

In September it was reported that Speaker GINGRICH was at it again, continuing his threats. And he says, and I quote, "I don't care what the price is. I don't care if we have no executive offices and no bonds for 30 days, not at this time."

Again the quote. "I don't care what the price is." That says it all, does it not?

Well, Speaker GINGRICH may not care what the price is because he is not the one who is going to be asked to pay. The price of a government shutdown and government default will fall squarely on the shoulders of middle class families in this Nation. When the Speaker gets his wish and the government shuts down, the Speaker will keep his job, he will keep his pay, but over 800,000 Federal workers will not.

When the government defaults on its financial obligations, again the Speaker will have his book royalties to cushion that blow, but millions of middle class families will pay the price in higher mortgage payments, in higher car payments, and in higher credit card payments. The blame for this manufactured crisis should fall squarely on the shoulders of NEWT GINGRICH and not on the shoulders of middle class families in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the President is right to say no to a budget that calls for higher Medicare payments for seniors. As a matter of fact, on January 1, it will be a 25 percent increase for this Nation's seniors, higher college tuitions for students and their parents, and higher taxes for working middle-class families. This is not an agenda that the American people support; and, in fact, it appears the public never did support this kind of agenda.

Mr. Speaker, for months Republicans have been promoting their Contract With America by saying that more than 60 percent of the American public supported its policies. However, we find out from last Friday that they had a political consultant whose name is Frank Luntz, and he claimed he tested all of these policies. In fact, what he did, and he was forced to admit this last week, that he actually only polled and talked to the American public about slogans. About 10 slogans.

So it turns out that the Gingrich revolution is built on the 10 most popular slogans that the Republicans could find. It had nothing to do with programs. There was no testing of how Americans would feel about cutting \$270 billion from Medicare, of increasing the payments for senior citizens and cutting student loans. It is no wonder that the bumper sticker government of the new majority has worn thin with the American public.

All the sloganeering will not hide the devastating cuts to seniors, to students and to middle class families in this country. And, in fact, what is happening today is the more that the American public understands the nature of this program, the more they did like the Gingrich revolution. As a matter of

fact, on Friday, in USA Today, public opposition to the Contract With America was affirmed. Sixty percent of those polled want President Clinton to veto the Republican budget as it stands. More specifically, 75 percent oppose the GOP's Medicare cuts and 74 percent oppose the GOP's student loan cuts.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say that the Republicans have lost public support for these policies, so now what they have done is resorted to blackmailing the President to get him to sign this extreme budget. That is what this is all about. But I will tell my colleagues that the President is standing with the American people in opposition to these policies.

To my Republican colleagues I say, if they want the President to sign their budget, make changes, do not make threats. If they want him to sign the budget, lessen the blow to senior citizens, to our children and to middle class families. The President wants to work with the Republicans, Democrats in this House want to work with them, but we will not be blackmailed into accepting a budget that the American people oppose.

Instead of rewriting history, please, I say to my Republican colleagues, rewrite your budget, do not hold a gun to the President's head, particularly do not hold a gun and do not hold the American people hostage in this next 24 hours.

#### CONGRESS HAS FAILED IN ITS BUDGETARY MANDATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida [Ms. BROWN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, joining me for my 5 minutes is the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON.

Mr. Speaker, I received a telephone call Thursday from one of my constituents, one of my veterans, a disabled veteran, and he was very concerned as to whether or not his benefits would be cut or whether or not he would receive them on time.

I am very upset that the Republican leadership in this House is upsetting my constituents. Can we discuss how we got to this point with this 104th Congress?

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me say to the gentlewoman from Florida that this is a plan that has been of long standing and of long coming. If we check back through the papers, on April 3, in the Washington Times, Mr. GINGRICH boasted that the President will veto a number of things and then we will put them all on the debt ceiling, and then he will decide how big a crisis he wants.

Now, that is April 3, back when he stated that the strategy was to create a titanic legislative standoff with President Clinton by adding vetoed

bills to a must-pass legislation, increasing the national debt ceiling.

I am not sure that that is anything that just started today or the last 24 or 48 hours. That has been the plan for a long time.

Then June 5, in Time magazine, Mr. GINGRICH was quoted as saying, "He can run the parts of the government," speaking of the President, "that are left after the Republican budget cuts or he can run no government. Which of the two of us do you think worries more about government not showing up?"

Now, that is the message that Mr. GINGRICH was sending to a number of senior citizens and to a number of children and working families, and that was in Time magazine June 5.

Then, in the Washington Post on September 22, the stated, "I do not care what the price is, I do not care if we have no Executive offices and no bonds for 30 days. Not this time."

I do not think that is responsible, but I am quoting that directly from these publications.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentlewoman from Texas that in August I conducted a series of town meetings, and in one of my meetings we had a joint discussion with another Member from Florida, and he indicated in the August meeting that they were prepared to shut this Government down if the President did not go along with their extreme agenda.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Well, I do think it is extreme when we decide that our senior citizens must pay, even against the American people's will, much more now for their premiums when it really is not necessary except to give that tax break that has been promised for the most wealthy people of the Nation.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. If we look at our history, the Congress has one duty, my understanding, and that is to pass the appropriation bills. Does the gentlewoman know when those bills are due?

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Well, of course the bills are due by midnight September 30, because the new fiscal year starts October 1. Clearly, that has not been done. Yet, the votes are here in this body for the Speaker to get his will, but they have not passed.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Does the gentlewoman recall that we had that hundred days and all that charade? And how many bills have we passed in the 104th as compared to our class, the 103d?

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. I do not know, but I can tell my colleague there has been a lot of them. And we have had a lot more votes. We have worked a whole lot more hours and a lot longer days than we worked the session before, but we were completed with our business on time.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. I think that this Congress has passed two appropriation bills, and my understanding is

that we have to pass 13. In fact, if we had done our work then, we would not be in this crisis mode tonight.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. I think what the American people are reacting to is the extremism, the extremes which these bills contain, and that is why we are having such difficulty bringing them to finality. When we decide that our children need no protection in the water or in the food or the air, and our seniors or working families or any of the American people, that is extreme.

#### THE EFFECTS OF THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to dialogue 5 minutes with my colleague. Would my colleague continue her remarks?

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Yes, I am very concerned as to this contract. The Republicans talked about the Contract With America. I have often said it was a contract on America. A contract on the elderly people, a contract on the children, a contract on the poor people.

□ 1915

This reverse Robin Hood, robbing from the working people and the poor people to give to the rich.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they have offered up provisions in this Contract With America that they could not pass in the Senate. I have always been so very proud of being a Member of the House. I served 10 years in the Florida House and 2 years here, and I have always been proud of the fact that the House deliberates, we have hearings.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can thank God for the other body who just do not take up this work, this sometimes trashy work this House has produced, and pass it on.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. I served in both the Texas House and the Texas Senate, and I have never been in a position where I could say that I did everything the way I wanted it to be done, but what I can say is that everyone had an opportunity to be heard, to call witnesses, and then there was a fair vote.

Very, very frequently, I got a part of what I wanted, others got parts of what they wanted. But in the end, it was a piece that was made up of input and one that we could say that a clear majority wanted. It was called compromising, negotiating, agreeing, and then a majority win.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that that will work in any deliberative body, but without that, it cannot. Here I am not even sure we are listening, because poll after poll, and then finally last week's local elections, have demonstrated the growing level of opposition to the Medicare and Medicaid cuts and the education cuts, which are not popular, but no one is listening.

This budget is being held hostage in order to impose higher Medicare premiums on seniors. This is not what the public wants. This is a body of, by, and for the people. This is a democracy, but nobody is listening; at least the ones who are trying to ram their ideas through are really not listening.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that the Republicans really are interested in negotiating, despite these weak complaints about the Democrats. The Republican leadership has demonstrated no sincere interest in negotiating. If there was interest in negotiating, we would use the proper procedures. We would simply not load up these simple resolutions with all of the legislation for the entire session to be in them.

It is not fair. It is not right. It is not according to anyone's procedure. It is heavy-handed. It is insulting, and it is ignoring the wishes of the American people.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. One thing I have learned from the Republicans is: He who has the gold makes the rules. It is like if you invite someone over to your house to play cards and you change the rules each step of the way, that is what we are experiencing here. The Republicans change the rules to fit whatever they are trying to do at that moment.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Clearly, this has been a long-time strategy; one that I really could not believe that we would have persons in the kind of responsible positions as we have planning this shutdown longer than 6 months ago, planning to ramrod unpopular ideas and policies that will hurt the majority of the American people in simple resolutions, simply because we have not completed our work.

If these are policies that ought to stand, they ought to stand without being loaded into these simple resolutions. We should be able to work those out. We should be able to allow the resolutions to go forward clean, and then come to the negotiating table.

This is simply a technique, in my opinion, to pull the President into a fight, where he has clearly stated that using the proper procedure for negotiating is acceptable, but he will not be hoodwinked into attempting to negotiate by allowing these higher premiums to go in and all these protections to be removed from our air, food, and water.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Do we have a final word for our constituents as to what is going on in Washington and what they should do? I suggest that they call their Congresspeople and let them know how they feel about how they are wasting taxpayers' dollars by furloughing people, by shutting down the Government.

CONGRESS SHOULD COME TOGETHER AND SERVE AMERICA WELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARR). Under a previous order of the

House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, in a time of crisis, one wonders where is that forceful leadership of the majority? Where is the forceful leadership of the Speaker? I tell my colleagues where they are. They are playing a dangerous game of chicken. Mr. Speaker, I say to them, shame on you for doing that.

In particular, in a state of crisis and emergency, Medicare and Medicaid should not be played as pawns and toys in the hands of people who want to force their way. I say they need to find new toys and new games to play and not force these kinds of unacceptable views on the President.

When we get down to the brass tacks, it makes no difference who flinches first. That will be lost in yesterday's news. The people will forget all of that. What they will wonder is that we failed to govern, we failed to take care of the people's business.

By the time the majority comes to their senses, their capricious acts will have already hurt those people who can least afford to sustain these harsh blows: The elderly, the poor, the disabled; not only those who are being furloughed tomorrow or at midnight tonight.

The majority has voted to cut Medicare by \$270 billion. To do what? To make sure their wealthy friends get a tax break. The poorest of the poor, those who receive Medicaid, \$182 billion will be reduced. That will mean unnecessary pain for a lot of people who now already find themselves in distress.

Mr. Speaker, what does this mean for my district in North Carolina? It means North Carolina will lose \$6.75 billion in Medicare funding for the next 5 years. And add to that Medicaid, which again will lose \$6.76 billion. Those combined would be \$13.51 billion that we will lose in the State of North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, that will affect millions of people, and yet my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to overload this resolution to continue to make the Government function by making sure we increase the premiums for senior citizens and Medicare. That is uncalled for. That is uncalled for.

Again, Mr. Speaker, what other things in the budget reconciliation do we find objectionable? Mr. Speaker, \$16.5 billion will be cut from the farming community as well. That will hurt people in my district.

Why is it that the President finds these objectionable? Because he wants to serve the majority: American people, whether they are farmers or senior citizens, or whether they are the poor. Medicaid itself in my district will affect some 882,000 people. Medicare affects some 999,000 people in my district. Should I not be concerned about that? Of course we are concerned about that. That is what we find objectionable about the budget reconciliation.