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The Clinton administration was not the first to do nothing about the desperate situation of the young black American. Doing nothing about it has been the unswerving policy of Presidents back as far as Richard Nixon.

Not incidentally, it was Mr. Nixon's so-called southern strategy that rebuilt the Republican party on white hostility to the Democratic record on civil rights. Nor are the dynamic Newt Gingrich conservatives engaged with the problem. The Contract With America may ask us to assume this its blessings will lead one of these days to more secure childhoods, better schooling, better jobs, and a full dinner pail for young black men. But in the meantime, the Contract With America is explicit about the need to cut welfare.

If a single Republican presidential candidate has spoken on the matter that produced the Million Man March, it has been a pianissimo performance. Let's not forget, either, that some kind of action is overdue. Some kind of action was overdue. There was a vacuum to be filled. Politics has declined into a game for overgrown boys and their high-tech toys. You win by finessing reality.

So, finally it was left for Louis Farrakhan to act. It made a lot of people so mad they could spit. That often happens when good people have done nothing.

End of quote by columnist Russell Baker, a white man commenting on the Million Man March.

The full text of the article is as follows:

[The New York Times, Oct. 17, 1995]

HE FILLED A VACUUM

(By Russell Baker)

So it was left to Louis Farrakhan to act. It is hard to say why without speaking realistically of the state of American politics, which has less and less to do with anything of consequence.

Surely somebody of stature, Democrat or Republican, ought to have felt obliged to act long ago. It is hardly a secret that one of the country's most dangerous problems is the increasingly desperate situation of its young black male citizens.

The portrait of a nation in trouble is etched in the statistics on black unemployment rates, black school dropouts, rising imprisonment of young blacks and killings of black youngsters by black youngsters.

When a large portion of a nation's youth is being thrown away, or hustled into prisons, or lowered into graves, it takes a remarkable capacity for indifference to say that, well, it's a pity, but it's not our problem, it's a problem for the black community, black churches, black neighborhood leaders.

It is hard to see how a multiracial nation can avoid damage if its leaders refuse to deal with its gravest problems on ground that they are distinctively problems of race.

This mistake was made by President Eisenhower 40 years ago and swiftly regretted, for Eisenhower was a serious man, serious about government's duties. He tried to avoid the multiracial reality of America in the Arkansas school desegregation crisis by arguing that race passions resided in the human heart, which could not be changed by government action.

When Arkansas's white Governor Faubus proposed to let the white human heart express itself by defying a court desegregation order, however, Eisenhower used the Army to preserve government by law.

Everybody now knows about the problem of the young black male, and nobody with power has done anything about it. To be

sure, President Clinton has gone into the occasional black church and made the correct sounds, but where is the high-powered, bipartisan, interracial Presidential commission empowered to recommend executive and legislative action?

Have the leaders of the black community put pressure on White House and Congress to wake up? If so, the pressure has been as that of a feather pillow on the pyramid of Cheops.

Who are the leaders of this black community, anyhow? Are there any, or are they just fictional creations of the media? Maybe the "black community" is fictional, too. Why shouldn't it be? After all, there is no such thing as a "white community," no group who can sensibly be called "white leaders."

Maybe it is tired old racist thinking to keep talking about a "black community" complete with "black leaders." Maybe it makes more sense nowadays to drop all that separatist language and say, "There's nobody here but us Americans."

The Clinton Administration is not the first to do nothing about the desperate situation of the young black American. Doing nothing about it has been the unswerving policy of Presidents back as far as Richard Nixon. Not incidentally, it was Mr. Nixon's so-called "Southern strategy" that rebuilt the Republican Party on white hostility to the Democratic record on civil rights.

Nor are the dynamic new Gingrich conservatives engaged with the problem. The Contract With America may ask us to assume that its blessings will lead, one of these days, to more secure childhoods, better schooling, better jobs and a full dinner pail for young black men, but in the meantime it is explicit about the need to cut welfare.

If a single Republican Presidential candidate has spoken of the matter that produced the Million Man March, it has been a pianissimo performance.

Let's not forget, either, the fierce and forbidding tetchiness of many black people, which discourages whites from discussing the problem. It is understandable that a politician might ignore the subject entirely when he fears that getting involved may earn him the epithet of "racist."

Some kind of action was overdue. There was a vacuum to be filled. Politics has declined into a game for overgrown boys and their high-tech toys. You win by finessing reality. So finally it was left for Louis Farrakhan to act. It made a lot of people so mad they could spit. That often happens when good people have done nothing.

#### MEDICARE AND VA HEALTH BENEFITS

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 want to take this opportunity to address the House this evening to address a couple of major issues, not the least of which is the bill we passed today, H.R. 2353, which I was a cosponsor of with the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON] to extend certain VA health and medical care benefits.

We extended the priority care for Persian Gulf veterans, the alcohol and drug abuse care, nursing home care alternatives, health scholarships, and we have also included within that legislation, which received bipartisan support, almost unanimous vote of the House, residential care for homeless

and chronically mentally ill veterans, compensated work therapy and therapeutic transitional housing demonstration grants, and homeless veterans pilot programs, along with a displaying of the POW/MIA flag at all of our VA medical health centers, until the President has confirmed to the House and Senate that all the POW's and MIA's are accounted for.

This legislation was part of our committee work and we are happy to see that it was adopted today in the House and now moves on to the Senate.

One of the areas in which the general public has great interest, and especially the seniors who we are trying to protect with Medicare, we have this legislation coming before the House this week. And for those in the House who have been working on this issue for a long time, many others may ask why are you discussing it this year and why are you trying to reform it?

It was only in April that the President's trustees came back to the House and Senate and said that in 7 years, if we do nothing with Medicare, we will actually run out of money to have a Medicare health care system for our seniors.

Medicare is the Nation's primary medical assistance program for seniors and the disabled. It is composed of two parts: Part A, for which an individual automatically qualifies for at age 65. It provides hospital, home health, and skilled nursing facility coverage, and is paid for by payroll taxes. Those taxes go into the hospital trust fund which, by law, serves as the exclusive source of part A funding.

Part B, a voluntary system in which individuals who qualify for part A may choose to enroll, pays for doctor and outpatient service as well as medical equipment costs. It is paid for out of the general fund of our Government and from premiums paid by beneficiaries.

At this point, health care costs in the country, Mr. Speaker, are rising about 4 percent a year. But Medicare has been rising at the rate of 10 to 11 percent a year. Anyone can say: How is there such a disparate difference? Why is it that health care is a 4-percent increase and Medicare is going up at 10 percent?

A large part of that is the fraud, abuse, and waste which exists in the Medicare system, unfortunately.

Mr. Speaker, \$30 billion a year goes to pay for fraud, abuse, and waste.

Under legislation that is before the House this week that legislation will address for the first time the enforcement, the speeding up of the prosecution of, investigation of fraud abuse and waste that we have in the Medicare system. It will establish through legislation that I cosponsored with the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. SHAYS] and the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SCHIFF], this legislation will in fact increase the penalties and create for the first time the crime of Medicare fraud.

Mr. Speaker, that will go a long way to making sure that our Medicare system will become solvent and will in fact be secure and strengthened for many years to come.

But the other alternatives, which are also important to discuss tonight, Mr. Speaker, offer not only the fee for services, as has been traditional under Medicare, but also offer to beneficiaries the choice of a managed care option or medical savings accounts.

Under the managed care option there could be additional services, such as pharmaceuticals available, hearing aids, dentures, and the like. Under medical savings accounts, we now have an investment of \$4,800 per subscriber in Medicare, which under the proposal now before the House could go to \$6,700 by the year 2002.

And this increase for medical savings accounts, for the subscriber that does not use all the funds for 1 year, they could either keep the savings, Mr. Speaker, or have it roll over to the next year's medical health care provided.

In addition to providing the option of fee for service, managed care, and also for the medical savings accounts, it would allow providers to establish provider-sponsored organizations that can offer the Medicare Plus option. That would be for doctors or hospitals to provide, as well as the managed care companies, such options for our senior constituents.

It would establish under the legislation a commission to recommend long-term structural changes to preserve, protect, and strengthen Medicare. It would strengthen the Federal efforts, I may have made it very clear, to have the fraud addressed. I said that previously. But it would also create a new trust fund funded from both Medicare and the Federal Treasury to finance teaching hospitals and graduate medical education programs.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that while the time is running short, I did want to say that to do nothing with Medicare would have us go bankrupt. So, it is important that we Republicans and Democrats work together this week, the House and the Senate together with the executive branch, to make sure that we not only keep a strong Medicare for this generation's seniors, but for seniors that follow so that we have a strong medical system for many years to come.

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I yield back the balance of my time.

DEBATE OMITTED FROM THE RECORD OF THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1995, ON THE OMNIBUS CIVILIAN SCIENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1995

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WAMP. I yield to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Chairman, I want to quickly point out that, as the gen-

tleman and I both know, our areas have been designated by the National Research Council as likely among the most vulnerable gap areas in the country with the modernization plan and the recommended placement of NEXRADs. The gentleman and I have been so budget-conscious that we have talked about sharing a NEXRAD, if in fact we get that opportunity, as we hope we will, placing it somewhere between our respective districts, so we can in fact protect our citizens, but at the same time save as much money as possible. I wanted the Members to know that is how well we worked together.

Mr. WAMP. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Chairman, it can be in the State of Alabama, as long as it covers Chattanooga and southeast Tennessee adequately. I appreciate that, and commend the gentleman.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I commend the gentleman from Alabama. I am a cosponsor of his amendment, and I want to thank the chairman of the committee for his willingness to hold hearings. We appreciate his willingness to work through problems in northeast Indiana, as well as northwest Ohio, and the tri-state region I represent. I also understand we are moving to new radar systems, and I think those changes in science are very important, and will provide more protection.

However, we have gaps in that system. While we are going through those gaps, if we close our local weather service, we are unprotected over the next few years. If we do not have a whole country covered in the radar systems, it becomes more problematic about the weather stations. Our constituents rely greatly on the National Weather Service to provide advanced warnings of tornadoes and other severe storms. Current law prohibits the National Weather Service from closing weather stations unless it can certify that the closing will cause no degradation in the warning service the stations provide to local residents. Without this amendment, that protection would be struck. A few years ago, the city of Kendalville in my district was hit without warning by a tornado that injured 28 people, destroyed 29 buildings, and damaged over 150 businesses and residences. I happen to be very familiar with that, because I was just south of where the tornado was going, heard the warning on the radio, and turned south so I did not get caught in the path.

All of northeast Indiana, as well as at least 30 other areas of this country, now face the prospect of losing their weather service warnings, even though independent experts at the National Research Council recently acknowledged that they face a potential for a degraded service. We in our area, in the current proposals for the new radar system, are covered by four different

systems, and it leaves us very vulnerable in the middle of that.

I was also at a fair last summer where a tornado went from western Ohio and came back west, rather than going west to east, and had there not been a weather service in Fort Wayne, they would have had to relay that to Cincinnati, back to Indianapolis, back to Fort Wayne, and this way in minutes they were able to get us to a shelter.

I know in a very personal way 125,000 people in my districts have sent postcards to NOAA with concerns for this. It is very important. There are a couple of concerns. This bill saves \$15 million, this amendment, but \$35 million additional, I understand, could be saved. I have been working to cut the budget on appropriations bills and will continue to do that, but we also in this bill, I have supported the space program, I supported the space station, I think the chairman of this committee and the subcommittees have done well in battling for science, but if we can have \$100 million for space and Russia, we can afford to protect our own citizens in this country.

It is not just a matter of children's lives being lost and the homes being lost and lives; in my case, it is my wife, my children, myself, people who I grew up with and who are friends, and this is far too important to lose in a transition where, overall, the program is very effective, but some lives could be lost by this degradation of service.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Cramer amendment. Mr. Chairman, the modernization of the National Weather Service's purpose is to consolidate weather service offices nationwide without jeopardizing the quality of weather service to any region. While I strongly support this goal, weather service users, the public, and elected officials have repeatedly expressed deep concern that the modernization plan might actually degrade services in some regions of the country.

In response to these concerns, Congress enacted Public Law 102-567, which stipulates that the weather service will not close any of its stations without first certifying that doing so will not degrade weather service to the affected region. Mr. Chairman, I have grave concerns about the provisions of this bill that repeal this mandate. No one in this Chamber is more committed to streamlining Government than I am. However, we should not do so at the expense of the safety of the people in northern California and elsewhere in the country. Yet, that is precisely what will happen if we do not adopt the amendment offered by the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. Chairman, let me illustrate by describing several situations in my own district of northern California.