

complete or even significantly impact that final decision process, but it may well be significant in impacting the manner in which we get to that final decision. We can spend our time over the next few days as we debate this continuing resolution, which is simply a preamble to the major issue which is reconciliation, we can spend our time debating the superficial issues of who, where, when, or what names we call each other or we can talk in terms of the substance of the debate which is how do we reform this Government and how do we take this Government which is so completely out of control and bring it under control; how do we give our children an opportunity to have a lifestyle that is better than ours; how do we become a generation which passes more on to children than was passed on to us by our elders.

These are the core issues, the issues of substance which we should be discussing over the next few days, and hopefully we can attend to those issues rather than become involved in the ancillary issues of name calling, political posturing, of Government by polls and Government by reelection.

Mr. President, I yield back such time as I may have.

Mr. PRYOR addressed the Chair.

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

#### SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I was not planning to respond to my good friend from New Hampshire, and I agree with him 100 percent; it is not the time for name calling and politicization of this issue any longer. But I do feel it is time to set the record straight, and I would like to take just a moment of the Senate's time to sort of begin to set the record straight as to what is happening right now with regard to this issue of so-called shutting down the Government.

This is not something that just happened in the last 24 or 36 or 48 hours. This has been going on for several months now. In fact, back on September 22, Speaker GINGRICH boasted:

I don't care what the price is. I don't care if we have no executive offices. I don't care if we have no bonds for 60 days, not this time.

That is a quote in the Washington Post September 22, 1995.

Look at what the Republicans have done. This is a fact. They have completely shut the Democrats out of the budget process. We know it. They know it. It is a fact of life. We have not been a part of this process. We have wanted to be a part of this process, but we have not been included. For example, after proposing the most massive cut in Medicare in the history of America, our Republican friends held only 1 day of hearings on this proposal—1 day. It is the biggest cut in Medicare we have had since 1965.

By comparison, the House held 42 days of hearings on Whitewater, Waco,

and Ruby Ridge. The Senate held 48 days of hearings on these same issues. One day of hearings, 1 day of hearings on this massive Medicare cut.

Mr. President, I do think it is time to set the record straight. I also think it is time to realize that the President is not willing to impose an \$11 a month premium increase on every single Medicare beneficiary as a condition for keeping the Government running.

Look who is being held hostage here. Every Medicare recipient in America is being held hostage, and the price is closing down the Government. And we are going to blame it on the President of the United States.

What is happening is we are only implementing what we call the Gingrich strategy. This is the implementation of a strategy that was conceived long ago but today is manufactured. It is an artificial crisis that has been created. It is a confrontation that has been dreamed up by people who do not care if this Government functions or not. It is a shameful experience. It is an experience about which I think most good-willed people in this body actually shudder when thinking about the Founding Fathers of this country—bringing us to this point of closing down the Government in order to make political hay.

Mr. President, you know and all of us know that this artificial crisis basically revolves around one provision, the Medicare provision in the reconciliation bill, and the continuing resolution. But the truth is that the Medicare provision in this particular continuing resolution is also included in the reconciliation bill.

Why is it we have not straightened that out so far? It is pretty apparent. We have not even appointed the conferees to go to conference on the reconciliation bill, and yet we are about to close down the Government. We do not even have the conferees appointed. There is no one to go to conference with and to solve this issue. That has to be a problem, and it has to be a responsibility of the majority party in the Senate and in the House. The Chair knows this. I know this. My colleagues know this.

I think it is time to set the record straight. Earlier this morning, the Democratic party, Democratic side of the aisle had agreed; we thought we were getting ready, with unanimous consent, by voice vote to go ahead and pass the continuing resolution, let it go down to the President, not hold up this thing any longer, not continue the threat of closing down the Government, and then let the President veto it. Let him do it early in the day.

We wanted that to happen. I hope that can still happen. Right now I do not know exactly what is going on, but I do know this, that this President at this moment is ready, willing, and able to talk to the other side of the aisle, I assume at the White House or anywhere else, and talk to them about the measures necessary to keep this Gov-

ernment functioning as it was intended to function and to stop implementing this grand Gingrich strategy, this contrived artificial crisis which does not have to happen.

Mr. President, I understand my good friend and colleague from North Dakota would like 4 minutes, and I yield my friend 4 minutes at this time.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Arkansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota has 4 minutes.

Mr. DORGAN. Let me take just a minute to follow on these comments.

We are here in the middle of a significant debate about the reconciliation bill and about the continuing resolution, the debt extension, and the public might wonder why. Why are we doing all of this?

A continuing resolution is necessary because virtually none of the appropriations bills have been passed on time. I think one of them reached the President on time. Most of them have not been passed through conference and sent to the President. They are supposed to be done, but they are not done.

Even more important, the law requires that the reconciliation bill be passed by Congress on June 15. It is now November 13. The fact is we are now going to in November and December debate a reconciliation bill for which there have not been conferees appointed 5 months after the law requires this Congress to do its job.

It seems to me it is hard for people who are doing this to claim they are part of some reform party. So I guess the point I would make about this issue of the shutdown is people are wanting to know who is going to share the blame or claim the credit. There is going to be no credit here, no credit in a shutdown.

Yes. I would say it is true there are too many pollsters in the White House. But it is also true, painfully true, there are too many Republican Senators running for President. That colors all of these decisions. And it is also true that Speaker GINGRICH has boasted for months about the train wreck he is apparently going to engineer and apparently we will realize this week.

There will be nothing but blame if this happens. It is not a thoughtful approach and not the right way for us to do public policy. For 200 years representative democracy has rested on the ability to compromise among differing points of view, and that is what ought to happen today and tomorrow. And we ought to solve these problems.

#### THE 7-YEAR BALANCED BUDGET RECONCILIATION ACT OF 1995

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

#### MOTION TO INSTRUCT—NURSING HOME STANDARDS

Mr. DORGAN. On the specific amendment offered by the Senator from Arkansas, I came just to offer a word of