

in the short-term CR and the debt bill that he said he opposes. These are things that we believe America wants. He said he opposes them. The only way we could get around the President was to send him a bill that he could not veto.

Mr. STENHOLM. If I could reclaim my time—

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. He has chosen to shut the Government down, not us.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. STENHOLM. I am happy to yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I find the logic strange that somehow the President ought to be questioned about his conduct before we have ever gotten appropriation bills to him. We can all have legitimate differences about what ought to happen on Medicare, what ought to happen on education. That is normal in this country. What is not normal is when you start criticizing the President for not signing legislation that has not yet been sent to him.

When the Congress has failed to pass 10 of the 13 appropriation bills, then the issue is not whether the President has vetoed something, the issue is whether the Congress has produced something for him to sign or veto. We have not yet done that, and until we do, it seems to me that it comes with considerable ill grace for this institution to suggest that we ought to short-circuit the process when this institution has not yet performed its basic duty.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. STENHOLM. I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. HEFNER. I would like to ask a question. There is nothing in these two bills that the President is talking about vetoing, there is nothing in these bills that could not go the regular legislative route if you had done your work, or will do your work. They could be separated out. You have got the majority. You could bring them up, even under suspension, if you wanted to.

Am I right? Is that right?

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. If the gentleman will continue to yield, the minority well knows that in the past there have been many, many, many times when we did not pass all the appropriations bill and we ran this place with continuing resolutions, short-term CRs. When we did that, the Democrats, when they were in charge, sent to the President of the United States things that he did not want.

Mr. HEFNER. The gentleman is not answering my question.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. The fact is you are turning everything on its head. The gentleman knows that.

tleman from Iowa [Mr. LEACH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, we are today in a democratic debate about the size and role of government. It is important and involves a need for comity of purpose on all sides.

Nevertheless, despite differences on the question of whether and how fast governmental budgets should be balanced, let us not lose sight of the fact that this is a blessed country which can manage its affairs peacefully and democratically.

I stress this point because on another continent last week, the Government of Nigeria executed the playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other human rights activists. A generation ago in her seminal work "The Origins of Totalitarianism" Hannah Arendt noted that one of the hallmarks of totalitarian regimes is the capriciousness as well as the anonymity of death.

It is therefore incumbent on democratic legislatures throughout the world to register dissent against political atrocities of this kind, and shine the spotlight of decency onto the regimes responsible.

The international community cannot allow individuals of conscience to disappear unnoted from the face of the Earth. Names must be named and deeds recorded. The courage of Ken Saro-Wiwa, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee and the President of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni Peoples, as well as Barinem Kiobel, Saturday Dobe, Paul Levura, Nordy Eawo, Felix Nuate, Daniel Gbokoo, John Kpuinen, and Baribor Bara must be acknowledged and remembered.

Like Socrates, forced to drink hemlock because of his alleged corrupting influence on the youth of Athens, Ken Saro-Wiwa was found guilty of crimes committed by others because his enlightened human rights advocacy was said to have created the environment that fostered societal misdeeds. As the lessons of Socrates' life and the injustice of his death 2½ millenia ago are recalled, we as public officials in a free society must today demand accountability for the execution of these 20th century Nigerian citizens of conscience.

In referencing this human rights tragedy, I do not mean to divert attention from the importance of the debate this evening, but this Congress, despite our problems, remains the principal legislative beacon of freedom in the world. We are obligated to resolve our differences. We are also obligated to put our problems in perspective. Important differences of judgment exist, but we can reach a consensus without putting a gun to anyone's head. We are, after all, Americans.

tleman from Hawaii [Mr. ABERCROMBIE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

THE LEADERSHIP'S INABILITY TO SUBMIT TO THE PRESIDENT LEGISLATION HE CAN SIGN

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I rise here to speak to the issue that we are talking about tonight, the inability of the Republican leadership, Speaker GINGRICH and the leader of the other body, to bring to us and take to the President a continuing resolution and an extension of the debt ceiling which he will sign.

I do that with a special interest tonight, because I have two constituents here with me in the gallery who are nurses in my district. They are very concerned. They are concerned that we continue the commitment that we have in this country to seniors through our Medicare Program, to others through our Medicaid Program, and to their colleagues, who work in Federal facilities, so I appreciate the gentleman giving me a moment to make sure that we remember there are real people who are being discussed in these issues. This is not just theoretical.

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Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, apropos of the remarks of the gentleman from Kentucky, reference has been made again and again this evening and in previous sessions of the House to a balanced budget, and reference has been made to the President. In fact, the President has been castigated for being unwilling, presumably, to move towards a balanced budget in a time certain, generally given to be 2002.

What is constantly left out of the equation is that there is no presentation for a balanced budget. Every time I hear that being said very frankly by Members on both sides, but most particularly as a kind of challenge from the Republic side, I would find it amusing if it was not so sad that this is based upon a palpable fraud. I will tell you exactly what it is. It is no great secret.

In previous times, Mr. Speaker, in order to mask the deficit that was accumulating, we have gone into what is called something off-budget. It is a bookkeeping trick. That is all it is, the Social Security trust fund. But before, at least we were honest about it with respect that it appeared from both the Republicans and the Democrats when we finally put budgets together that we were, in fact, utilizing the so-called surplus funds in order to achieve a budget. We were not pretending that we were trying to balance the budget at that point.

As the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STENHOLM] and others who have preceded me have indicated, that has been a goal of both Democrats and Republicans. This is not exclusive to the Republican Party. But the difference has

THE EXECUTION OF NIGERIAN CITIZENS OF CONSCIENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

GOAL OF BALANCED BUDGET NOT EXCLUSIVE TO REPUBLICAN PARTY

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been that there was not the stench of mendacity in the air as I very sadly detect now.

The plain, simple fact of the matter is that in the budget as presented by the Republican Party, we are going to take in the neighborhood of \$636 billion out of a so-called surplus in the Social Security fund in order to balance the budget in the year 2002. We start in 1996 with \$63 billion. There is \$115 billion scheduled to be taken in the year 2002 in order to achieve a balanced budget.

Now, this is supposed to be coming from surplus funds. So I put the challenge to those who will say that this is truly going to be a balanced budget as presented by the Republican Party in this House in 2002. If that is a surplus, then give it back. If you do not need to have an IOU to the Social Security trust fund in the year 2002 of \$630 plus billion, let us hear it on this floor. I can come down here for special orders any night; I invite anybody to come down now and say that what I am saying is not true.

I see a smile on the face of the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STENHOLM]. He knows that this is the case. My good friend from Indiana is not smiling, he is grimacing at the moment. But the plain fact is that while there are people in this body who are serious about balancing the budget, they are serious in a way that says that they will not try to fool the American people into thinking, because we have done a book-keeping trick, namely putting it off budget, that phraseology, a phrase of art with respect to accounting, that we will not owe that money to the Social Security trust fund.

There will be no balanced budget in 2002, and I would hope that the next Republican Member who gets up and recites this mantra will at least have the common decency to respect the intelligence of the American people who can add and subtract and read and write the numbers just as well as anybody else and admit that in the year 2002 when they claim, providing nothing goes wrong whatsoever with the projections, when they claim that there will be a balanced budget, on that day, at that moment, they will owe \$630 plus billion to the Social Security trust fund.

If we are going to balance the budget, I welcome the debate. Let us get to it, let us try and figure out how to do it, but let us be honest about it. Let us not start accusing anybody in this body, particularly on our side of the aisle, of being less than true to their faith, the faith that they have in what they want to do, and come forward with sensible, reasonable, honest figures with respect to the balanced budget.

MAINTAINING THE CURRENT MEDICARE RATIO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from California [Mr. KIM] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that having a continuing resolution which would leave the government open is in jeopardy because of this premium part B on Medicare Program. I wish the people in California would listen to me tonight. I want to tell you exactly what the part B in Medicare plan is all about so you can make your own judgment of who is right and who is wrong.

I do not think we, the Republican Party, is doing such a good job to communicate with the people. I am going to do my best tonight.

Let us take a look at this chart here. Right now beneficiaries, senior citizens, only pay one-third of the total cost of the part B, which is to pay for the doctor's fee. Two-thirds, a little more than two-thirds is paid by the other taxpayers, roughly 68.5 percent. Many people did not know that. My district people did not know it. I did not know we had been subsidizing it. They are so busy working every day, they did not pay attention to exactly what the part B premium is about.

Mr. Speaker, it used to be 50-50. Half of it paid by the beneficiary and the other half is subsidized by the other taxpayers.

Now what has happened? One-third is paid by the beneficiary; two-thirds is being subsidized by the other taxpayers, the working people. Who are those people? Some of those people cannot even afford to buy their own insurance, but they have to subsidize senior citizens by two-thirds. Under the current system starting January 1, it is going to change even greater: 25 percent by the beneficiary and 75 percent by the other taxpayers' subsidy. That is not fair. That is what we are saying.

We are saying that we have to keep this ratio, one-third, two-third ratio. That does not increase anyone; that is all. For that we have been criticized unfairly.

Is it wrong that we would like to maintain this one-third/two-third ratio? A senior citizen only pay one-third of the premium and two-thirds subsidized by the younger people? Is that unfair, keeping this ratio? Why does it have to go to 25 and 75 percent relationship? How can you balance the budget when you have to spend this kind of money, additional spending, to subsidize beneficiaries? How can you possibly balance the budget?

We are not cutting anything, we are trying to maintain the same ratio. By doing this, as you know, medical costs keep going up. By doing this, everybody has to pay a little more, a few bucks a month, just to maintain this relationship. We are not increasing anything, just maintaining one-third/two-thirds relationship.

Mr. Speaker, it is not right that we are asking those people out there working every day making \$50,000 a year, trying to support the family, try-

ing to send the kids to school, trying to make the mortgage payment, let them at the same time subsidize senior citizens by more than two-thirds.

Now, when our country is in this shape financially, yes, let us increase that, maybe 100 percent, but right now we are in financial crisis. Our debt is \$4.9 trillion. Our interest payment alone last year was \$230 billion, about the same as our national defense budget. Under that kind of circumstances, we are going to ask them to pay more?

I have to set the record straight. People can see me. I apologize that the chart is kind of messy, but I have to speak to you tonight to get the facts straight. If you do not think that that is fair, then let us know. That is all we are trying to do, maintain this current ratio. For that, our President is going to veto the entire continuing resolution I think is very unfair.

CRUCIAL DEBATE ABOUT THE SURVIVAL OF SENIOR CITIZENS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, I was in my office working and many of the staff members were there with me, because obviously, we are preparing for the onslaught of questions that will probably be coming from many of our constituents in the 18th Congressional District.

I listened to the debate, particularly by the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. HEFNER], and I would like to yield to him, because I do not know about the plain facts that our colleague on the other side of the aisle was mentioning about Medicare part B.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know about the gentleman from North Carolina, but I know the plain facts that today my senior citizens pay \$43, and under the Republican plan in a few months, maybe just about 30 days, they will be paying \$53.

I have had my senior citizens tell me, I do not know where I am going to get the money from. This is not a battle of who is chicken and who is not, this is not a battle of who has one-upmanship; this is a crucial debate about the survival of my senior citizens and citizens across this Nation and the Medicare system.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, people making \$50,000 a year, which is certainly not rich, but people living in my district on a fixed income for an increased of \$10 or \$12 a month, many times depend on where they are going to buy their groceries or get their prescriptions filled and what have you, it is a tremendous burden.

Also, I would like to have asked the gentleman the question that if we are going to put \$270 billion, and make no mistake about it, it is a cut, \$270 billion, then you cannot have the \$240 billion tax cut unless that is scored by