the American people, particularly Federal employees, hostage in the process.

This is not the time for Members to focus on perceived slights by the President. This is not the time to focus on partisan politics. This is the time to act in a responsible manner and ensure that the Federal Government is up and running to serve the American people.

BUDGET IMPASSE

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to focus on not just where we are now, but how we got here. Several days the House passed and sent over to the Senate a continuing resolution which would fund every part of the Government that is now shut down, and fund it at a level that I take it the President does not object to, because he has not objected to that part of the continuing resolution.

There was only one other condition attached to it: That the President agree to balance the budget of the United States in 7 years according to realistic numbers. The President has announced, before the bill was even passed the President announced that he would veto the legislation.

Why? Because the President would shut the Government down rather than balance the budget in 7 years, and the Congress would allow the Government to be shut down rather than prevent the budget from being balanced in 7 years. A number of Members on both sides of the aisle have talked about the schism, about the philosophical differences.

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. TALENT. I yield to the gentleman from Maine.

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I think that the American would say that everybody is in favor of balancing the budget, but does your proposal have a $245 billion tax break on top of balancing the budget?

Mr. TALENT. We provide family tax relief. Is the gentleman in favor of balancing the budget in 7 years?

Mr. BALDACCI. Yes.

Mr. TALENT. Did you vote that way?

Mr. BALDACCI. Yes.

Mr. TALENT. Did you vote for the balanced budget amendment?

Mr. BALDACCI. I voted for the Stenholm budget. I voted for the Orton budget.

Mr. TALENT. Did you vote for the continuing resolution?

□ 2310

Mr. BALDACCI. I support a 7-year balanced budget.

Mr. TALENT. Did you vote for the continuing resolution?

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I want the gentleman to understand, our balanced budget did not have tax breaks in it. I think that the proposal that you put forward did.

Mr. TALENT. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE].

Mr. HOKE. Does the continuing resolution have a $240 billion tax cut in it?

Mr. TALENT. No, I appreciate the gentleman saying that. The President has complained and several Members of this body have complained about certain parts of our budget that they do not like this aspect of it, they do not like that aspects of it.

The continuing resolution does not say the President has to accept the congressional budget, does not say the President has to accept any budget. It says the President has to agree to balance the budget in 7 years. One of the problems we have in this Congress is that instead of debating the import of the matters before us, we keep making contrary assertions about what is before us. We cannot even agree on what we are talking about.

The continuing resolution says the Government will continue if the President will agree to balance the budget in 7 years. He does not like our budget. He can offer his own. In fact, he did offer his own budget. He did offer his own budget some months ago, I believe in the form of a 22- or 24-page press release, which he claimed balanced the budget in 10 years.

This is how the Congressional Budget Office scored it. Continued deficits through another 10 years at $200 billion. It was a budget that no Member of either party in this House would even offer on the House floor. It was offered on the Senate and it was rejected by a vote of 96 to 0.

The President is not opposed to the continuing resolution. He is not trying to get the Government to shut down because he does not like our budget. He is shutting down because he does not like our budget. He is shutting the Government down because he does not want to balance the budget in 7 years. Why does he not want to balance the budget in 7 years? About the only good thing about this controversy, Mr. Speaker, is that it does highlight the very major philosophical differences between the two parties here in Washington. The President of the United States and the leader of the Democratic Party believes basically that what is important about America is the Federal Government and its agencies and its instrumentalities, as if the United States was a pyramid with the Federal Government at the top of it. And the policies the President has followed and the national Democratic Party, not all Democrats to be sure, but the national Democratic Party have followed has sucked up that pyramid power and resources away from the American people for the last 30 years.

But our party believes in the people and what they have built, their families their communities, their neighborhoods, their local schools, serve and civil and charitable organizations. We want power and resources located in the people, and what built in their communities. And we do not want the Federal Government to bankrupt everything that the people of this country have built and have worked for for the last several hundred years.

Mr. Speaker, the President was against the balanced budget amendment. He is against the budget that we offered. He refuses to offer a serious budget of his own. And now he vetoes a continuing resolution that calls for him to do nothing except accept in principle that we will balance this budget within 7 years.

Mr. Speaker, if some family or some business in the United States was awash in red ink the way the Federal Government is and their deal with their creditors and the bank was, we will get our budget balanced in 7 years, not eliminate the debt, just eliminate the deficit in 7 years, people would laugh at them. That is all we are trying to do here. That is all we need to do to get this government open. The minute the President agrees to balance the budget in 7 years, according to reasonable numbers, this Government will open for business.

MORE ON THE BUDGET IMPASSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARR). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. ANDREWS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, let me begin tonight by thanking the staff of the House of Representatives for staying so late and giving us a chance to address each other and our fellow countrymen. We appreciate it. It must be very scintillating for you to listen to all of us. We appreciate that you are here.

It is a great honor and a humbling experience to serve in this body. It is something I am very proud of. But frankly, we have not brought ourselves very much honor the last couple of days by what has gone on.

Tonight I would like to talk about a question and a challenge that I would offer to everyone on both sides of the aisle as we try to struggle through the next couple of days. It must be, Mr. Speaker, thoroughly exasperating to watch what we have done the last couple days or have not done the last couple days, when you consider the fact that there is a short-term question before the Congress and a long-term question before the Congress.

The short-term question is, what do we have to do to open up the doors of the Federal Government again and get these 800,000 people back to work? Virtually everyone from both parties that comes to the floor says they want to do that. And then they degenerate into why the other side has blocked them from doing that. And I find it inconceivable that 535 Members, including us and the other body and the President, cannot come up with a sensible solution in the next couple of days that would do that.

The longer term question is, do we want to balance the budget in 7 years? The answer is an overwhelming yes. Almost 300 Members of this institution have voted to do exactly that, not in

symbol, not in political symbol, but have actually voted for a 7-year plan to balance the budget, numbers and details. And it must be equally exasperating to figure out why that has not happened, why 300 of us cannot get together and do that.

Let me offer a question and then the challenge that I talked about. The question is, I have to wonder whether the leaders of the Republican Party and frankly whether the leaders of my party at the White House really want to resolve this problem or whether they want to set themselves up for the 1996 election.

It is not too farfetched, Mr. Speaker, to think that here is what is going on. The Republican Party has had tremendous success in this country at all levels of politics by making the argument that they are the party of lower taxes and leaner Government and zero deficits, and the Democrats are the party of higher taxes and larger Government and higher deficits. They have done very well having that argument in elections. The thought occurs to me that maybe the Republican Party is better served by keeping that argument going through the 1996 election.

On the other hand, the Democrats have done well in the November 1995 elections and the public opinion polls would suggest are doing well right now with the argument that Republicans are callous to the needs of seniors and children and the environment and maybe the leaders of our party have decided that we would be doing well to keep that argument going through the 1996 election as well.

I pose the question tonight in all sincerity, without impugning the motive of any person in this House or any person in the Government, as to whether that is what is really going on, as to whether we are engaged in a huge choreographic exercise here that is simply designed to lead up to the 1996 campaign so we all have the right themes and the right sound bites. If that is the case, we are doing our country and this institution a tremendous disservice. Because there are two things at stake here that we may never again in our careers have a chance to address.

The first is the chance to reverse a 25-year flood of red ink that has put the children of this country at great risk. I believe sincerely that there will never again come in this century and maybe not for the next couple of decades an opportunity to truly balance the budget of the Federal Government. There are 300 of us here in this Chamber who are ready to do that. I do not know why we have not been able to get together and figure out a way to do that.

The other point that I would make to you, and I think is even greater significance, the credibility of politicians in general and this institution in particular was very low when this all began, and it is much lower as we stand here tonight. And I believe that what is at stake is not simply our ability to put the fiscal house of this country in order, it is also maybe our last chance in a long time to make people believe that the political system works for them again.

I stand here tonight, 11:20, after a long day, frankly, wondering what is going on.

Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS].

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. We are friends and classmates from the 102d Congress.

I want to respond to the gentleman's question, because I think he raises more than a rhetorical question. He makes a valid point. I have wondered what it would take to forge a bipartisan compromise on a long-term agreement to balance the Federal budget.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. ANDREWS] has expired.

ON THE CONTINUING RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS].

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, to return to the colloquy with the gentleman from New Jersey, I simply want to point out that one of the concerns, one of the frustrations that I have had is that the closer we have gotten to the actual moment of truth, the moment of truth being that time which actually came today, when we voted on the final version of a 7-year plan to balance the Federal budget using honest numbers, this is an agreement scored by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, it balances the Federal budget in 7 years by limiting the growth, the increase in Federal spending to 3 percent per year, the closer we have gotten to that moment of truth, the fewer Members on your side of the aisle who have been willing to stand up and cast that tough vote.

□ 2320

Now let me point out that the gentleman is the exception to the rule. The gentleman from New Jersey not only voted for the Democratic alternative, the substitute version offered by the Democrats to balance the Federal budget, he also voted for the continuing resolution a couple of nights ago, but let me point out, because I have here in my hot little hands, as they would say, the three rollcall votes that I consider most pivotal.

First is the vote the gentleman referred to as the vote earlier this year, in the first quarter of the year, on the balanced budget amendment, which was part of the Contract With America; that was rollcall vote 51 in the House of Representatives. Voting yes were 228 Republicans and 72 Democrats, including the gentleman from New Jersey.

And later, rollcall vote number 741, this was on the so-called coalition budget, the version of a balanced budget offered by the more moderate conservative Democrats which was officially offered on this floor as the Democrat substitute or the Democrat alternative on a balanced budget. Out of 199 Democrats, 68 voted for the concept and the plan for balancing the budget at that time; 131 Democrats were opposed.

And then just 2 nights ago in rollcall vote, and I have got it as well, rollcall vote number 8002 in the House of Representatives, only 48 Democrats, again including the gentleman from New Jersey, voted for the continuing appropriations which stipulated only that we would be committed, in passing that bill into law, to the concept of balancing the Federal budget in 7 years using honest CBS numbers.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Reclaiming my time, Mr.. Speaker, the fact is this does show bipartisan support, that the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. ANDREWS] has well established himself as someone who is going to work with the Republican majority to, in fact, pass a balanced budget. What we need is enough of those Democrats on the other side of the aisle to talk to the President, and the fact is we would not have these furloughs, we would not have these agencies not funded, we would not have programs stopped now, if the President would only sign a balanced budget that the said on no less than six occasions that he would sign.

Mr. ANDREWS. If the gentleman would yield, I will be very succinct. I do not want to intrude on his time.

Frankly let me try to answer your question. Here is how I think we can get the 300 votes, and everyone has their own version of this. The tax cut will be smaller, the money taken from the tax cut will be put back into Medicare. There will be a little bit more taken out of agriculture and energy, put back into the environment and education, and there is your 300 votes, and it will take us 15 minutes.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Reclaiming my time, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. HOKE. I would like to engage you just a little bit longer on this because I think the questions you raised are more than rhetorical, and I really appreciate your sincerity, and I have to say that I reject your conclusions. I mean, cause you know you have clearly been absolutely consistent, and I looked at the votes earlier, just like FRANK did, and I think that this is not about policy—well, it is ultimately about policy, but I really do believe that it is about politics and that politics is about power, and I do not know how else you can explain the voting patterns.

You know, one of the things that I saw by looking at this is that there were 24 Members of your side who voted for the balanced budget amendment on January 26, an amendment to