

My guess, Mr. Speaker, is that is very low. But at a time we are trying to ask people, or they are asking people to put in more and to trust them and that these are not really cuts, and we have heard it all, in the interim their very own office says they are winking at waste, fraud, and abuse. It will come back in even a bigger form. Rather than trying to take out what we know is in there, they are winking and letting it come back in. I find that really very, very surprising. I think most Americans would find that surprising.

I am sure to people at home it sounds like we are a bunch of 5-year-olds in a fight out on a playground, but this is a very important fight. It is a fight about the future of Medicare and Medicaid and what it is going to look like for future generations.

You have a trustees report that says we need to save about \$90 to \$100 billion. We have put out a plan that would do that, that the trustees say would get us there, and that is very important. You see the other side waiving the trustees report, but then they come up with \$270 billion. They do not take it to the trustees to say is this the right way to go, they do not have hearings where the trustees come, and day after day we see a constant trickle of more shocking news about what is in their reform program. I do not know how you can call putting a low priority on Medicare crooks reform. That does not sound like reform at all. That sounds very retro.

Mr. Speaker, I think that is why some of us on this side get very impatient and our voices go up and maybe we get too shrill about this, but these types of issues are very serious. People are entitled to hearings. The people who came here and got arrested, I think that is one of the largest affronts to American citizens I have ever seen, and I wish the leadership would apologize to them and say that they are welcome here and this is the people's House and they can come ask these questions.

We on our side of the aisle, we want to ask some questions, too. Since when is a low priority on Medicare crooks the priority of this House? It certainly is not on this side of the aisle. We do not approve of Medicare crooks, we do not approve of defense fraud, we do not approve of fraud wherever it is. Money is money and people should be treated with dignity. But to see this type of thing constantly trickling out in the press without the openness and without the discussion that we need, I think is very tragic, and that is why people get cynical about government, and that is why I think people are really beginning to wonder and wake up. What is going on on Medicare and Medicaid?

I am also concerned, Mr. Speaker, that we have done away with what we called spousal impoverishment, but you may as well call take-your-house-away bill, because a couple, if one gets sick, is going to have to put all their

assets on the line to take care of that one person before they will qualify for Medicaid.

Boy, that is not a family value as far as I am concerned. In 1988, this Congress said no to that type of thing. We said that the family's assets should be split and we should not do that. I hope people find out Medicare fraud is not my priority. Putting families in the poor house is not my priority, and I hope we get on to America's priorities.

PROVIDING CHOICES IN HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, when I was a kid growing up, one of my favorite TV shows was *Dragnet*. There was a fellow on that show, Officer Friday, and one of his expressions that I liked, if he was getting a lot of extraneous information he would just say just "The facts, ma'am. We need the facts."

I would like to get into a little bit of the facts surrounding the so-called arrest of these innocent senior citizens at the Committee on Commerce meeting yesterday. When I heard about this, I was indeed myself concerned, and I asked some of the members of the Committee on Commerce what went on, and the Committee on Commerce hearing was disrupted by a group of seniors who just happened to be a group of seniors affiliated with a group called the National Council of Senior Citizens, which is a very liberal left wing organization which this previous Democratic-led Congress had been giving about \$75 million a year to for the express purpose of lobbying the Congress to spend more and more and more money.

Yes, you the taxpayers were having your tax dollars given to an organization that was devoting its efforts full time to lobbying the Government to engage in more deficit spending. This group, this innocent group of seniors, who came in were quietly and politely asked to leave, not once, not twice, not three times, not four times, not five times, but six times they were asked to leave the Committee on Commerce meeting because they were interrupting the hearing.

Finally, it became quite apparent to all those there that the purpose of those people being in that room who were working with this liberal left wing organization, the purpose was to make sure that they got arrested so that they could get some photographs, so that those photographs could be used in newspapers, in magazines, and in this body. This is a staged event.

Mr. Speaker, I have been talking to the senior citizens in my district and they understand that we have a problem. Indeed, the nature of the problem was established credibly by three Democrats working in the White

House, Robert Rubin, Robert Reich, and Donna Shalala, who said the fund is projected to be exhausted. What did we do, Mr. Speaker? When we got this information, we sat down with AARP. No, we did not talk to the National Council of Senior Citizens, because their only answer is to raise taxes and increase spending and borrow more money. We talked to responsible groups. We talked to the senior citizens. We talked to the hospital providers and we talked to the physician providers as well.

We have come up with a plan that I think is reasonable and credible. It provides choices for senior citizens. If a senior likes the plan that they are in right now and likes their physician, they can select traditional Medicare and they can stay in it. If they want to opt for some different options, we have a new program called Medicare Plus, which will allow senior citizens to select a variety of different options. Those include if they are getting near retirement and they like the coverage that they have with their current employer, if that employer's insurance provider has a senior option, they can actually select to stay with that company if they want to.

If they want to, they can select a vehicle called a Medical Savings Account, which allows them to really control their dollars and determine exactly how it is going to be spent. There is another option in there for the establishment of provider-sponsored networks. Why is that in there? It is in there for this reason. Managed care has been shown to be, in many ways, a better way to deliver care that is of very, very good quality, and it is also a way to help control escalating and spiraling costs in the managed care environment. There are many communities that do not have managed care vehicles available to the people in those communities.

We have allowed hospitals and physicians to form networks together. They are called provider-sponsored networks, so that they can offer managed care vehicles, managed care systems for the seniors in those communities.

Now, in the process of doing that, we did have to repeal a lot of provisions in previous law that prohibited physicians from getting together. We have to repeal those provisions or they cannot get together.

Mr. Speaker, I think we clearly received a definite message that our plan was credible and it was workable. The Washington Post, of all publications, a publication that has a long tradition, a long record of supporting Democrats and attacking Republicans in this city, came out with an editorial where they said the Democrats campaign, the MediScare campaign, they called it crummy stuff, demagoguery big time, they called it scare talk, expostulation, they said it was irresponsible.

What did the Washington Post, the traditional voice for liberal Democratic policies, say about our plan?

Congressional Republicans have confounded skeptics. It is credible, it is gutsy, and I think it is a good plan. I think it is good for seniors. I think it is good for America, and I think it will help us to balance the needs of seniors with needs to be responsible with our tax dollars and all Americans should support this plan.

□ 1030

SAVING MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to my colleague and friend from the other side of the aisle who just spoke. Teresa McKenna in this picture was arrested because she wanted to speak about the injustices and the inequities and the lack of discussion on the issue that is most important to her and the people that she affiliates with in this country, the Medicare issue.

We have had one hearing on a proposal that will affect 40 million people, and she and other of her colleagues went to the Committee on Commerce to ask to be heard. She asked to be heard. They were told they could not be heard. She asked why, and she was told she could not be heard. Then they were arrested and taken down to the jail.

Now, the gentleman who just spoke talked about this was a left-wing type of an organization. Does she look like some left-wing radical that wants to overthrow this Government? All she wants is a fair shake for herself and her seniors.

Do you know why she wants a fair shake? Because in a report that was done very recently by the Department of Labor, we found that 60 percent of senior citizens in this country, 60 percent, have combined retirement incomes, that is the retirements and their Social Security, of \$10,000 a year or less. I will repeat that again for you. We have got 60 percent of our seniors living on \$10,000 a year or less in this country.

What the National Council of Senior Citizens do is they go out and help these low-income seniors get low-income jobs so they can have some supplement to that \$10,000.

What is going on here is my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have a proposal that will take \$270 billion out of Medicare in order to pay for a tax cut which comes out to about \$245 billion, which predominantly goes to the wealthiest Americans. Fifty percent of that tax cut goes to people who make over \$100,000 a year. That is what this fight is about. It is about the Teresa McKenna's and the people struggling to make ends meet, and who will have \$1,000 added to their bills each year. They are living on \$10,000 and \$13,000, and we are giving tax cuts to

the wealthiest corporations and wealthiest individuals in our country.

That is why we are so upset and mad. Do we need to fix Medicare and improve it as we go along? Of course we do. We have been doing that for 30 years. But how do you fix it when the Speaker of the House, as this headline in the Washington Times indicates today, says "Gingrich places low priority on Medicare crooks. Defends cutting antifraud defenses." How do you fix it when you have that type of an attitude running this institution?

Now, let me just say with respect to this issue, not one dime, not one dime of their plan goes back into the Medicare trust fund. Not one dime. The last speaker indicated that the Medicare trustees, the three that he mentioned, Secretaries Rubin, Shalala and Reich, indicated that the trust fund was broke. But they also said it was not broke. They said basically all you need is \$90 billion. You don't need \$270 billion to fix it.

The other thing I wanted to talk about very briefly is what is happening to Medicaid. We are cutting \$182 billion out of Medicaid. What they are doing by cutting this money is they are putting in jeopardy literally hundreds of thousands of seniors from getting nursing home care that they so desperately need and impoverishing spouses in this country by changing the rules and regulations. A \$182 billion cut in Medicaid, 60 percent of which, or close to that number, goes to long-term care for our seniors in nursing homes.

Medicaid is not just a program for the poor, it is for seniors. Two out of every five children in this country get health care from Medicaid, and they are cutting it by \$182 billion. That will mean 15,000 residents in my State of Michigan will not have nursing home care next year if this cut goes through; 175,000 will not have it over a 7-year period. These are draconian cuts.

The New York Times had a headline saying the Republican Gingrich revolution is rolling back the regulations we put on nursing homes. Remember the time when people were being drugged and straitjacketed to their beds? We had serious home abuses. We changed that with humane regulations. Those are all being rolled back now. This proposal that they have to cut Medicaid also repeals the minimum quality standard for nursing homes and other quality care.

So, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, let me just say that I hope America is paying attention to these two important issues we will be debating in the next week or so.

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

[Mr. KIM addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.

THE TRUTH ON MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the Committee on Commerce, and of all the speakers you heard this morning talking about the incident that occurred at the Committee on Commerce on the Medicare markup this week, I am the only person who was actually present for that incident. Let me tell you the truth about that incident; the facts, ma'am, just the facts, if you will.

What occurred was a woman named Teresa McKenna, who is not some poor person worried about her Medicare, she is a paid lobbyist working for the National Council of Senior Citizens, brought a few of her members into the committee room as we had opened up the session to begin marking up the bill, and they began shouting and protesting at that markup hearing.

The committees of the Congress work just like this body does. Members of the public are invited to attend and to sit in the galleries or sit in the committee rooms and to witness the process by which we mark up bills and debate them and process them through this House. Guests are always welcome, as is the press, at our committee markups.

Had Ms. Teresa McKenna brought her members into this room, into this gallery, and conducted themselves the same way, began shouting and interrupting the process, the same thing would have occurred in this House as occurred in that committee room. They were asked three times by the officers in charge at the request of the chairman to either take seats or leave the room so that we could begin our business. Three times they refused. The officers had no choice then but to escort them out of the room.

Immediately after they had been escorted under arrest outside the room, the chairman instructed the police officers involved not to press charges, but to release them to go free. In short, the committee did exactly what this House would do; it exercised its responsibility to enforce order in the process by which we debated the bill.

Teresa McKenna represents an organization headquartered here in Washington. She has been representing it for some many years now. She is a paid lobbyist for that organization. You need to know about the organization. Last year it received \$72 million of taxpayer funds to carry out their business. That is a pretty hefty sum. Can you imagine how much health care we could give to seniors in America if we spent that \$72 million on some senior health care problems. But, instead, this group got \$72 million of taxpayer monies as grants from the Federal Government to do their work.