

health care plans the way everyone else does.

What can be wrong with that?

VOTE TO SAVE MEDICARE

(Mr. GUTIERREZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, you just cannot run from the truth.

As the Republicans try to hide that they want to take health care from our seniors for a tax giveaway to the wealthy, their justifications are becoming laughable.

I think the silliest one is this:

This isn't a cut in Medicare. We are only slowing the growth.

Let me explain the Republican definition of slowing growth:

Say I own a cruise ship, and it seats 100 passengers. It only makes sense that I would have 100 life preservers.

Now, say I build a bigger boat. One that seats 150 people.

If I say to my passengers I am only going to have 125 life preservers, but don't worry—that's not a cut, I'm only slowing the growth of life preservers—I do not think that is going to help the 25 people who drown when my boat crashes.

Well, my friends, Medicare is a life preserver for our seniors.

One that protects them when they are sick, one that saves them when they are ill. One they have paid for and earned and deserve.

This week, we have a chance to keep all the life preservers on board.

Vote to save Medicare.

FACTS ABOUT MEDICARE REFORM

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of wild accusations and some very interesting and creative, if not altogether truthful, analogies. My dear friend from Illinois brought up perhaps the strangest I have heard today.

Let us get away from this, and let us talk fact. Let us get away from the mythical mathematics of Washington, DC.

Fact No. 1: Medicare spending per beneficiary increases from \$4,800 this year to \$6,700 in the year 2002. That is an increase of almost \$2,000. That is reality. That is real math.

Fact No. 2: We provide choice to seniors through Medicare Plus. Only the guardians of the old order who put their trust not on individual initiative but an overgrown, gigantic Federal bureaucracy dictating to the American people would say otherwise. The fact is we provide choice, even if seniors want to keep the program they have intact and make no change. That is why it is Medicare Plus. That is why it is good for the American Nation. That is why

it will pass in this body later this week.

MEDICARE: DO NOT SURRENDER OUR COMMITMENT

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is ironic I follow my colleague from Arizona.

I rise today to present 5,000 signatures from people in the congressional district that I represent and the surrounding community in Texas. On Monday I visited a senior citizens center and was presented these petitions and signatures from senior citizens and working families. They signed their names to these petitions because they are concerned about the broad cut and the extreme reversal of Medicare that is going to be voted on tomorrow in this House.

In the 30 years since enactment of Medicare, we transformed what it means to be old in this country. We have lifted our senior citizens out of poverty and restored their health and their dignity. Never again will seniors have to choose between food on the table and Medicare or health care, until tomorrow, because what we see today from the Speaker and the Republican majority is the surrender of that commitment between our Government and our seniors, because the majority feels it is so important to fulfill their campaign promise to provide a \$245-billion tax cut and cut Medicare \$270 billion.

These petitions are from 5,000 hard-working Texans, and I hope we remember that tomorrow.

SAVE MEDICARE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, through the years, the cost to seniors has increased as the costs of the program has increased—but the Medicare benefit package still reflects 1965-style medicine. And seniors simply are not getting the options that other Americans are receiving. Seniors are now spending, on average, 21 percent of their annual income on health care-related expenses.

Our Medicare plan provides health security for today's and tomorrow's seniors. Medicare Plus will allow seniors to choose from several plans. Basically, seniors can stay in the traditional fee-for-service Medicare, or they can exercise the right to choose a plan that better serves their needs—everything from eyeglasses to dental care.

Each plan must offer as good a benefit package as Medicare currently offers. The proposal attacks waste and fraud through an incentive program for seniors. This plan is necessary.

We must do something to equate the system for seniors while ensuring its stability for future generations.

MAKE MEDICARE THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I believe the Republican plan on Medicare goes too far. But I do not agree with the political strategy of the Democratic Party. I do not believe the Republicans are two-headed monsters that want to destroy Medicare.

Medicare is broken. It needs fixing. The sad fact is the Democrats, we the Democrats, had control, and we did not fix it.

Making NEWT GINGRICH and the Republican Party into Darth Vaders may be good Democrat strategy, but it is bad public policy for America. It is divisive. It is irresponsible in an America that is already divided.

Let us get beyond the spin to win. Let us fix Medicare so it, in fact, can be a gift that keeps on giving for our parents and grandparents, and let us get off the politics.

PRESIDENT THINKS TAXES WERE RAISED TOO MUCH

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President said in Houston at a fundraiser that, "A lot of people in the audience are still mad about my budget," that he pushed through in 1993, "and they think I raised their taxes too much."

Now, listen carefully to this: The President said, "It might surprise you to know that I think I raised taxes too much," the President of the United States making an admission that he raised taxes too much.

Think about that, Democrats, those that voted for it. That is why we have a new Republican majority in Congress. That is why our new majority promised the American people that we would roll back some of these taxes, these huge tax increases that the President pushed in 1993 that he now thinks are a mistake.

This fall we will give every middle-class family a \$500-per-child tax credit, provide tax relief for seniors and help create more jobs and more opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the President may say his tax increases were a mistake. The Republican Congress is going to do something about it.

BACK DOOR DEALS ON MEDICARE

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, let me tell you how Republicans write Medicare legislation.

When wealthy doctors are dissatisfied with how the Medicare bill will affect them—they negotiate a back door deal with Republicans and suddenly—they get a deal worth millions and do not have to share the burden of the \$270 billion cut with seniors.

When HMO's want to make more money—they make a back door deal with Republicans and suddenly Medicare legislation includes provisions that will force thousands of seniors into managed care plans.

Yet, when seniors wanted to come out in the open to discuss their concerns about Medicare—they got no back door deals, they got arrested.

Mr. Speaker, this is no way to write policies. Medicare reform should help people get better—not worse.

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CONGRESS MUST TAKE ACTION TO PRESERVE MEDICARE

(Mr. METCALF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, Medicare will be bankrupt by 2002. Faced with this crisis, of course, we will take action to protect and preserve Medicare. But keep in mind the far more serious problem. Unless we balance the budget, the United States will go bankrupt.

Look at the facts. We owe \$5 trillion in debt. Interest will soon pass defense as the largest expenditure. It does not count hundreds of billions of dollars borrowed from Social Security. It does not count a couple of trillion more in liability from pensions and retirements.

The overspending of previous Congresses has been destroying the American dream for our children. If we really care for the future of our children, we will balance the budget now.

GET TOUGH ON MEDICARE FRAUD

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, for those who would rip off the American taxpayer through Medicare fraud, the Republicans have an answer. The answer, through their pay more, get less plan, is an unusual solution: Let us get soft on fraud, unilaterally disarm law enforcement, and legalize conduct illegal today.

Mr. Speaker, Medicare fraud results not from old folks pretending to be sick, but from health care providers pretending to treat them. In this plan, instead of helping law enforcement, the Republicans actually change the law to make it more difficult to prove fraud. They not only cut Medicare by \$270 bil-

lion, they proceed to cut the moneys that are dedicated to law enforcement. But for those who rely on kickbacks from unnecessary care, they say, well, we will change the law to make it easier to take a kickback.

Today, in the Washington Times, under an article entitled "Republican Medicare bill seems to favor fraud," they point out that this change alone will cost the American taxpayers \$1.1 billion in this Republican profraud, antisenior Medicare bill.

THE ST. LUCIE RIVER INITIATIVE

(Mr. FOLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, today it is very prophetic that I rise to discuss the St. Lucie River Initiative that is occurring in one of our counties in Florida. We are being inundated by water due to many recent rainfalls. I would like Members, particularly those in the Florida delegation, to welcome the members of the St. Lucie River Initiative.

Mr. Speaker, we have one of the most beautiful, pristine waterways in Florida. The Army Corps of Engineers started in 1915, and completed in 1963, a series of canals that have changed the water flow patterns in our State. We have to save the Everglades and Florida Bay, but we must save the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon for future generations.

There is a solution. It involves acquiring land, storing fresh valuable water on that land, and preventing the water from running to the tide and polluting these estuaries and the St. Lucie River. So I ask Members from Florida again to welcome the St. Lucie River Initiative group into their office. Listen to the facts they present, because I think we have a solution before us that can save our valuable resource, the Florida waterways.

DISCREPANCY IN MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCING

(Mr. FLAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, this chamber is accustomed to numbers. We are told the numbers do not lie. Statistics are nonpartisan. Percentages are unbiased. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to bring you numbers that are biased—100 to 1. That is the discrepancy in mandatory minimum sentencing for crack cocaine to powder cocaine offenses. One hundred to one is an immense disparity. Worse, 100 to 1 is an unjustified disparity. And still worse, Mr. Speaker, 100 to 1 is a disparity that disproportionately targets the urban African-American community. This 100-to-1 discrepancy is discriminatory on its face.

The U.S. Sentencing Commission, along with Federal judges and civil rights groups, has recommended an elimination of the 100-to-1 disparity, but today this Chamber may choose to reject that recommendation. Why? Is powder cocaine one-hundredth less deadly than crack? Does powder cocaine cause one-hundredth the violence that crack does? Or perhaps, have the misperceptions surrounding the communities in which one finds these drugs, affected the fairness of our laws?

Drug trafficking is an abhorrent crime, Mr. Speaker, and should be dealt with harshly. But the numbers do not lie. One hundred to one is discriminatory. If we choose to mete out justice as a nation, Mr. Speaker, we must first ensure our laws are just.

VOTE AGAINST CROATIAN-AMERICAN ENTERPRISE FUND APPROPRIATIONS

(Mr. WOLF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, the conference on foreign operations appropriations is scheduled for next week. One of the areas of discussion between the two bills is a \$12 million appropriation for the Croatian-American Enterprise Fund.

Mr. Speaker, let me read you some excerpts from a recent human rights report by monitors from the European Union who investigated human rights atrocities in the Krajina region of Croatia, which was recently liberated from Serb occupation:

After Operation Storm * * * the area was largely devastated. Killings and harassments of civilians have been observed. Looting of virtually all houses took place and houses were burnt to the ground long after fighting had stopped.

On August 11, an ECMM team from Knin found the body of an old man, shot in the head and in the right side * * * as late as September 11, ECMM Knin found two elderly women recently shot through their head * * * Reports of killing are numerous * * * at some point newly killed Serbs were found at a rate of six per day. The most common murder method is shots in the back of the head or slit throat.

These reports came in weeks after the fighting has stopped. Many Serbs fled the Krajina but those that remained were for the most part elderly.

On September 30, the Washington Post reported:

That evening [August 25] human rights officials returned to Gruborici and found the bodies of two elderly men. One was on the floor of his bedroom in his pajamas with a bullet in the back of the head * * * the other was discovered in a field with his throat slashed. The next day, monitors found the body of a 90-year-old woman who had been burned alive in her house.

Mr. Speaker, these kinds of atrocities could not have occurred without some kind of tacit approval from some elements of the government of Zagreb. I am not saying the orders came from Zagreb, but the Croatian Government should have known these kinds of things