the amount of money flowing into or out of the Federal Government. As a result, you can reach balance.

Of course, assumptions have been part of the debate. That is why we have insisted there be a core score of assumptions called the Congressional Budget Office. But that really is not the essence of how you resolve the issue, because the essence of how you resolve the issue is what structural changes, what changes have you made in the way this Government functions that will guarantee or at least give us significant hope that we will be able to bring under control the expenditures of Government or the rate of growth of the expenditures of Government in a manner which will allow us to be able to afford the size of the Federal Government over the next 7, 10, 15 years.

If you are going to address that issue, it is not so much reaching a balanced budget, it is the programs that drive Federal spending. So as we evaluate the process of reaching a balanced budget and what is occurring at the White House, I suggest we look at a few issues because those are the issues that are going to really determine whether or not we are successful.

It is not so much whether the numbers that are put on the table after this meeting at the White House, which hopefully will be successful, is arrived at that say, yes, there is a balance by the year 2002; it is not so much those numbers that are important, it is the programmatic activity that underlies that.

In this area, the core issue is the issue of entitlement spending. Entitlement spending are those programs which people have a right to have the Federal Government spend money on them because of their physical situation, their financial situation, because of their situation in their lifestyle. Those entitlement programs are the core problem that is driving the Federal debt.

In fact, in the year 2015, all the revenues of the Federal Government will be absorbed by the entitlement programs. We will not have any money to spend on national defense or cleaning up the environment or having better schools. We will be spending everything just on entitlement programs.

So the issue of whether or not we are going to bring under control Federal spending and whether or not we are going to be able to pass to our children and this country a fiscally solvent one versus one that is bankrupt, and whether our children will have an opportunity for prosperity really comes down to how we address these entitlement programs during this process.

In doing that, I think we can score the activities by looking at a few specifics. If the proposal that comes out of the agreements or the discussions which are now going on with the White House—assuming there is a proposal; and I certainly hope there will be—but if such a proposal does not aggressively and affirmatively address those entitlement programs, then it will be essentially a facade, and we will have accomplished little. The pain that these Federal employees are going through subject to the continuing resolution failure will be for naught, and how can we know whether or not there has been substantive change or substantive action taken on the entitlement programs.

Let me lay down a few benchmarks that I think we should look at. There are three basic programs that we are talking about here: Medicare, Medicaid, and welfare reform.

In the Medicare accounts, clearly there has to be a new way to deliver services. There has to be more opportunity for competition. Our senior citizens have to be given more choices, more opportunity to go out in the marketplace, like their kids today, and be able to purchase services other than just what is known as fee for service. Thus, any reform that comes out of this process must involve the use and the utilization of marketplace forces in a very aggressive way. It must allow seniors to do as their children are doing today, which is to opt into other types of health care delivery, whether it happens to be an HMO, a PPO, or a group of doctors, or a PSO, which is another form of doctors and hospitals practicing together. Those various options must be made available to our seniors. And I hope that in any resolution of this matter—it must have that type of a choice program in it, a real choice program, and it cannot be just what we presently have in our Medicare system, which is basically an illusory choice program.

You can also look at the Medicare reform effort and determine whether or not it is real by what the rate of the premium payment is. If we go back to a 25-percent rate of premium as being the part B premium borne by senior citizens, then we will know that basically there has been a sellout, that nothing has really happened.

The fact is that 31.5 percent is what is needed as the part of the part B premium to be paid by seniors if we are going to have a solvent trust fund. Seniors cannot expect that the Medicare trust fund will remain solvent if they are going to ask their children to basically subsidize, at an ever-growing rate, the cost of the part B premium.

The seniors cannot expect the Medicare system to remain solvent. Seniors have to be willing to pay their fair share. By paying their fair share and maintaining the premium at 31.5 percent is clearly a core test issue.

Another test is whether or not there are copayments, especially whether or not we have a situation where, on the part B premium, people with high incomes are required to pay the full cost of the premium. Today, we have the top 500 of retirees from IBM last year being subsidized by the folks who are working at the restaurant, down at Joe and Mary's Diner or at the local gas station, and it is not right, it is not fair. They are being subsidized to the extent of almost 68.5 percent, the cost of their part B premium, and that is not correct.

So any reform that comes out of this agreement has to have some sort of understanding that high-income individuals will bear the full cost of their part B premium.

In the Medicaid accounts, it is very obvious that Medicaid has not worked the way it was supposed to. Nor has welfare. If we are going to make them work effectively, we have to give the States the flexibility to run the programs and to initiate original and imaginative approaches to running the programs. We have to end this huge drainoff of funds which is going into bureaucracy instead of going into care in the area of Medicaid and going into direct support in the area of welfare.

Today, I think it is less than 40 cents of every welfare dollar actually gets to the recipient. The rest goes to overhead. In most States, the administrative costs represent about 15 percent of what the operating costs are of a program. So the difference between those two numbers is what States feel they can have available to address the needs of people versus ending up funding bureaucracies.

So any program that is going to effectively address the outyear drivers of our budget problems, specifically the entitlement programs, must address the fact that Medicaid and welfare must be decoupled from the entitlement train and be returned to the States to be operated as States' programs with the flexibility being given to the State governments where there is as much compassion as in Washington to deliver these services to the less needy and to the more needy individuals.

So these are some of the tests of whether or not we will reach an agreement which is real versus one that is illusory, and in looking at any balanced budget agreement, it is essential that we look at those tests because it is essential that we have an agreement that is real.

I thank the Chair for his courtesy and yield back my remaining time.

Mr. GLENN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). The Senator from Ohio.

HOSTAGE TAKING IS NOT PRETTY

Mr. GLENN. Mr. President, let me join with those who complimented Senator DOLE for taking the leadership yesterday in sending a clean continuing resolution to provide Government funding over to the House. I not only want to compliment Senator DOLE, I also want to compliment all the Republicans on their side of the aisle in the Senate because Senator DOLE made that proposal, knowing full well that he had unanimous consent, or he would not have made it. So I want to not only congratulate him but also the Republicans on the other side who I feel are

working in good faith trying to bring this to an end.

Yesterday afternoon, I was making a couple of notes for some remarks on the floor this morning. I was going to start out by talking about hostage taking, how it is never pretty and it is always unfair. The innocents are penalized for something they had nothing to do with. I was not aware at that time of what the lead editorial in the Washington Post was going to be today. They say ''The Government as Stage Prop.''

They start out saying almost the same words:

> Hostage-taking is an ugly business. It doesn't matter what the cause. Innocent people are seized and used as pawns; they become political trading stamps whose welfare is exchanged for things the hostage-taker could not win by normal means. That, even more than the mindlessness, the waste (in the supposed cause of economy in government), the inconvenience and the instances of outright harm to unpaid workers and unserved citizens alike, is what is finally wrong with the current Government shutdown.

I will not read the rest of the editorial. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD at the end of my remarks, along with another enclosure.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. GLENN. Mr. President, innocents are being penalized for something with which they had nothing to do. Congress protects its own income, of course. We do not give up any of the $133,600 a year, but for those making $33,000 a year, it makes all the difference in the world, and this because one small group thinks that they, and only they, have the wisdom on how this Government should go and that they can dictate the future of this Nation.

We elect 535 people to the Congress of the United States, and what a charade it is that just a small group thinks that they can shut down everything and bring such pressure that the rest of Government, everyone else who is elected to Government will give in and say, ''OK, this is getting so bad that we give in to your unfair tactics.''

Why do we get into this mess? Let us go back just a few years and see what happened. Let us go back to the history. Let us ''go to the tape,'' as they say on the sports broadcasts.

Did Democratic problems contribute to some of the situation we are in now? Why, of course it did. Back some years ago, we had an economy that was not as well managed as it should have been. We wound up at one time with 21-percent interest rates and 17-percent inflation rates, and that lead to what was called the ''Reagan revolution.'' That revolution came in with an experiment in supply-side economics, as it was called then, that did not work, and we can show that.

In the years 1981, 1982 and 1983, we cut taxes by 25 percent—5 percent the first year, 10 percent the second year, 10 percent the third year. This was supposed to result in more investment and such an increase in the economy of this country that new revenues were going to more than make up the losses from those tax cuts.

It flat did not work. When it started, we had, from George Washington through to the end of the administration of Jimmy Carter, $1 trillion in national debt. What do we have now? In the few short years since that experiment in supply-side economics, we have seen the debt skyrocket. We have added $3.9 trillion—$3.9 trillion—in the last few years. It will be just a short time until we hit a total debt of some $5 trillion.

Entitlement growth has contributed to that, of course. Were we prompt in taking action to slow some of these things down, in Medicare, Medicaid, and welfare? No, we probably were not. But does that mean we dump the whole of the programs and just stop Government now?

I know from talking personally with President Clinton on a trip he made to Ohio that first priority of the new administration was get control of the economy. Otherwise, all the other things would not be possible.

What did he do? He came out with a program then, and it was a program that has had considerable success, in spite of the fact it seems to be mentioned only rarely these days. About half of it came in cuts in programs and about half of it came in some tax restoration, to restore some of those tax cuts that had happened under the Reagan administration and went too far. President Clinton, to his everlasting credit, had the fortitude to go ahead and make some changes in those programs and restore some of the tax rate that could bring us back into balance.

We remember that day on the Senate floor very well in the summer of 1993. When the effort was made to pass the Clinton program, we had complete opposition on the other side, both in the Senate and in the House. It was a very dramatic moment when the Vice President, sitting as President of the Senate, broke the 50–50 tie and put the administration's program into effect.

Now, every single Republican Member of the House and every single Republican Member of the Senate voted against that proposal to move toward a balanced budget. Every single one. There were no cries then about the balanced budget and so on. It was a complete stonewalling of the President's efforts to get us headed toward a balanced budget. Did it work, or did it not work in the ensuing years, since 1993? Let us look at the record.

At the time the President made his proposal and at the time that we voted the program in, the budget deficit, per year, was running right at $300 billion. Last year, what was the record? The program was working. The budget deficit went down to $246 billion per year.

Last year, the record is that it went down to $162 billion. So we were on the right path—without any major revolution, without dumping whole programs of Government. We were tailoring them back.

I know from my own personal experience, because I was chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee and I was assigned billions of dollars to cut back on programs that did not have that big a budget, and we did it. It was tough and we made some very, very tough decisions at that time. That was opposed by every single Republican Member of the Congress, in the Senate and in the House. They said, ''We cannot restore any of those tax cuts. We cannot come up with any tax increase at all.'' That was the rationale for most of the opposition.

Well, it did work. We have been on a track down where the budget deficit has been declining in each one of those years. Where was the Republican interest in the balanced budget? Did anybody ever say a good thing on this floor about what was happening as a result of those tough votes we made in the summer of 1993?

We need to keep going with those reductions. I agree with that. It has leveled off somewhat. Some of the predictions indicate that it will be $150 to $200 billion as far as the eye can see. So we need to make an effort to keep cutting those down and do it not by some great revolution but by the evolution that has been successfully started.

It is said that we have to transfer all these responsibilities to the States. Some should be transferred to the States; I agree with that. But I also say that these proposals to shut down the Government are not affecting only Federal employees, as has been pointed out on the floor here this morning, they also impact the people on welfare, children, the poor, and the care for the elderly.

Here are a few examples of how the people of this country are being impacted, and this is not just Government employees, as important as that may be.

We have some 54,000 Federal employees in the State of Ohio. All of those are not affected by this, but I will use that figure. I do not have a breakdown on how many exactly are impacted. We cannot get information because the appropriate offices that would provide that information are closed down.

These Federal employees are important to us in Ohio. But, Mr. President, regarding care for the elderly, 600,000 elderly Americans face the potential of losing their services of Meals On Wheels, transportation, and personal care provided by the Department of Health and Human Services, if a CR is not passed this week. This covers protection and services for children, unemployment insurance, securities markets, and so many other areas that are affecting every single American, not just the Federal employees, right now.

So what we need to do is say to our colleagues over in the House that ''enough is enough,'' as the majority

leader has said. Enough is enough, and it is time that we got on with not only putting Federal employees back to work but rendering the services that the American people expect and are paying for and should have.

Over in the House, the Speaker has said that the crown jewel is the tax cut. That comes out of Medicare, as I see it, some $270 billion. They say you cannot equate that. If you cannot equate it directly from Medicare to the tax cut, that means we are borrowing $245 billion to give a tax cut. We are borrowing the money to give a tax cut. I disagree with President Clinton's proposal on a lesser tax cut, also. I do not believe any tax cut at this time is necessary. Borrowing to give tax cuts is pure folly, as I see it.

The social fabric of this Nation should not be changed by a revolution dictated by a few, but by evolution, slower change, which lets people adapt, whether it be the elderly, children, the sick, the poor, those who need Medicaid. To just throw this back to the States and say that we will give you a bag of money, but we are going to put a much greater increase on requirements that you have to comply with, makes the biggest mockery of the unfunded mandates legislation we passed earlier this year than I can possibly think of. So we are giving them responsibilities, a little bit of money, and saying, ''Good luck to you.''

Mr. President, I think we need a clean CR, again, that the House will accept. We have narrowed this down to where it is time that the House of Representatives and their group of diehards gave in a little bit and decide that we can negotiate these changes and put the Government back to work.

I yield the floor.

EXHIBIT 1

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 3, 1996]

THE GOVERNMENT AS STAGE PROP

Hostage-taking is an ugly business. It doesn't matter what the cause. Innocent people are seized and used as pawns; they become political trading stamps whose welfare is exchanged for things the hostage-taker could not win by normal means. That, even more than the mindlessness, the waste (in the supposed cause of economy in government), the inconvenience and the instances of outright harm to unpaid workers and unserved citizens alike, is what is finally wrong with the current government shutdown.

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole was trying again last night to find the formula to reopen temporarily. Good for him; it's the right position; and he takes it at a certain cost. Speaker Newt Gingrich said it would be ''very hard'' to find the necessary votes in the House without a budget agreement. Does he really lack the power to produce such a limited result? Sen. Phil Gramm, meanwhile, one of Sen. Dole's rivals for the Republican presidential nomination, spoke for the vaudeville wing of the party. He is one of those who, over the years, have found it convenient to make almost a cartoon of the federal government.

It's a straw-man style of politics. First you portray the awful thing, then you run against it, and no matter if the portrayal bears scant relation to the reality. ''I do think we've discovered one thing,'' he said on television Sunday, ''and that is, Have you missed the government? I mean, doesn't it strike you funny that 280,000 government employees are furloughed, large segments of the government are shut down? I think this proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that we need to go back and eliminate 150,000 to 200,000 bureaucratic positions.'' Mr. Gramm and others thus use the government as a stage prop. Rather than make the decisions they ought to be making—ought in fact to have made weeks ago—both parties are using it, or the lack of it, to score political points and gain leverage in the underlying budget talks, even as they also scramble to avoid the blame for the spectacle they have jointly achieved. We have a suggestion for them. They ought to reopen the closed agencies while they talk, since in fact they do finally seem to be talking. It's a nasty game, the shutdown, and it's gone on long enough.

EFFECTS OF THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN, TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 1996

Congressional Republicans, by refusing to approve funds even for the short term, are forcing a continued shutdown of the government. The continuing shutdown is causing increasingly severe hardships for millions of Americans who: depend on government services; serve the public as federal employees and contractors; and are impacted by the economic spin-off effects of reduced government activity.

EFFECTS OF THE CONTINUING SHUTDOWN ON AVERAGE AMERICANS

Care for the elderly: 600,000 elderly Americans face the potential of losing their services of ''Meals on Wheels,'' transportation and personal care provided by HHS if a CR is not passed this week.

Protection and services for children: As of today, states will lose $74 million in quarterly grants for discretionary child protection programs, which help states respond to more than 2.5 million reported cases of child maltreatment each year. In addition, the Federal Parent Locator Service, to which 20,000 child support cases per day on average are referred, is closed.

Unemployment insurance: By the end of this week, 11 states (plus DC and the VI) will have exhausted Federal funds for administering the unemployment insurance program (New Jersey, Alabama, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Kansas, Alaska, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Utah, New Mexico). In order to keep unemployment offices open, states will have to fill the gap with their own funds. Otherwise, unemployment offices would have to close and benefit payments would cease. Kansas has already closed its unemployment office.

Securities markets: The SEC's funds are expected to be exhausted by the end of next week, causing delays in review of an estimated three-fourths of pending and new SEC filings for the month of January. A delay in review of filings for initial public offerings, mergers and acquisitions, and filings for new debt or stock offerings would eventually impact the flow of corporate financing and capital formation.

Home-buyers: Each day of the shutdown, the Federal Housing Administration cannot process 2,500 home purchase loans and refinancings ($200 million of mortgage loans) for moderate- and low-income working families.

Protection of workers: Since the start of the shutdown, over 1,000 workplace safety complaints have gone unanswered and 3,500 investigations involving pension, health and other employee benefit plans have been suspended.

Environmental protection: All EPA non-Superfund civil environmental enforcement actions have stopped, costing $3 million a day in fines or injunctive relief against polluters; and as of today, up to 32 Superfund cleanups will be shut down.

District of Columbia: The December 22 CR expires tomorrow which will continue the uncertainty over how DC can continue to operate its services.

Passports: Each day, the State Department can't process 23,000 applications for passports that it would normally receive.

Programs for Native Americans: The Bureau of Indian Affairs cannot make general assistance payments due to about 53,000 Indian families and individuals, or to guardians and foster families that care for about 3,000 Indian children.

Veterans: While the December 22 CR provided funding for certain benefits and payments, it expires tomorrow; consequently, contractors providing services and supplies to hospitals will not be paid, and benefits for January will not be paid on February 1 in the absence of a CR. In addition, approximately 170,000 veterans did not receive their December Montgomery GI Bill education benefits and will not receive benefits in January. Funding has also lapsed for processing veterans' claims for educational and rehabilitation counseling, and enabling veterans to obtain VA guaranteed home loans.

Small businesses: Each day of the shutdown, over 260 small businesses are not receiving SBA-guaranteed financing; and 1,200 small business owners are not receiving SBA-sponsored training and counseling normally available to them.

National parks/forests and related businesses: Each day, an average of 383,000 people cannot visit National Parks. Potential per day losses for businesses in communities adjacent to National Parks could reach $14 million, due to reduced recreational tourism.

Foreign visitors: Each day, the State Department cannot issue 20,000 visas to visitors, who normally spend an average of $3,000 on their trips.

Export promotion: On an average day—export licenses with a value of $30.5 million that would otherwise have been approved by the Bureau of Export Administration will not be acted upon; more than $92 million in sales of U.S. products are blocked due to inability to process license applications; and more than 2,500 telephone calls and faxes from U.S. businesses seeking export information are not being answered.

EFFECTS ON FEDERAL WORKERS

Due to Congress' failure to approve short-term funds, beginning last Friday, December 29, about three-quarters-of-a-million Federal employees have received only half their usual pay.

They received pay for December 10 to 15, but not December 16 to 23.

Unless the Congress approves funding by late this week, emergency and furloughed employees will not receive pay for the current pay period on time (i.e., next week).

480,000 emergency workers are working, and the government is obligated to pay them, but they can't be paid until Congress approves funds to end the shutdown (includes federal law enforcement officials, prison guards, and nurses at Veterans Hospitals).

280,000 non-emergency workers are currently furloughed and not being paid (and have no guarantee they will receive back pay unless Congress acts to approve back pay).

Mr. COATS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana is recognized.

DO WHAT IS RIGHT FOR AMERICA

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I was elected to Congress in 1980. I took office in January 1981. At that time, during that election, there was some view that it was a major election. Ronald Reagan was elected President, and a number of changes took place that were viewed then as historic. Republicans took control of the U.S. Senate for the first time since 1954. Republicans did not take control of the House of Representatives but in a sense they gained working control because they elected a significant number of new Members and, joining with conservative Democrats, they formed a working majority that passed some very significant legislation.

One of the primary issues, if not the primary issue, of that election year and the agenda that was proposed and adopted in part during that 95th Congress was the whole question that we are debating here today and this year, which is, what is the size of Government? What is the scope of Government? Is Government too big? Does it try to do too much? Does it overregulate, overspend, overtax? What is the proper role of Government?

David Stockman, then Director of the Office of Management and Budget for then President Reagan, proposed a plan to begin to trim back some of the spending of Government. There was an outcry from the American people. It was the issue of the year. When we compare what was then proposed with the magnitude of the problem then versus what is proposed today and the magnitude of the problem today, it is seen as a very, very minor, almost inconsequential, proposal, in retrospect.

That debate, in one form or another, has been taking place now for the past decade and a half. In a growing sense of frustration, I think the American people are viewing the Congress as incapable of really addressing the fundamental core issues, of really doing something that makes a difference. I do not know how many times we have promised a balanced budget through plans that have been offered by Members from both sides, by both parties. But it was said, ''This is the plan that will balance the budget.''

We had, of course, the 1981 and 1982 legislation. We had the 1983 Social Security legislation, which is probably the closest we came to making a policy change that substantially made a difference in the way we spend money. We had the 1986 agreement, the 1988 agreement, the 1993 agreement. Each agreement, Members stood on the floor and said this will do the job. We have finally stepped up to the plate, and we have done what the American people have asked us to do. We go home and campaign on it. This is the real balanced budget. Gramm–Latta I, Gramm–Latta II—we have been through it all. There is plenty of blame to spread as to why this was not accomplished.

The Senator from Ohio talked about tax cuts that were proposed and those were attempts to address the question of more and more hard-earned money from those who are in the work force being siphoned off to Government—whether Federal, State, local, or sales tax, or excise tax, or whatever—and also an attempt to dry up the supply of money coming from taxes, to try to slow down the spending. We can argue whether that was proper strategy or not.

I do not think anybody would argue the fact that we have seen the national debt accelerate from a $1 trillion level when I came to Congress in 1981, to nearly $5 trillion level, a 500-percent increase in just this short decade and a half, that the solution would have been $4 trillion of additional taxes out of the American taxpayers pockets. I do not think anybody is advocating that as the solution.

So now here we are with this ever-accelerating frustration on the part of the American people, cynicism, apathy, distrust of this institution's ability to successfully address this problem. Here we are, now, in 1995, having spent this last year primarily attempting to address this question.

We had, again, what many would call a historic election in 1994. As the American people exercised their frustration with the status quo, their frustration with the way that the Congress was addressing the question, the fundamental question, of what the role of Government is and its ever-expanded expenditure that was placing our Nation's economic future in jeopardy and, I think, violated the basic moral responsibility that many people feel we have, and that is to not continue to pass on debt for the enjoyment of expenditures, the utilization of expenditures for our own enjoyment in the present, paid for by someone else's earnings in the future.

I argue that there is an economic necessity for our getting hold of this ever-accelerating rate of growth in the Government and that there is a moral requirement placed on each of us to do what I think each of us knows is the right thing to do, and that is not to enjoy the benefits of this society that the Federal Government can provide to us in the form of payments and benefits to the extent that it places an extraordinary debt load and obligation on the future. That is one of the most basic principles of life: Delaying gratification so that you do the things that are necessary now to provide for a better result in the future. We have robbed our children of this lesson. We have demonstrated to them, I think, a great irresponsibility in terms of the way in which we handle our Nation's finances.

Now, all of this came to a head early on when we debated the balanced budget amendment, because many of us stood here and argued, having gone through all this statutory process, this process of will, if we just work hard enough with it we are able to deal with this problem; having gone through that several times and failed miserably, that only a constitutional mandate to balance the budget would accomplish what we were seeking to accomplish.

That was supported, largely by Republicans but also by a significant number of Democrats, and failed by one vote. It was the greatest disappointment of my time in Congress to lose that by one vote, because as I spoke here, I said I doubt that we will ever have on a sustained basis the will to do what is fiscally responsible on a year-after-year basis, because the political requirement, or at least the political temptation to please constituents now and worry about paying for it in the future is so great that it will continue to drive us toward providing more and more benefits and less and less personal responsibility in terms of asking people to pay for those benefits in the here and now.

Because the Government has the ability to float debt and postpone repayment of those obligations, the political temptation to sort of please those people you represent now so that you can get elected at the next election and worry about repayment of that or putting the hard questions before the people we represent, that is always deferred.

Now, in 1994 I think that frustration, as I said, boiled over. We had a dramatic change in the representation in the House of Representatives and, I think, a very strong mandate from the American people that they wanted something different than the status quo. They wanted the real thing. In response to many who said, ''Well, I'm not voting for this balanced budget because it doesn't have an exception for this, an exception for that, and, besides, we shouldn't have to rely on the Constitution to make us do what we know is right. We should have the will to do it ourselves. So let's forget the mandatory constitutional requirement and let's go forward by exercising our own personal will and do what we know is right.'' That is what the attempt has been all this year.

Here we are. Now it is 1996. We were not able do that in 1995. We are arguing over small numbers and details and large numbers and details, but we are not focusing our efforts on the core concepts.

The Senator from New Hampshire came down here a few moments ago and redirected our attention back to what I think are the basics, what should be the basics of this debate. Instead of focusing on those basics, we are focusing on whether or not a Federal employee should be paid for work that they are doing now, whether they should be held hostage to this process, what the impact is on people and their families, and that impact is real. However, it does not address the core debate.

Mr. President, it seems to me our options are somewhat limited at this point. We can talk about this endlessly and posture and get spins out of the White House and spins out of Congress.

This can go on and on and on and on, or we can simply say, ''Look, there is a basic principle involved here. We all know it requires major policy changes, or we will just simply be back here 2 years from now arguing the same thing.''

We all know, as the Senator from New Hampshire said, unless we address the three basic programs of Medicare, Medicaid, and welfare reform and change policies that drive that spending and decouple the entitlement from the automatic spending train, we will not have achieved success in balancing the budget. I think everybody understands and knows that. Yet, we are now addressing that or focusing on that question.

I do not know what the solution is, Mr. President. Maybe it is to require that the President of the United States, the leader of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House be sent to Dayton, locked up at Wright Patterson Air Force Base—as were the Bosnian factions, leaders of the Bosnian warring factions; they have been at war with each other for 600 years, and being locked up at Dayton produced a result most thought would not happen—perhaps locking up the three leaders of our Government in Dayton, cutting off and saying, ''No Larry King, you cannot read any newspapers, you cannot take any polls, you cannot watch the television, you cannot go to Hilton Head to play golf, and you cannot go to New Hampshire and campaign until you do what is right for America,'' maybe that is the solution. I do not know.

Doing what is right for America is what ought to be driving us in this debate. I think we all know what is right for this economy and what is right for the President and what is right for the future. I think we all know or we should know that unless we address these fundamental changes in the way in which this Government spends money and we put some restraint and control on that, we will not succeed and we will be back here arguing the same thing.

I regret the Federal workers are out of work. There are a lot of people out of work. AT&T just announced they are going to lay off 40,000 people, so it is not just the Federal workers. In defense of the House Republicans, they are using the only leverage they have against the President. It has not worked very well because the President's spin has captured the headlines and their spin—the Republican House has not captured headlines with that.

I have probably gone over my time. I appreciate the patience of the Chair and my colleagues. I will have more to say about this later, but I do think we ought to focus on the basic issues and I do think, despite what the polls say and despite what the phone calls say, we ought to do what we believe is right for America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

THE IRRESPONSIBLE COURSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, today we are in the 19th day of the longest Government shutdown in the Nation's history. Let me begin, as others have here today, by commending the majority leader for his action yesterday in bringing to a vote, here in the Senate, a continuing resolution to restore funding for the ongoing operation of the Government. I frankly regret that it took us 18 days to have that continuing resolution brought to the Senate floor. But, regardless, I was very pleased to see that action by the majority leader yesterday. I also commend all Senators for agreeing to the passage of the continuing resolution. I think we all know that under Senate rules, any Senator could have objected and could have kept that measure from passing in yesterday's session. It says something about the merits of this issue, this issue of the Government shutdown, that every single Senator agreed to allow that bill to pass.

Today, the House of Representatives will have to decide whether it, too, will pass the continuing resolution that we passed yesterday in the Senate, whether it will pass that resolution so it can be signed by the President and so that funding can be restored to the Government or, in the alternative, whether the House of Representatives will continue in what I believe is the irresponsible course that it has pursued, now, for several weeks.

Since this second shutdown of the Government began, I have spoken three times on the Senate floor. Each time I have denounced the refusal of the Congress to fund the Government as irresponsible. I have denounced it as being an abuse of power by the Congress and an abrogation of responsibility by the majority here in Congress. I believe very strongly that the Founding Fathers who wrote the Constitution expected more responsible conduct by the later generations who would serve in this Congress. I believe very strongly that the American people deserve more responsible conduct by their elected officials.

But I will not repeat today all the arguments that I made in the previous days. Instead, what I want to say today is that today, each Member of the House of Representatives should be given the opportunity to vote on whether or not to restore funding for the normal operation of Government. Let the people's elected Representatives vote on whether they believe that Government should be shut down or we should restore that funding.

I saw the Speaker of the House made a statement yesterday that he did not know whether the votes were there, in the House, and he doubted that the votes were there in the House to pass the continuing resolution that we passed here in the Senate. It is very simple to determine that. Just put the question to a vote. Let each Member come on the floor of the House and cast his or her vote and answer to his or her constituents for that vote.

The people's elected Representatives need to decide whether the Congress should continue to withhold funds needed to process student loans for this next semester of school. They need to decide whether it is proper for Congress to keep the campgrounds and monuments and visitors centers closed in our national forests and our national parks. They need to decide whether they want to continue withholding funds that are needed to process the 23,000 passport applications that are received each day by the State Department, that were received yesterday, that will be received again today. And they need to vote on whether the Congress wants to withhold one-half of the pay of three-quarters of a million Federal workers or, in fact, withhold the pay of that entire group, entirely, for the month of January—which I understand will be the case unless some continuing resolution is passed.

People deserve to know how their elected Representatives stand on these issues. I know the response that some Republican House Members will give. They will refuse to vote for funding the Government and explain their position by invoking their earnest desire to get to a balanced budget. So let me respond to that just very briefly.

First of all, the issue of whether Congress shares with the President the obligation of maintaining the functioning of Government is a separate question from whether we ought to commit ourselves to reach a balanced budget at some future date. I believe strongly that the Congress does share that obligation to maintain a functioning Government and it is not an obligation that can be ducked by Members of Congress by simply changing the subject.

A second point is the obvious one that we are not going to bring the budget into balance this year. Nobody has stated that we could bring the budget into balance this year. The Speaker of the House has not claimed that, Senator DOLE does not claim that, President Clinton has not claimed that. If everything works perfectly, the best that we could hope for is that if the Government takes certain steps during the next 7 years, and if the economy acts in certain ways during the next 7 years, that that combined result will get us to a balanced budget in the year 2002. So, those Congressmen and Senators, previously Senators, who insist on keeping the Government shut until the Government gets to a balanced budget will have a long time to wait.

Congress meets every year. We pass new budget bills every year. We pass new appropriations bills every year. None of what we do around here is chiseled in granite. All of it is subject to change during this next 7 years. So we need to get on with our business. And part of our business and part of our responsibility is to restore funding for the normal functioning of Government.