

debt ceiling. Not once. The bottom line is, these are bully-boy tactics which were never used before.

Yes, there has been agreement with the debt ceiling put on ABDC, but it was bipartisan, et cetera. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, because that is a grave misstatement of the facts.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I think your point is very well taken. I think it is important, as Mr. SCHUMER indicated, that any time that we have not had the passing of a clean debt ceiling or lifting of such, it has been bipartisan; but more importantly, let me state that all of the economists will confirm, we have never, never, never defaulted on payments that the American people must make and that this Nation must make on their behalf.

We must understand, this Nation must understand, that the creditworthiness of this country is based upon its ability to pay its debt. The alternative: Sell all our gold. The other alternative: Do not pay any tax refunds.

The President of the United States will not stand

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is good that we are here this morning in vigorous debate, and hearing my colleague, the gentleman from Michigan, who serves as the chair of a 130-person panel from the Republican Conference, it is interesting that he would say that we on this side of the aisle are frivolously representing to the American people that this is not a crisis. On those alternatives. That is a crisis.

Has any other Western civilization nation or any other nation defaulted? Yes, four of them in the past 100 years, and they have not done so since 1970. Places like Argentina, Stalinist Russia. Is that the kind of company we want to keep to ensure that we have a nation that can be respected internationally and have the economy stable?

Do we want to default? Do we understand that the Republican majority is saying to us, we are going to leave tomorrow, not come back, and take us to the brink of March 1, when we have not passed a clean debt ceiling in order to prevent default. That is the crisis which we face; and my colleague from Michigan, who, as I said, I respect, is clearly on the wrong road if he thinks he can bring the American people to the brink of default and we not constantly get on the floor of the House and explain it.

We will not leave here tomorrow, and I will offer a resolution that we not have a recess so that we can continue this, and that we not go home while we are without the responsibility or the action of making sure that we can pay on our responsibilities and our debt on March 1.

DEMOCRATS SO-CALLED SCAMS ARE SHAMS

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

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues, I come to the floor this morning to talk about two scams that have been perpetrated by both the administration and the other side of the aisle.

The first scam is what I call the Clinton shutdown and the charges that were made about balancing the budget and about getting our Nation's finances in order. It is part of a scare scam, and it is pretty clever. It says, that Republicans will hurt the elderly, the environment, education.

In fact, if we just take a minute and look at the facts involved here, in the area of Medicare, we have heard it over and over: Republicans are going to cut it. In fact, over the next 7 years we will add \$724 billion in spending.

Medicaid, we will add \$348 billion in spending. In education and job training and student loans, we will add \$25.7 billion in spending. But we hear it over and over.

What they do not in fact tell us is that part of this argument is about the bureaucracy. EPA has 6,069 employees in Washington, DC. That is almost as many as a dozen years ago, a total of 18,000. I am not talking about the 12,000 outside of Washington, but 6,000 in Washington, DC.

Education, we have 3,322 employees in Washington, D.C., out of a total of 4,876 employees. A total of 358,000 Federal employees. These are not defense; these are not civilian defense. These are part of that bureaucracy within just earshot of the Capitol building. That is what this debate is really about.

Now, my colleagues, a second scam comes before us, and the second scam is this: If the Republicans do not continue taxing and spending and driving this Nation into debt, then we will not be able to pay our Social Security recipients, and they have even said, Mr. SMITH said, we are not going to be able to pay our veterans.

This administration, which has just gotten through robbing the Federal retirement trust funds, now is engaged in the second scam. They can pay welfare payments to illegal aliens, they can pay medical benefits better than we have for our veterans, but they cannot pay Social Security.

They can pay for bilingual education for illegal aliens. They can find \$50 billion to bail out Mexico. But, in fact, they cannot pay Social Security and our veterans.

So the President is making these choices. The administration is making these choices. They can even pay AmeriServe, or whatever the name of the President's volunteer, so-called volunteer program, which pays volunteers for the first time in the history of this country and gives them an array of perks that would make any veteran blush.

These are the choices that we face. I will say again, the greatest threat facing our senior citizens today is that we get this mess in order.

We debated here about extending the debt limit of this country for 34 days, and we needed \$67 billion. We are going into the hole at the rate of over half a

billion dollars a day, and they want to continue this tax-and-spend policy; and they say that in fact we cannot pay our senior citizens Social Security checks. Well, that is their choice, because they have other choices, and that is what this debate is about, whether the debate deals with in fact balancing the budget or extending the debt limit.

So we are in fact here today. Let me tell my colleagues, I chair the Subcommittee on Civil Service, and let me describe the mess we inherited: 35 of 39 Federal retirement trust funds have unfunded liabilities in the trillions of dollars. Now they have spent the last number of days robbing what little remains, what shred remains, so now they are threatening our senior citizens. That is what this is about.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MICA. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Let me just say that I asked the Congressional Research Service whether Secretary Rubin could legally withhold trust funds. They said their first review of the law said, no, it would be illegal to withhold trust fund payments for any trust fund where there is a surplus coming into those trust funds. I have written Secretary Rubin the day before yesterday asking him to give us the reasons why he thinks he can do this.

Mr. MICA. Finally, my colleagues, let me say that the President, after this Congress and this new majority did its job and came forward with 12 funding bills, the President never came up with a balanced budget proposal until January 6, 1996.

TIME FOR RESPONSIBILITY IS NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, this debate, I think, for people at home is very frustrating, except I think the people are a lot smarter than those of us in the Chamber, and they see right through it. They know what is going on here. They see people saying, we are not going to pay our bills.

Now, that has never happened. There have never been elected representatives that have come in and said, we are not going to pay our bills. That is not anything that anybody respects in America. Try that as a family. Furthermore, if you know you are just about to go into bankruptcy, you know you are just about to run up against that brick wall, you go on vacation for 3 weeks.

Mr. BUNNING of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Well, let me finish, if you do not mind, because I do have a few things to say. I have asked others to yield and they do not. I remember the days when we used to yield, but I guess that seems to be over.

I sit here and on one hand, I get depressed because people come to me and they say, why are you leaving? And I say to them, why are you staying? Why