



# F. Y. I.

**House  
Democratic  
Leadership**

***Communications***

*Richard Gephardt, Chair  
Richard Durbin, Vice Chair*

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## ***Democrats Expose GOP Agenda: Bigger Tax Breaks for the Wealthy, Bigger Medicare Cuts***

In the first debate among congressional leaders in nearly a generation, aired Sunday on PBS, Democratic Leaders Gephardt and Daschle successfully exposed the truth about the GOP agenda. Republican Leaders Gingrich and Lott continued to try to defend large tax cuts for the wealthy, paid for by cutting Medicare, nursing home care, education, and the environment, while the Democrats repeated the call for targeted tax relief and practical solutions to families' everyday problems through the **Families First Agenda**.

Much of the discussion focused on the impact on working families of these cuts in education, Medicare, and the environment -- all key priorities for Democrats -- while Republican Leaders tried to explain away their two-year long assault on these areas critical to America's families.

During the debate, Republicans never denied that their massive tax breaks would benefit the wealthy, by providing a \$20,000 tax break to people making over \$200,000. In addition, Speaker Gingrich tried to explain away the GOP's deep cuts in Medicare, but ultimately failed to refute the fact that the GOP Medicare bill would mean that seniors would face doubled premiums, have their choice of doctors taken away, and turn Medicare into second-rate health care.

After initially denying any responsibility for shutting down the government twice for nearly a month, Republicans ultimately conceded that they "learned a lot over that [government shutdown]." The Republicans shut down the government for 27 days, costing taxpayers \$1.4 billion in a failed attempt to blackmail the President into accepting their extreme priorities, like Medicare cuts for tax giveaways.

Trying to run away from and downplay their extreme agenda to help them look better in the eyes of the American voter, Republican Leaders were forced to take credit for Democratic accomplishments in this Congress, such as increases for education funding, pesticide reform, Kennedy health reform bill, and a Safe Drinking Water Act.