

I urge you and other Congressmen to settle this dispute about our budget. Do what is best for our country, pass a balanced budget, but do it promptly!

Sincerely,

CECELIA J. GENGE.

ALEXANDRIA, VA.

My name is Brian Rothermel, a heart transplant recipient. I am a member on a seven person team from the U.S. going to France to participate in the "2nd Winter World Transplant Games" along with participants from 38 other countries.

I have been unable to get my passport due to the Government shutdown. My flight is to leave out of New York on a chartered trip to Pro-Loup, France, on January 5, 1996. I have been actively raising money through donations from companies, organizations and individuals to help defray the cost of the trip.

The National Kidney Foundation out of New York is the U.S./organizer of the event and all of the money raised goes to them as a tax deduction.

I am a key member on the team and will be severely devastated if I am unable to go. Please help me in my "quest for gold" and let me get my passport. Thank you for any assistance or consideration you can give me.

BRIAN ROTHERMEL,

Mr. WARNER. I thank the Chair. I close by once again commending the leadership in the Senate and other Members who are actively working today and tomorrow and right on into this week to try to resolve this tragic impasse.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

NATIONAL DISGRACE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I, too, am pleased that the Senate passed a continued funding resolution which puts the Federal Government back to work and puts money into pay stubs for all Federal employees. I commend the Republican leader for doing that, and I am proud of the fact that the Democratic leader has also been offering those continuing resolutions. I am relieved that we have finally taken positive action to put an end to this national disgrace and the shameful way we have treated our Federal employees.

I thank everyone who worked on this continuing resolution that has passed, but I am here to say that we need more than a continuing resolution. We also need to repair the damage that has been done.

Mr. President, I represent a shutdown State, as does the Senator from Virginia. What does a shutdown State mean? Of the hundreds of thousands of Federal employees that are furloughed, many of them are in the State of Maryland. I represent flagship agencies. What are those flagship agencies? One is the National Institutes of Health, 13,000 people working around the clock to find the cure and containment of disease and they are furloughed. I represent the national space agency at Goddard, the Social Security agency, the responsibility of which is to respond to the needs of the elderly in

terms of getting out their Social Security benefits; the health care finance agency, the National Institute of Standards. I could go on and on.

I can tell you as I have been out meeting with them, visiting with them, talking with them, they know they are out of work, they are out of money, and they are out of patience. For those workers who have been declared essential, what the American taxpayer should know is that although someone has been declared essential does not mean they are getting paid.

What are examples of the essential employees? Those are FBI agents, the DEA agents, the drug enforcement agents. This morning I met with the FBI team in the Baltimore area. They are on the job. The drug dealers are getting paid. Burglars are getting theirs, the bank robbers. But the very people we rely upon to track down the criminals in the United States of America are not getting paid. They are there. They are working. They have every right to be paid.

I was at the VA hospital in Baltimore this morning, speaking to the nurses, the physical therapists, the physicians, the support team. They are there making sure that every veteran is cared for. They are giving their time and their life's blood, but those doctors, those nurses, are not being paid.

Mr. President, that is a national disgrace. When you talk to constituents as I have, they say to me: Why is it that we can have peace talks for Bosnia and get it done? Why is it that we can have Mideast peace talks and get it done? But why is it we cannot have budget peace talks and get it done?

I do not know. Maybe we have to take the entire Republican and Democratic leadership including the President and all of us and go down the Wye River and try to get this settled. We need to be very serious about this.

Yesterday, when I was at the Social Security Administration, I spoke with the workers there. They want to work, they want to earn their pay, and they want to pay their bills. And you know what. They are absolutely worried. They are worried about how they can meet their responsibilities while they are trying to answer the phone calls and do the other work that Social Security requires.

This morning, when I met with those FBI agents and met with the nurses at the Social Security, I heard incredible talk, stories. At the VA hospital, I talked with a nurse who has come into the job without fail to save the lives of veterans and they themselves have no money for their mortgage. They have no money for their car payment. They have no money for their child care. They worked Christmas Day. They worked New Year's Day. Many of them worked the night shift and therefore are paid a premium for that. They are also prohibited from getting any type of second job because they are essential employees. How can we turn our backs on these men and women?

They have given me letters that they want to go into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD talking about how they continue to work and continue to care for the sick and care for the dying and they want to know who is going to care for them.

I have a letter from one Federal employee who talks about how, while they have no pay, they are raising money for those who are also out of money. I have another letter from a nurse who has dedicated her life to the sick. I ask unanimous consent that these letters be printed in the RECORD, because I want everyone to know the consequences of this.

There being no objection, the letters were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

BALTIMORE, MD.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,

Speaker of the House of Representatives, House of Representatives, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER, I am a Federal employee at the Baltimore VA Medical Center, the wife of also another loyal Federal employee who works for Ft. Howard VAMC. Together we support 2 children, and assist my elderly mother. Our mortgage alone is greater than ½ our pay. It seems clear to me that no one serves to profit from this political struggle over the budget. Remember you cannot have everything, so start by prioritizing the most valued needs for the good of everyone. I struggle with the thought that Congress and our President no longer care about what happens to us, and that the decisions to allow other Federal employees to be punished for your inability to perform your job, makes me cringe with fear. As for my case, the risk of losing my home and those things I have worked hard for is incomprehensible when you in the midst of disaster took a vacation. It makes me worry that if our country was threatened by other beings, would you hinder and jeopardize our existence. What you are doing is WRONG . . . It's wrong morally and ethically and you, the entire Congress and President should know that team work is what built our country. Divided you will be conquered, United you will build the new generation, much stronger and able to lead us through more challenging endeavors.

There has been no negative outcomes directly affecting you, and why??? Have you created a Them and Us? It is time to earn your keep? Help me, my family and make the RIGHT choices. You were selected for your expertise and administrative skills to manage this task. As we approach the feast of the Three Wise Men, let God send the Holy Spirit to make wise decisions now.

I came to work for the Federal Gov't 6 years ago searching for job security, a little premature. I think the Gov't strategies and methods have to move toward rebuilding a model that meets the needs of this day and age. If you want a budget passed, make it contingent on the salaries of those who must decide this process. It appears that the rules to this game are mixed up and with every passing day, you leave Federal workers with the thought that they are not important. The long term effect is a work force that has little motivation and a lot of anger and resentment. Trying to remotivate staff AIN'T EASY.

I guess I personally want you to hear how it feels to be one of the Federal employees. It's like the story "JUNGLE BOOK" when the little boy raised by animals in the jungle walks into a room filled with the stuffed

heads of game, and starts to tear. He says if this is civilization, let me stay an animal, we hunt for food, you hunt for game. . . . Unfortunately, the behavior of you leaders isolated out the Federal Employees (and select groups of them), making us the game. It really hurts to part of them right now. I guess I believed in the UNITED STATES of America. Unite now, work diligently to restore our confidence for this country.

Yours Truly,

MARLENE SIEMEK.

MIKE HOLY, R.N., M.S.,
Baltimore, MD, January 3, 1996.

Hon. BARBARA MIKULSKI,
Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MIKULSKI: I am a registered nurse, employed at the Baltimore V.A., once furloughed back in November, and now, since December 15th, presently working without pay. I have repeatedly over the past few weeks heard derogatory and mean-spirited comments directed at the federal workforce from a variety of sources. The latest, and what I would consider one of the most reprehensible, came this past Sunday, when on Meet the Press Phil Gramm asked, "Has anyone really missed the federal workers?"

Perhaps, Ms. Mikulski, Mr. Gramm has not "missed" the workforce because, dedicated to the mission, and despite the lack of pay, they continue to come to work, continue the mission, and in the case of the staff at Baltimore's V.A., continue to minister to the needs of our country's veterans! I would challenge Mr. Gramm, or any of the other detractors of the federal workers, to produce comparable examples of such dedication in the private sector.

I would like to share with you, in the hopes that you may share with others, one additional example of the dedication to the community which is evidenced here at the Baltimore V.A. Just five days before Xmas a thirty year old mother of five lost her life in a tragic vehicular/pedestrian accident. Hearing of the news, and the five orphaned children, and aware of what the pay situation would be regarding their own forthcoming paychecks, in a period of just two and a half days V.A. employees contributed and raised one-thousand-fourteen dollars (and thirty-five cents) for the family. The money was hand delivered to a local radio station, to be given to the family, that Friday afternoon, three days before Xmas. Such, Ms. Mikulski, is the "stuff" of which the Baltimore V.A. employees are made!

I share with you the above, again, in the hopes that you may share it with others who may be unaware of the caliber of the people involved. In spite of the politics within the Washington Beltway, at the Baltimore V.A., the mission continues—"Putting the Veteran First!"

Thank you for your continued efforts and advocacy on our behalf!

Sincerely,

MIKE HOLY, R.N., M.S.

Ms. MIKULSKI. The Senator from Virginia also talked about phone calls. I have hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of phone calls coming into my office. We have even had to bring in, in some very emotional and highly charged situations, a suicide intervention team because of the desperation that we are facing.

Not everybody is a high-paid Federal employee. One of my constituents, one of the nurses, got a paycheck yesterday for 7 cents—7 cents—after all the deductions were taken out. Another can-

not pay her car insurance, and she is not getting paid, and she needs to drive her car to work. I have another Federal employee who is deaf, cannot pay her rent, and they are not accepting the fact that she is furloughed.

These are real stories about real people. And why are they not getting paid? They are not getting paid because some refuse to pass a continuing resolution until we pass a balanced budget. Sure, we want to pass a balanced budget, but we also need not destroy civil service. And while the civil servants are on the job, the Federal contractors are also losing their wages.

Who are they? They are people like the cafeteria workers at NASA who work at the minimum wage. They work for a contractor. They are never going to get caught up. They are the small businesspeople who, again, are Federal contractors and are not being paid. There are people like the small business lady who has a small photography shop outside of the Baltimore passport office. Because there are no passports, nothing is happening. She still has to pay her rent. She has lost 75 percent of her business.

Mr. President, this cannot go on. This is why I am pleased that the Republican leader passed a no-frills, get-back-to-work continuing resolution.

Today I hope that the House of Representatives passes this bill. I am appalled that the House of Representatives is stalling and is hinting that they will not pass this. We must end this financial nightmare for nearly a million Federal employees and contractors. They want to be back to work. For those who are working, they want to be paid. Let them have the pay that they have earned.

If this does not work, I will come back and offer a CR myself. We need to stop playing games with people's lives and get down to business. It is time to stop holding Federal employees hostage.

Mr. President, in conclusion, I have a great deal of respect for the Senate, and I do not want to engage in any histrionics on the floor. But yesterday the Social Security workers, those who want to answer those hotlines, those that want to deal with the million-person backlog, gave me a lock. They gave me a lock, and they gave me some chains. What did they do as a symbolic thing? They wanted to lock us in and chain the door until we get the Government back to work. They want us to go back to work, balancing the budget of the United States.

So, Mr. President, I hope today that the House of Representatives passes this continuing resolution and that the leadership can come to a resolution on this budget crisis. I thank the Chair, and I yield back such time as I might have.

Mr. GREGG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

THE BUDGET AND ENTITLEMENT SPENDING

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise to address what I think is a farce. Obviously, we are hearing about what are some very significant individual concerns and legitimate individual concerns about Federal employees who are being put through significant stress as a result of their inability to be paid, which I would note in many instances, such as the FBI and the DEA, result from the fact that the President vetoed appropriations bills which would have funded those agencies.

But independent of that really personal and traumatic event which is occurring for many Federal employees, there is a much more significant event occurring here which is the question of how, after 26 years, we begin to put fiscal discipline into the Federal Government. And that has a lot of stories, too, a lot of personal stories.

In fact, in our Nation today where there are approximately, I guess, 50 to 70 million children, depending on how you define a child, every one of those children are a personal story of the fact that we have not balanced our budget. A child born today will have to pay almost \$170,000 just in interest during their working lives in order to pay out debts which our generation has put on their backs. That is a pretty big bill.

Just 2 weeks out of work is a big deal, too. Nobody wants to put people through that burden. But what we are doing to our children as a nation is even more significant. So what is really the core issue of this debate is how we straighten out our fiscal house so that we do not end up passing on to the next generation of Americans a country without an opportunity for prosperity, and that comes down to being responsible in the managing of our Government.

I want to talk a little bit today about what I would perceive as being a responsible solution to this balanced budget event, because we are hearing a lot of discussion and a lot of debate about how this should occur or how that should occur. But let me just note there are a few benchmarks upon which we can evaluate whether or not there has been success in getting under control the Federal spending, the rate of growth of Federal Government and, therefore, the opportunity to bring under control the Federal debt burden that we are passing on to our children.

The real benchmark of this exercise is not quite honestly whether we meet a technical balanced budget in the year 2002, although that is absolutely critical that we do that, because such a balanced budget can be reached, unfortunately, through the adjusting and tinkering with assumptions. For example, if you change what the estimated inflation rate is over the next 7 years by just a percent or you change the estimated rate of revenues by the Federal Government by just a percent, you adjust by hundreds of billions of dollars