

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for having yielded to me.

Mr. DORNAN. Courtesy of half a second then, Mr. Speaker?

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, we could have an hour discussion, every Member of this House, on the O.J. Simpson trial, because most Americans think the justice system broke down, that he was as guilty as sin.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. That would be worthy. I think the American people need to hear both sides of the story.

Mr. DORNAN. I agree.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. To clarify, the gentleman from California [Mr. DORNAN] may not make a unanimous-consent request to extend time under 5-minute special orders.

WHY SO LITTLE TIME FOR DEBATE ON THE MOST IMPORTANT VOTE IN OUR CAREERS?

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I think many Members feel, as the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. BORSKI] indicated just a few minutes ago, that the vote tomorrow will probably be the most important vote that we have cast in our career; certainly in my 17 years it qualifies.

Mr. Speaker, when we began this session of Congress, there were great protestations about past abuses, closed rules that did not permit open debate, and amendments of all sorts from all across the spectrum here to be offered. We talked a lot about open meetings. To quote Woodrow Wilson, it was all going to be open covenants openly arrived at. This was going to be a new era.

Mr. Speaker, I regret to tell you that what is happening to this most fundamental piece of legislation that all of us feel is so impactful on 40 million Americans in the Committee on Rules at the moment is a travesty. There are people who have yet to commit to vote for this legislation being offered by the Republicans who are angling for a little amendment that hopefully the Speaker will unilaterally without any congressional committee approval insert into an amendment offered by somebody when we get to the floor, probably the manager of the bill. Those people up there who have yet to commit to vote for this on the Republican side are struggling to get some cover so that they can vote for a piece of legislation that will be terribly destructive, not just to senior citizens, not just to rural and urban communities, but to the fabric of American life and the quality of our health care. It is a travesty because most Members who are not about to vote for something like

this are going to be excluded from the process. They are not going to be put in a position to have the opportunity to offer a rule that would, for example, cut this from a \$270 billion hit over the next 7 years, far more than the trustees would indicate is necessary, to something like \$90 billion. We are not going to be able to repair the damage that this bill will do because we are being shut out of the process.

I know people have heard it, they are probably sick of it, but 28 days of hearings on Whitewater, 10 on Waco, 8 on Ruby Ridge. I do not mean to say these are not important issues, but it tells you something. We had 1 day of hearings in the Committee on Ways and Means, none in the Committee on Commerce, and now not a week of debate on this issue, something far less: 3 hours of general debate. Why? Because people do not want to talk about what is about to happen. Republicans offering this legislation do not really want the American people to fully comprehend the impact it is going to have on them. Otherwise we would spend a week and take 8 hours a day extolling the virtues of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I asked today in the Committee on Rules that we have 20 hours. I would be happy with 10. I would now take 5 based on what I expect. It is the antithesis of what we were told this Congress was going to be about when we kicked off in January and took up the vaunted Contract on America.

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It is a great frustration to anyone who appreciates the legislative process, who thinks that, regardless of the outcome of these issues, we ought to have a full debate. We ought to be able to exchange words and language in amendment form, just as we do in committee.

The committees attempted to make some changes. Those changes were unilaterally and uniformly rejected by Republican majorities. But that does not mean that those of us who are not on those committees are shut out of the process. We ought to be able to have some of those key debates right here on the floor, not have just one alternative made in order, not the ability at all to deal with the intricacies of Medicare, a program that probably more than anything but Social Security is the hallmark of what American government is all about, what means the most to the American people.

So I am just here today to kind of let out a protest on process. I will have more to say, as many of my colleagues will, about the inherent weaknesses in this approach, this budget-driven, tax-cut-justified approach. It is not, however, my purpose today.

I am simply here to say that, from my perspective, this treatment of what is the centerpiece of the Republicans' effort to radically change the course of this country is being treated so cavalierly as to require protest by all of us

simply because of the nature of the process in which it is being considered.

I hope the Committee on Rules, before it finishes tonight, will hear our words, will make in order a number of amendments and will allow for the real debate that this radical legislation demands. I doubt if we will be satisfied by their ultimate decision.

CLEVELAND TOPS SEATTLE FOR AMERICAN LEAGUE PENNANT

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

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, I made a friendly agreement with the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] of Cleveland, regarding the recent battle between the Seattle Mariners and the tribe from Cleveland. I was really looking forward to using some of that genuine Cleveland slab steel that he promised as part of this to rebuild my 500-foot seawall at our home in Langley. Unfortunately, the Mariners were unable to pull out one more miracle finish in game six last night.

I really have to hand it to the Cleveland Indians. They played a tremendous series. Their pitching was outstanding. I wish them the best in the World Series.

Also, I know that the gentleman from Ohio will enjoy the salmon and the apples from the great State of Washington.

Even in defeat, the Seattle Mariners proved to be a team of character and unmatched resilience. Time after time they came back from what seemed to be a hopeless situation. Whether it was Randy Johnson striking out the side to preserve a win or Edgar Martinez hitting a grand slam to win the game, we are proud of them.

Mr. Speaker, we in Congress can learn a lot from both of those teams. Hard work, perseverance, and teamwork are the key to success. We need all the help possible in the weeks to come in our drive to balance the budget.

Again, congratulations to the Seattle Mariners for an amazing season and good luck to the Cleveland Indians in the World Series.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. METCALF. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to express my gratitude as well as sympathy to the gentleman from Washington. Of course, it is easy to be magnanimous in victory, but I must say you really are a gentleman, and I appreciate the kind words with respect to our prospects in the World Series.

I have to tell the gentleman that this is a particularly special time for anybody from Cleveland. We have been in the wilderness a long, long time, and as you all know, as you well know, the last time we were in the World Series

was also the last time that the Republican party was able to take over this Congress. I think that was in 1952 when we won the Congress.

Now, the other thing that most people do not know is that in 1948 we also won the World Series when we controlled the Congress, the Republicans did, and the Indians went to the series then with the Braves again. Not the Atlanta Braves, of course, but at that time the Boston Braves. It was the Boston Braves at the time, and we won that series four games to two.

So I think that those things are extremely good omens for the Indians in this World Series.

By the way, I wanted to make sure that the gentleman from Washington, we remember what the Indians looked like here with the logo, and of course, as I understand it, people are going pretty crazy in Cleveland right now, as you can imagine, after 40 years of drought.

I wanted to say one other thing if I might on the gentleman's time, and that is that I spoke with the distinguished Speaker of the House of Representatives, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. GINGRICH], who of course represents a part of the great city of Atlanta with whom the mighty Indians of Cleveland will be battling and what is undoubtedly going to be dubbed the most politically incorrect series of this century with the Atlanta Braves going against the Cleveland Indians.

But I have made a proposal to Mr. GINGRICH which he has accepted. He is not able to be here tonight, I have been informed, because he is trying to solve the last bits of the Medicare bill, but I made the following wager and that is that I have a beautiful tie that has Cleveland Indians on it, and he has agreed that if the Indians win he will wear that tie for an entire day that this House is in session, and he will also make a contribution of whatever special foods they have, hopefully Vidalia onions and peaches from the great State of Georgia, to a hunger center of my choice in Cleveland.

If the Braves win, I will wear a Braves tie and also make a contribution of a slew of frozen pirogies to be sent down to a hunger center in Atlanta.

I appreciate the Speaker accepting the wager.

I really do appreciate the kind words of the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF]. I am looking forward to that smoked salmon, I have to tell you, and I am sorry that the season was curtailed for the great Mariners, but it could not be better for the Indians.

Mr. METCALF. I thank the gentleman, and I might comment that I would have presented their logo even without the banner, but I do appreciate the banner.

AMERICA'S VOICE MUST BE HEARD ON MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, the voice of the American people must be heard. Their cries and pleas cannot be ignored by those of us in Congress. We must heed their call.

I received petitions from my congressional district—hundreds and hundreds of missives from my constituents on the issue of Medicare. Here are their voices—listen to all of them—"Without Medicare, I won't have anything" said one elderly woman. "Do not cut Medicare * * * it is all that I have" wrote another senior citizen.

Did the Congress, created by the Founding Fathers to be a deliberative body as it creates legislation, deliberate this issue with all due respect. Indeed, I say not. The majority insured that this governing body devoted all of a single day to this issue—integral to the health and welfare of our Nation.

The 1-day hearing conducted by the majority was to discuss their proposal to cut the Medicare Program by \$270 billion.

That cut is roughly three times higher than any previous plan. My colleagues, before America or this Congress buys into the proposal to cut Medicare, there are many questions that should be asked and that must be answered.

We must ask, how they expect poor seniors, those on fixed income, to pay for the increases they must bear?

Will Medicare beneficiaries be able to choose their own doctors? True freedom and choice for seniors does not exist under the Medicare Preservation Act.

Where will the \$90 billion in unspecified savings come from?

How will hospital closings be prevented, especially in rural communities?

Why is it that none of the funds from the increase Medicare premiums will be contributed to the Medicare trust fund? Where is it going—I know the answer and so should the American people—to pay for your imprudent tax cut.

Why is it necessary to insist on a tax break for the wealthy, while cutting Medicare for those least able to absorb those cuts—the elderly, the sick, and the disabled?

These and others are important questions, my colleagues.

They deserve frank answers.

The majority should not rush this legislation to the floor as part of their speeding train. We need to have more bipartisan support to protect Medicare as well as Medicaid.

We cannot ignore the impact of this \$270 billion cut upon the heart and soul of our Nation—rural areas.

Citizens of rural America will certainly be jolted by these unnecessary cuts, since their incomes are 33 percent, yes one third, lower than their urban counterparts.

One third less money for everything, including health care.

Did you also know that our elderly citizens, they are 60 percent more like-

ly to live in poverty if they live in rural areas—60 percent.

Through the Medicare Preservation Act, Medicare funds for rural Americans will be cut by at least \$58 billion dollars.

That is \$58 billion less for our rural health care facilities and providers. If this atrocity comes to pass, we are certain to lose more rural hospitals than we already have. I have been there, have you? I served as the chair of the Warren County Board of Commissioners, my home county, when we had to close our county hospital. Citizens of Warren County now have to drive outside the county to seek hospital care.

Twenty-five percent of rural hospitals already operate at a loss, and that is because Medicare and Medicaid alone accounts for almost 60 percent of the average hospital's net patient revenue. Can you imagine the havoc that these cuts will wreak upon rural areas. More hospitals are sure to go under, need there be more counties like Warren?

I cannot in good conscience believe that the bulk of the American people support the majority's plan to cut Medicare and Medicaid.

The \$270 billion cut translates into at least \$45 billion dollars less for the health care for impoverished, disabled or elderly Americans in rural areas. For Pitt County Memorial Hospital, one of the finest university medical schools in rural areas, this cut translates into \$621 million dollar loss from 1996 to 2002—\$621 dollars less of needed medical care. For Nash General Hospital, \$234 billion dollars less in the same time period. For the Craven Regional Medical Center, \$211 billion less and I could go on and on and on. I think you get my point. And I know that the senior citizens of my district as well as the nation hear me. Mr. Speaker why can't we hear the pain of these proposed cuts. I will vote against this mean-spirited legislation.

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

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

AMA WRITING KEY PORTIONS OF MEDICARE BILL

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

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, cynicism toward our political process received another boost last week, as the American Medical Association [AMA] received key concessions in return for endorsing the Republican's plan to reduce Medicare spending by \$270 billion. In return for their support, the AMA is being allowed to write key portions of