortion clearly stands as America's greatest and most tragic moral failing of the modern era. In the last century America was called upon to address the moral blight of slavery. And we did it. Though the struggle was great and tore the country in two, good ultimately triumphed over evil and the scourge of slavery was banished from the land. In this century we face a different fight—the fight against what anyone with a moral conscience can only consider the taking of a human life. Will America rise to this new challenge? Will we come to our moral senses? Only time will tell.

But we can say this: Whatever happens, those who believe abortion is simply wrong will continue to take their case to the American people. Although the courts still consider abortion a legal right, that doesn't make it a moral right. And although any change in the legal status of abortion may still be a long way off, there are still measures we can take not to combat this crime against humanity.

It is my belief that political change in America only happens as a result of cultural change. Until we change America's culture—until America regains a commitment to the sanctity of human life—all our efforts will produce little change. We need to argue our case forcefully. We need to convince America by the power of our ideas and by the depth of our passion that abortion deserves no place in any society that would call itself civilized. We condemn Hitler for the slaughter of 6 million Jews. We condemn Stalin for the murder of 20 million Russians. We condemn Pol Pot for the extermination of 1 million Cambodians. But we raise nary a peep about the 1.5 million innocent children who are killed on our own shores every year. My colleagues, I ask you: Where is our conscience? Where is our shame?

Now our foes on the other side of this debate refuse to admit that what is at stake in abortion is a human life. No; they insist that abortion is just a medical procedure intended to terminate a pregnancy. The fetus to them is not life. It is not even potential life. It is merely a blob of tissue, or worse, a parasite that needs to be excised from the victimized mother. Abortion is solely about the so-called rights of the mother. The rights of the unborn child are never part of the equation, because for them the fetus has no rights.

But I have a question for the pro-abortion forces in this country: How can you be so sure? How do you know the fetus is merely human tissue with no claim to personhood? How do you know abortion is not, in fact, the taking of a human life? Their answer, of course, is that they just know. Never do they produce any evidence that the fetus is not a human life. They simply assume that the fetus is not life. And after all, what other choice do they have? The only way they can feel comfortable morally is to pretend what they advocate is the surgical equivalent of having a tooth pulled.

In his book ''The Unaborted Socrates,'' the moral philosopher Peter Kreeft poses this analogy for abortion. Pretend you're a hunter going off into the woods with your friend, but you get separated. Now you're alone hunting for deer and you hear something rustle in the bushes in front of you. You can't see what it is, but you know something is there. What do you do? Do you shoot, hoping the noise is caused by a deer and not your friend? Or do you play it safe and hold your fire until you're sure that it's not your friend? My friends, the abortionist faces the same quandary every day of his life. He can't say for sure that the fetus is not human. But does he play it safe? No, he takes a chance that the fetus he is aborting is really a human being. He literally risks that he is a murderer.

We all know there are deep divisions within our society over abortion. But the one thing I hope we all can agree on is that it is morally risky at best to practice a procedure that even an abortionist must admit could be murder. But it is up to us, my colleagues, to make these arguments, to persuade the country that it is best to err on the side of caution when contemplating abortion. If we do not act, who will? If we do not speak up on behalf of the unborn, will they speak up for themselves?

But I have hope. I believe we are beginning to turn the corner. Congress, through the hard work of Representatives like CHRIS SMITH, BOB DORNAN, and HENRY HYDE, has finally succeeded in passing the first legislation ever that would prevent a particular abortion procedure from being used. I speak here of the so-called partial-birth abortion, a gruesome act whereby the fetus is delivered right to the base of the skull, at which point the abortionist plunges in a pair of surgical scissors to facilitate the evacuation of the brain. The baby, of course, is then fully delivered, but dead. In this act of barbarity, only 3 inches separates a legal abortion from murder. But of course, we all know it is murder anyway.

Unfortunately, the Clinton administration has promised to veto this bill, despite bipartisan support. This is interesting, because even the President has said his goal is to make abortion safe, legal, and rare. Well, here was a chance to make it a little rarer, and what did he do? He promised a veto.

But I wonder something? Why does the President want abortion to be rare? If it is just a harmless medical procedure that improves the lives of women—as the President believes—then why should it be rare? In his world abortion is a good thing and therefore it should be plentiful. But the reality is that even the President knows the American people are uncomfortable with abortion. He knows that even if he sees nothing wrong with 1.5 million abortions, the majority of the American people do.

Fortunately, America's moral climate is changing. Americans never thought legal abortion would be used for anything other than extreme cases.