what they can be paid and what they can earn. There is no reason to exempt this Congress of the United States from the real discipline of the marketplace. Our major responsibility is to get this country back on track.

I intend to offer an amendment to the measure of the distinguished Senator from Maine that would add that incentive for Members to honor their obligation to meet budget targets.

Mr. President, the controversy involves two major questions. I think some Americans may be surprised to focus on those because the national media have not focused on them perhaps the way we think they should. It involves commitment of this country to balance its budget in 7 years. And it involves honest real numbers. The President has said that he cannot live with the commitment to balance the budget in 7 years. The President has said he wants other than the Congressional Budget Office figures, ones from his administration, or perhaps others, to be the standard for the numbers.

Mr. President, I simply want to draw Members' attention to one fact. While the President now says he finds it unacceptable to be committed to a balanced budget in 7 years, when the President himself ran for office in 1992 he looked the American people in the eye and promised to balance it in 5 years.

Mr. President, he has never presented a budget that does that. Now, not only is he not willing to stand up for a 5-year commitment, he said he would veto a continuing resolution—he has, indeed, vetoed a previous one—if it insists on a commitment to a 7-year balanced budget.

Most Americans must be surprised at this. It runs directly contrary to his promise to the American people when he ran for office.

The President specifically promised a balanced budget in 5 years. Later he said a balanced budget in 7 years, and later in 8 years, and later 9 years, and later in 10 years. That is one of the major differences of two in the failure of the President to keep his commitment to try to balance the budget.

The second difference is over economic assumptions. I must say I find no item more important than realistic economic assumptions. The distinguished Democratic leader, for whom I have a great deal of respect, has come to this floor and noted for the record that we have had assumptions that were not optimistic enough in the last few years. It is quite true that prior assumptions in periods of economic upturn have proved sometimes too conservative. It is the nature of the assumptions. We have had assumptions in the past that follow a general rule. They are not optimistic enough when we have an economic recovery, and they are not pessimistic enough when we have an economic downturn.

I submit the judgment and the weight of long-range economic assumptions should not just be how they perform in the short term of an upswing or a downswing but how they perform over the long term. Here the record is very clear. No one should be mistaken about it. The assumptions we have used for the last quarter of a century, whether they be from the Executive Office or the Congressional Budget Office, have been wildly optimistic. They have overstated the revenue that would come and they have understated the outgo, the spending of the Federal Government. The reality is this has been one of the major places of gamesmanship. Economic assumptions have been used to mislead the American people.

All one need to do is take a look at the budgets for the last 25 years. Every single one of them except for the last couple years have suggested, while they would not balance the budget this year, they would balance the budget the following year or the year after that or the year after that. It used to be we would balance the budget 1 year out and then 2 years out and then 3 and then 4 and then 5. No one can honestly look at the economic assumptions that have been used in calculating our budget and not conclude that they were fraudulent. They have consistently overstated revenue and consistently understated expenditures. One need only look at the Social Security assumptions to see the fraud.

I do not want to overdo this point, but I think it is critical that people understand how important the economic assumptions argument is because it goes to the very integrity of the books, it goes to the very integrity of whether or not we achieve a balanced budget.

The President is suggesting that we cook the books. That is what this controversy is all about—his refusal to honor his commitment on balancing the budget and his unwillingness to live up to realistic estimates.

I do not know how many Members had a chance to look at the details of the President's proposal in terms of economic assumptions earlier this year. Dr. Laura Tyson defended them before the Budget Committee. One of the things I found so extreme in the President's proposal was literally the suggestion that they were going to use two rates of inflation, one rate of inflation when calculating income and another rate of inflation when calculating expenditures.

I understand how reasonable men and women can differ on the value and the content of economic assumptions. To assume different rates of inflation when you are calculating the income and expenditures is absurd. Could they be off slightly in the way we do the calculations? Of course. But there was a significant and is a significant difference in the way the President's people calculate inflation. It is absolutely fraudulent. There is no integrity in those numbers.

If we adopt economic assumptions that undercut the integrity of this budget process, we will have deceived the American people.

Men and women can honestly disagree, and we are going to negotiate over how much tax cut we should have, and we are going to negotiate how much spending we should have. And everyone understands there has to be a compromise in those areas.

There should be no compromise on the integrity of the budget process. Congress has compromised the integrity of the budget far too long. It is one of the core reasons why we find ourselves in the disaster situation that stands before us.

I hope there is an agreement reached today, but I for one cannot agree to destroy the integrity of the budget process. I for one think it would be a great mistake if included in that agreement is a willingness to accept phony numbers and phony assumptions and false claims. It is the road that has gotten us to this problem. It is the problem we must address honestly and straightforwardly. I believe, if we do, if we use honest numbers and realistic changes, this country's economy will blossom in the future as it has in the past.

I yield the floor, Mr. President.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as if in morning business for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EFFECTS OF SHUTTING DOWN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I wish to share my views of appreciation for the remarks just made by the Senator from Colorado. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Senator from Maine [Ms. SNOWE], on the introduction of her legislation, and I urge the leadership on both sides of the aisle to take up that legislation and pass it.

As the Senator from Maine pointed out, there is a great credibility gap here in the Congress that we treat ourselves all too often differently from the American people. This is a glaring example of it. People who also work for the Federal Government are not receiving their pay and benefits, and we in the Congress continue to do so.

That is not a good message for us to send. I do believe that as in the past there is very little doubt we will compensate those who have been laid off as nonessential workers, although I would certainly hope we in the Congress would examine the impact or the lack of impact of the absence of some of those nonessential workers and perhaps over time we could use that as a guide to downsizing the size of Government. In the meantime, we in the Congress should not accept our paychecks when Federal workers are also not receiving them.

Mr. President, I wish to also point out that some of the actions taken in this downsizing or laying off of essential workers and providing what is deemed nonessential, cutting off what are deemed nonessential services to the

American people has gone a little bit too far, and I speak specifically of the Grand Canyon.

For the first time in its history, the Grand Canyon has been closed down with a very few number of employees. Most of the services could have been provided to people who come from all over the world. I think it is just a disgrace and a bit of political demagoguery that the Grand Canyon is being shut down because of this crisis. The Federal Government, the Department of the Interior and, most of all, Secretary Babbitt should know that we could provide services to about 90 percent of the visitors with just a handful of employees. I urge the President and the Secretary of the Interior to reverse that decision.

I also point out that in our zeal—and it is well-founded zeal—to protect those who are Government workers who are not receiving their pay, let us remember that there are tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of Americans who are directly dependent upon places like the Grand Canyon—the hotel employees, the concessionaires, the people who supply all of the things that go into these provisions of Government services that will never be compensated. They will never be compensated. I appreciate very much what the Senator from Maine is trying to do for Government workers and what we will do, but let us not forget that there are a whole lot of people who are not Government employees but who are dependent upon Government for their economics and their livelihoods, and their families are dependent upon it, and they will have a very bleak Thanksgiving because they have already lost income which they can never regain.

That is what the tragedy of this whole confrontation and crisis is all about. I understand why many Americans say, as a commentator this morning on one of the talk shows said, it is a food fight and mothers would not approve of their sons behaving the way we have seen happen, especially wrestling matches in the Chamber of the House of Representatives and a great deal of disparagement of integrity and character and personal attacks that are being mounted on both sides.

But, Mr. President, I do not think we should let it distract us from the fact that there is an enormous amount at stake here. And that is really whether we are going to carry out the commitment that we made to the American people in the election of 1994. And for us to depart from the valid assumptions which have been supported by Members on the other side of the aisle, by the President of the United States, and all of us, and the Congressional Budget Office, as providing us the basis for economic assumptions, would be an absolute travesty.

Mr. President, I will not go through again the number of times the President of the United States has changed his view as to how many years it would take to balance the budget. But I do remember quite well in 1993 when in a rather raucous State of the Union message the President of the United States said—and I quote from his State of the Union Address, as he explained to Congress and the American people why he used CBO numbers to score his 1994 budget proposal.

He said:

> I did this so that we could argue about priorities with the same set of numbers. I did this so that no one could say I was estimating my way out of this difficulty. I did this because if we can agree together on the most prudent revenues we are likely to get if the recovery stays, and we do the right things economically, then it will turn out better for the American people than we say. In the last 12 years, because there were differences over revenue estimates, you and I know that both parties were given greater elbow room for irresponsibility. Let us at least argue about the same set of numbers so the American people will think we are shooting straight with them.

Mr. President, let us let the American people know that we are shooting straight with them. We can only do it with Congressional Budget Office numbers. I heard one of the President's advisers this morning going through the same routine that they have, that if we balance the budget in 7 years, if we stick to the CBO numbers, we will destroy the American's ability to receive welfare, education, student loans, et cetera, et cetera.

It is the same line we have been hearing for a long, long time. Clearly for quite awhile it has had resonance with the American people. There is a legitimate question that needs to be asked. If we do not balance the budget, what happens to all of those programs—education, Medicare, welfare, all of those programs if we do not stop this reckless spending? And I think the answer is obvious. None of those programs can be funded if we continue to amass this enormous debt that has laid $175,000 debt on every child born in America today, only to pay the interest on the debt that we have already accumulated.

Mr. President, I hear a lot of talk about a compromise, so do my colleagues. And compromise is the name of the business in Government. But if we compromise our 7-year commitment, and if we compromise the Congressional Budget Office numbers, then we will have done a great disservice not only to the overwhelming majority of the American people that told us they wanted the budget balanced in the last election but to future generations of Americans who, by us using irresponsible numbers and unrealistic figures, would do a great disservice to them.

Let me also point out one other thing, Mr. President. This is really all about how much money Government can spend. If we use the Office of Management and Budget numbers, they will provide different estimates which will then say less sacrifice is required to balance the budget thereby giving the executive branch and the other bureaucracies more money to spend.

The question is, are we going to let the American people keep that money and spend it themselves or are we going to send it to Washington and continue to fund many, many failed programs which have not only not helped the American people but in the view of many of us in the case of the failed welfare system, harmed the American people more than it has helped. So it is really about how much money is going to be spent.

I always enjoy it when my colleagues—I see my colleague from North Dakota who has been very active on this issue on the floor—say we want to balance the budget, too. Give us your plan over 7 years, and give us credible numbers, and we do not have a problem. We can start the Government back to work in a New York minute. But the question is whether there is going to be the commitment over 7 years and whether we are going to use realistic numbers.

Mr. President, this morning the Concord Coalition took out a full page ad in the Washington Post. I urge my colleagues to look at it. I do not agree with everything said here by the Concord Coalition, but I do think they make some very important and valid points.

We can either get an agreement here today or tomorrow or the next day or the next day or on Thanksgiving Day or afterward, but at some point we are going to have to agree and get the Government going again. I do not know when that will be. I hope it is today. But what we decide today or tomorrow, or when we make that agreement, it will directly impact the future of America. And those that call this a food fight, or whether somebody was snubbed on an airplane or not, are not cognizant of the fact this is really what the differing philosophies are all about, between this side of the aisle and that side of the aisle, whether the American people should keep their money and not send it to Washington, DC, or whether the Government spends the money that is their hard-earned money, which is now for an average family of four in America is $1 out of every $4. In 1950 that same average family of four sent $1 out of every $50 to Washington, DC, in the form of taxes. And I know of no one who believes that same family in 1995 is better off than that family in 1950.

Mr. President, I know my time has nearly expired. I urge my colleagues to agree rather than disagree, and regain the level of civility that is required for us in order to reach reasoned and mature decisions and judgments.

Mr. President, I yield the balance of my time.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the unanimous-consent request made earlier be amended so that I be allowed to continue in morning business for not to exceed 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

Mr. REID. Parliamentary inquiry.

It is my understanding that the procedure now before the Senate is that we are in morning business, and that we are each allowed to speak up to 10 minutes. Is that true?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. LEAHY. I am sorry. I understood it was 5 minutes. That is why I requested 10 minutes.

I ask that I simply seek recognition under the normal order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

WORKING TOGETHER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I know that the distinguished Democratic leader is going to speak here on the floor in a few minutes to describe the offer that was made and, apparently, rejected by the Republican leadership. And I would hope that Senators and the public would listen to it. I say this because I have a feeling in many, many ways that if we were left to the situation where the Democrats and Republicans in the Senate were able to work together on this, with the White House, we would have a solution to this impasse.

Certainly, we would have a solution that would put a lot of hard-working men and women back to work, people who cannot afford to miss paychecks and who want to be at work, people who have mortgages to pay, children to educate, parents to care for, have medical bills to pay, car payments to make, and can ill-afford to lose paychecks, especially when there are jobs that need to be done and people want to do them.

I say that I think we could work it out between the Senate and the White House. It appears to me, however, that the other body and its leadership do not feel it is possible and that they say there is nothing that can be done. I see this remarkable situation where the other body simply recessed even though appropriations and spending bills begin—spending bills by custom; revenue bills by Constitution—begin in the other body. They have left.

They have this fiction of waiting for the call of the Chair. But, in fact, their leadership has decided they would recess and that they would leave. They are shirking their duty. They are shirking their duty. They are being paid. They ought to stay. They ought to stay and work this out for those tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of men and women who are not being paid, who are loyal Americans, who have given a great deal of their life and effort to this country and want to keep this country going.

We have a situation where we have become the laughing stock of the world. The President of the United States cannot go to a major economic summit in Japan at a time when perhaps a greater danger to this Nation is perhaps not the deficits we now face but our trade deficit. At least much of the deficit we owe to ourselves, but our trade deficit involves countries abroad who are eating our economic lunch.

Every time we have $1 billion more in our trade deficit, we lose tens of thousands of American jobs. The President was going to represent this country at a meeting in Japan where we could at least talk about that with the country that has the greatest trade imbalance with the United States, but he has to remain here. He is remaining here at work. The distinguished Presiding Officer is remaining here at work. I am here at work.

I wish the Republican leadership in the House would let the House come back to work, because, Mr. President, there is one thing that ought to be very evident to everybody: We are not going to pass a Gingrich budget. We are not going to pass a Clinton budget. We are not going to pass a Dole budget. We can pass a budget for the American people. We will pass a budget that reflects the views of both Republicans and Democrats of the House and of the Senate and of the President because, frankly, under the Constitution, under the laws and under the history of this great country, we are all in this together.

So I urge everybody to stop thinking there is going to be one party that is going to win everything in this. That may work in a game of marbles on a playground in kindergarten. That does not work here. This is not a playground, even though it may appear that way to some. It is not kindergarten, although it may appear that way to some. It is not a game of marbles, even though it may appear that way to some. This is the budget of the country, the most powerful, greatest Nation on Earth, the most significant democracy history has ever known, the largest economy in the world, and we are standing here because some feel they may have been slighted or some feel that they must make a point that will fit on a bumper sticker in next year's election, congressional or Presidential.

Mr. President, I am one Democrat who says let us have Democrats and Republicans sit down. Set aside short-term political gains and do what is best for this country. Stop thinking that we will have a Speaker Gingrich budget, or a leader Dole budget, or a President Clinton budget, but rather that we will have a budget that can take the best of the proposals of each of the three, and let us work at it.

We have had proposals here. The distinguished Senator from North Dakota and I have voted for a budget that would give us a balanced budget within the 7 years. We all want that. But before we balance a budget that intends, in large part, to slash very needy programs so that a tax break can be given to people at the highest level, let us ask if that is what the American public really want.

Do they want to see money for education cut so that the most wealthy in this country can have a tax break? I doubt it.

Do they want to see nutrition programs for the most needy in this country slashed so that the wealthiest can get another tax break? I doubt that the American people want that.

Do they want to see Medicare and Medicaid attacked to that the wealthiest in this Nation can have a tax break? I doubt that very much.

If we are going to be saving money, let us protect the most in need. And if there is extra money left over, let us apply it to the deficit. Let us apply it to the deficit, not to another tax break for the wealthiest who already pay less in taxes than any industrialized nation on Earth. We do not need to put it there. If we really want to do something for our children, rather than giving it as a tax break for the wealthiest, apply it to our national debt, apply it to our deficit.

In the deficits that grew up during the Reagan and Bush era, today we spend nearly $1 billion in interest—in interest alone —almost every day, $1 billion just in interest on the deficits and the increase in the national debt built up during the terms of only two Presidents, Ronald Reagan and George Bush.

Let us be honest about that. Some who were the greatest proponents of the Reagan deficits have stood in the last 2 days on the floor of this Senate and said, ''We have to do something about this terrible deficit.'' Well, I tell them that virtually our whole deficit is caused just by what we pay in interest on those profligate days in the eighties where we made huge tax cuts and huge defense buildups and borrowed the money from the next generation to pay for it.

That is what happened then, Mr. President. What happens now, though, is what happens now. Today, we have hundreds of thousands of people out of work needlessly. We have hundreds and hundreds of thousands more who will be out of work because of the ripple effect, whether it is the people who want to get into our national parks, whether it is those who will not be able to borrow money for their mortgage, VA loan, or anything else, whether it is those who want to make new claims in Social Security.

Think of the hundreds of thousands, even millions of people who will be out of work because of the Government programs that have stopped, Government programs that all of us, Republicans and Democrats, have supported, whether it is in the VA or whether it is in our various mortgage programs or Social Security or anything else.

Let us say, OK, everybody has made their political point. They can use them in their ads next year. Let us sit down and remember, we are not going to have a Republican House or Republican Senate or a Democratic House or Democratic Senate budget or Presidential budget, but together we can