Shortsighted has more than one meaning here. In the near term, we are being destructive and wasteful by forcing Government agencies to limp along on partial funding, continuing to operate, but unable to give full service to the American public. In the long term we are hurting our investment in that most basic and important of all services, public education.

Today we voted on an 11th continuing budget resolution to keep the Government going. This resolution was for 7 days, it was for 1 week. Underneath the new majority we have become a government by the week, for the week, and of the week. I voted ''no'' on this continuing resolution because of the drastic cuts in education, not only title I, not only Head Start, but also, as I said earlier, the drug-free safe school zones have been cut.

Here are some facts I would wish that the majority will remember:

A recent Gallup Poll showed two-thirds of all Americans ranked the quality of education as their top priority over such issues as crime, health care, and the deficit.

A January Wall Street Journal poll says 9 of 10 Americans favor the same or increased spending on education.

The January Washington Post poll says 8 out of 10 Americans oppose cutting education. Yet the current budget resolution, which was continued today, if extended for the year, will cut $3.1 billion from education, the largest education cut in our Nation's history.

Are such cuts in step or out of step with the will of the American public? The polls I cited would indicate that such cuts could not be more out of step.

If we extend this continuing budget resolution to the year's end, more than 1 million young people will be deprived of services in the title I program alone.

Here are some other ways to view the problem:

Failure to have assured funding in place is affecting the operations of America's 110,000 elementary and secondary schools that serve roughly 50 million students. State legislators and school administrators in all 50 States and in more than 14,000 school districts are unable to develop detailed financial plans for the coming year. Without these plans in place, this affects the hiring of teachers, the signing of contracts. Impact aid districts are squeezed by partial payments. This will affect roughly 2,000 school districts, including those in my home State of Michigan, and 1.3 million children. The Brimley School District in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan is looking at a $600,000 shortfall because title I has not been completed. Antrim County stands to lose $100,000; Benzie County schools, $58,200; Charlevoix schools, $77,700; Cheboygan schools, $140,200.

□ 1615

Crawford County will be over 70,000, Emmet County over 67,000, Grand Traverse, over 200,000.

Mr. Speaker, unless the Department of Education can make full payments, many schools will receive impact aid or run out of funds later this spring and will be unable to pay teachers' salaries. People with disabilities will not receive rehabilitation services. Vocational rehabilitation programs prepare some 1 million individuals each year to get a hold of and to hang onto their jobs.

This is only a partial look at the problem, but it lets us draw some sad conclusions. One of the tragedies of this Congress is that we have gotten away from rational discourse and debate. We have gotten away from the notion of agreeing to disagree, while completing the basic business of the people of the United States. There certainly can be rational debates over the long-team or long-range value of programs like drug resistance education, drug-free school zones, title I, and other specific education programs. In fact, having a debate over these programs is an excellent opportunity to restate their value and their importance to the American people.

However, Mr. Speaker, this process of destruction by attrition, of week-to-week continuing budget resolutions, of the slow wearing down of those who struggle in the field of education, is not rational, and it is not a debate. It is irrational, and the American people recognize it as the wrong way to do business.

Mr. Speaker, we would ask that when we come back next week and work on a continuing budget resolution, that we take into consideration the cuts we have made in education, the cuts we have made in the environment, in the enforcement of the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, the gutting of the Clinton COPS Program. We ask that these be put forth in a continuing budget resolution, and we stand ready to work with the minority and the majority to work together to find the $8 billion we need to cut.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. EHLERS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. EHLERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

MEDICAID BUDGET CUTS THREATEN TO IMPAIR THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR MANY AMERICANS

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

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, balancing the budget is important, but the debate has taken the wrong turn. We should be focusing on saving lives and the quality of care, not just balancing the budget, balancing the budget at the expense of losing people, and at the expense of creating turmoil in the lives of so many.

For the past 30 years, Mr. Speaker, America has prided herself on protecting those vulnerable populations who, because of many circumstances, are not able to afford the health care they desperately need.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Commerce which I serve on, held a hearing on the Medicaid proposal by the National Governors Association. During the recess, we had a hearing in which six Governors came to testify. Due to the fact that many Members could not be there, we required another day of hearings.

The Governors' proposal is a bipartisan consensus which I must admit has done a lot to contribute to the debate and finding solutions to reforming the Medicaid program. I applaud them, Mr. Speaker, for trying to help. However, I am still concerned with several very, very important issues which, in my opinion, must be further reviewed.

Under the NGA proposal, not only will the recipients of the Medicaid safety net program suffer, but so will the inner cities, which house many of our great teaching institutions that train the majority of our Nation's physicians. New York alone trains 15 percent of the Nation's physicians. Public hospitals which care for over 30 million uninsured will also suffer much more than ever imagined.

If enacted, Mr. Speaker, the Medicaid cuts would deliver a blow to New York City that is double its proportionate share. Over the next 7 years, cuts to New York hospitals will total approximately $12 billion, that is B as in boy, billion, in New York City, and billions more in New York State. Payments for long-term care and personal health services will decline by approximately $7 billion in New York City, and $1 billion in New York State.

Furthermore, the Medicaid cuts will reduce needed service levels, and access to care will also suffer, as well as reduced projected employment by over 100,000 in New York City and 200,000 in New York State, and cause the personal income of New Yorkers to decline by at least 2.7 percent.

While the debate over Medicaid reform has largely focused on cost savings, it is important to refocus the debate on saving lives and quality of care. Mr. Speaker, let me just say that we need to recognize the fact that people are living longer, and as they live longer, they will need additional care. In order for them to have that care, we need to make certain that the resources are there to provide that care.

People in nursing homes today are doing a fantastic job. For a long time, we did not have standards like we have today. Of course, we had a mess. We had some nursing homes that were creating all kinds of problems for our elderly. However, we were able to get some statutes in the law that sort of turned that around. We now seem to be moving back toward where we were before those statutes came into being.

I visited a nursing home just recently in my district, the Cobble Hill Nursing Home. I listened to the staff as they talked about the kinds of things they have to do now, and recognized that if we continue to cut the programs, that they will not have the staff to be able to perform those duties.

I am hoping, Mr. Speaker, that we realize that as we talk about the budget cuts, that we do not forget that we are talking about quality of care, we are talking about the lives of human beings, and let us not let the debate make the wrong turn. Let us straighten it out and go in the right direction to protect the lives of our people.

EDUCATION CUTS ARE THE LARGEST IN THE NATION'S HISTORY

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, education is one of the priorities that the President and Democrats in Congress have stressed should not be severely impacted during these constant budget battles that take place on the floor of this House of Representatives. Yet, once again, we face a situation where the House-passed spending bill for the remainder of this fiscal year would provide the largest cut in education in the history of the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, this is really the work primarily of Speaker GINGRICH and the House Republican leadership, whose radical plan would essentially cut $3.3 billion from the education programs, a 13-percent reduction in funds that schools around the country depend on to educate students of all ages.

The Senate, as was mentioned by one of my colleagues earlier, fortunately has voted to restore most, or about $2.5 billion, of this lost education funding. However, Mr. Speaker, the Senate bill will not prevail if Speaker GINGRICH and his extremist views hold sway.

Today, the House Republicans passed another stopgap funding bill. It is the 11th, I believe, since the beginning of this session. This measure would only keep the Government running for another week. Its purpose is to give House Republicans an opportunity to attack the reasonable education funding levels in the Senate bill. It is nothing more, in my opinion, than another attempt by House Republicans to hold the Federal Government hostage to their agenda.

President Clinton has already said that he will not sign any bill that funds education programs at the House-passed level. He also said that rather than sign any extremist Republican spending plan, he may refuse to sign all stopgap spending bills sent to him after Easter. Thus, if the House Republicans continue to insist on steamrolling through these radical cuts in Federal education programs, we could face yet another Government shutdown.

I believe preserving a strong educational framework was something that traditionally Members on both sides of the aisle, in both Houses in Congress, used to be able to agree on before the current House Republican majority took over. What is happening here is that the Speaker and the House Republican leadership are basically going against this consensus, or shattering the consensus that we have had for years that says that education should be a priority.

If we compare the differences between the House and Senate education proposals, we can see the differences between the radical Republicans here in the House and the more sane, if you will, Republicans in the Senate. The House-passed bill cuts title I programs by $1.2 billion. The Senate restored $815 million of that. The House-passed bill would eliminate the Goals 2000 Education Reform Program. The Senate restores $60 billion for Goals 2000. The House-passed bill cuts $266 billion from the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. The Senate restores $182 million. The House-passed bill cuts $27.5 million from the School-to-Work Program. The Senate puts back $182 million.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on with this list, but the point is that it is here in the House that the education cuts are being implemented. The fact that Senate Republicans will not go along with that only goes to prove, essentially, that it is the House Republicans that are forcing or taking this stand.

Mr. Speaker, what does it mean back in our States and back in our districts? It means if this House Republican plan goes through, the teachers and teachers' assistants could be laid off, and schools in search of alternative sources of funding could force their local governments to raise taxes in order to maintain the same number of teachers. If alternative sources of funding cannot be found, fewer teachers would need dramatically decreased sizes of classes, and students in need of assistance in areas such as basic reading and writing would be denied the help of their local schools, because education money will have dried up.

Mr. Speaker, there is no mistake about it. If we look at my own State of New Jersey, my own district, the taxpayers simply cannot afford these increases. The local property taxes, the local budgets, are usually turned down, because people do not want to have to pay higher property taxes. It is much more difficult for them if they do not have the Federal funding sources.

What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that it is time for the House Republican leadership to wake up. There should be no more of these stopgap funding bills for 1 week, 2 weeks, or 3 weeks. They should simply return to the mainstream and joint the congressional Democrats, the President, and now even the Senate Republicans in saying that education is a priority, that there should be adequate funding for it, and that education programs should not be part of this constant battle back and forth which leads us to these stopgap funding plans.

Mr. Speaker, I think that more and more over the next few weeks, as we continue to battle over the budget and over spending priorities, hopefully we will see the House Republican leadership come over to the point of view that says education should remain a priority and should not be something that we cut severely, because it really is the future of America and the future of our young people.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 29 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1836

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GOSS) at 6 o'clock and 36 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2202, THE IMMIGRATION IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST ACT OF 1995

Mr. DREIER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104–483) on the resolution (H. Res. 384) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2202) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to improve deterrence of illegal immigration to the United States by increasing border patrol and investigative personnel, by increasing penalties for alien smuggling and for document fraud, by reforming exclusion and deportation law and procedures, by improving the verification system for eligibility for employment, and through other measures, to reform the legal immigration system and facilitate legal entries into the United States, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

THE IMMIGRATION IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST ACT OF 1995

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I know that I first want to express my great appreciation to my very good friends who are sitting and standing behind me at this point, and I will be as brief as possible.

I have risen to briefly talk about the rule that we are going to be considering next Tuesday, which the Committee on Rules has reported out just a