

week they were saying they wanted to fix it to the next election. Well, our next election is long before 2006. They want to cut \$270 billion when we only need \$89 billion to fix it to the same year. Their numbers do not add up. That is their problem. They do not add up to the year 2002 because they are taking \$245 billion as a tax cut.

In the 30 years that we have had Medicare, it was a Democratic Congress overcoming Republican opposition to enact Medicare. It has been saved eight times in the past 30 years, and hopefully we will save it again for the senior citizens, that is, until tomorrow, when we vote on the Republican Medicare reform proposal.

That is a surrender of the commitment that our government made with senior citizens in 1965. The majority feels it is so important to fulfill their campaign promise of a tax cut that busts our budget. They talk about they want a balanced budget. I want one, too, but let us get our financial house in order before we worry about \$245 billion in tax cuts and throwing families back to the Dark Ages where seniors have to decide whether they want to pay for rent, utilities, food, or health care.

The worst part of their bill is that, rather than the fact that the Medicare is being cut \$270 billion, again, it is to pay for that \$245 billion tax cut. That is the outrage that people are saying. That is why they wanted to run this through with only one hearing in the House and arresting seniors who came over to testify. This plan had a lot less than the President's health care plan that most of the other side opposed. So I would hope that we would deal with it.

Tonight there is a vigil out on our Capitol steps by seniors who are raising their voice in opposition. I would hope that 30 years from now, when we celebrate the 60th anniversary of Medicare, it will be because we voted this down tomorrow. If we do not vote it down, then the President will veto it, and next year the voters in our country will recognize who is really concerned about health care for seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. BROWN], from Cleveland, who is now the American League champion.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I have had lots of town meetings in my district. I hear the anger from senior citizens and from their families about the \$270 billion in Medicare cuts in order to pay for tax breaks for the wealthy and about the Republicans idea to give people the right to choose health care plans but take away their right to choose a doctor.

What I am also hearing from senior citizens is they are particularly concerned about fraud in Medicare. The inspector general said that as much as \$200 billion, as much as \$200 billion of fraud over the next 7 years in the Medicare plan. Yet the Republicans bill actually promotes fraud, waste, and

abuse. The New York Times had an editorial called Bribes for Doctors talking about the midnight deal, that the Speaker's deal made Medicare substantially worse.

It is clear that as bad as the fraud is, it does not make sense to give tax breaks to the wealthy of \$245 billion while you are cutting Medicare \$270 billion and taking away the ability of government to fight fraud and investigate and prosecute fraud.

MEDICARE OVERHAUL

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

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, earlier this evening the gentleman from California, Mr. FAZIO, made the statement that the Republicans do not want Americans to fully understand our Medicare reform bill. I would like to challenge that assertion because in fact it has been our experience and my personal experience that what we need to do is precisely make sure that Americans, particularly America's senior citizens, understand our Medicare present reform bill. When they do, they like it. And they like it very much.

That has been my experience. It was my experience this evening. I had a letter that one of my staff members placed on my desk from a 70-year-old gentleman in my district that was very upset. He had been listening to my friends on this side of the aisle. He said he was having a hard time sleeping because he and his wife had been in and out of hospital. He heard we were going to take his Medicare away. So I said to him, let us go through it one step at a time. And I said, do you like your Medicare just as it is? He said, yes, I am very happy with it.

I said, well, under our plan, you will keep your fee-for-service Medicare just as it is. And you and your wife will be able to go into the hospital and go to the doctors next year and the year after that and the year after that just as you have been now. In fact we are going to make sure that the system is there for you.

I said, we are not going to raise your deductibles. Oh, you are not? No, we are not. We are not going to raise your co-pays. You are not? I heard them say that you are. Well, we are not. What are you going to raise? Are you going to raise the portion that I pay for my part B? I said, no, we are not going to raise the portion that you pay. You pay 31.5 percent now. And you will pay 31.5 percent next year. And your friends and neighbors will pick up the other 68.5 percent next year just as they have this year.

I said that 31.5 percent is going to go up a little bit just as it did last year, the year before that. But your COLA's, your Social Security COLA will go up by even more than that, so your Social Security check that you receive next January will be bigger than the Social

Security check that you are receiving now and will receive through the end of the this year. So you are going to have more money in your pocket at the end of the day next year, when this plan takes effect, and exactly the same health care that you chose now.

We find that, when we go to focus groups, when we go to town meetings and we explain in detail this plan, the senior citizens thank us. They like it. They have nothing to fear and they know it. And if they do not know it now, they certainly will know it once the President signs the bill and it goes into effect.

Let me talk about some of the disinformation that has been difficult for us to deal with.

□ 2215

Members of the minority party have stood up all night, and they stood up for weeks and weeks and weeks, and talked about Medicare cuts, and, as we have said over and over again, no one is going to cut Medicare. We are going to increase the expenditures per capita on Medicare beneficiaries by 40 percent over the next 7 years. That is a whopping increase, it is a generous increase, and it is more than enough money to restore and preserve the system and continue the same benefits package.

So we do want Americans to understand that because when Americans understand that and they understand that we are going to spend more on them in each of the next 7 years, and not less, they are comforted, and they need to be comforted because they have been told a lot of falsehoods.

We have heard people say from the other side that we are going to take away. One of the gentlewomen from the other side of the aisle said, "cutting health care," cutting health care as if a single senior citizen in this country would not have access to exactly the same health care services when our plan is in effect as it is now. Simply not true. Every senior citizen in this country will be able to stay in the fee-for-service program and get precisely the same health care benefit next year as they do this year.

Now, that is an indisputable fact that is not even subject to debate, and yet I hear Members from the other side of the aisle over and over again talk about cutting health care. I walked past the sort of ginned-up candlelight vigil outside the Capitol tonight, and I heard the minority leader of this House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT], talk about Republicans doing away with Medicare, and I shook my head. I shook my head and thought how could a Member of the U.S. Congress utter those words knowing deep in his heart that no one in this body would ever contemplate for a moment doing that. Certainly, this Member, whose mother and father he deeply loves and whose mother and father are Medicare recipients, would never do anything to reduce their package, their benefits. We have heard

over and over again the talk about forcing seniors into managed care, forcing seniors into managed care. We do not do that. What we do is we preserve the system. We preserve it not only for this generation but the next, and I hope we all vote for it tomorrow.

VOTE "NO" ON THE REPUBLICAN PLAN TO RAPE MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BUNN of Georgia). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. KLINK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, there was a song back in the early 1970's by Janis Joplin, and the previous speaker, my colleague from Pennsylvania, kind of reminded me of it. I would like to change the words, and that is she said, "Freedom is just another word for nothing left to lose." I think it is freedom is just another word for being forced to choose, and that is what the Republican Medicare plan is about. Senior citizens will be forced to choose whether or not they want to follow their doctor. That is as the Republican fail-safe, and he is right. If people want to stay in traditional Medicare as they have it today, they will be able to do it, but they may find out that their doctor does not do it because the fail-safe plan the Republicans have built into Medicare is going to squeeze the traditional medical fee for service, and so you may have to choose whether or not you stay with your doctor or whether you follow that doctor who decides to go out and get involved in HMO's or managed-care systems.

So freedom to choose is being forced to choose, to have to choose whether you want to stay with your Medicare system as it is now or you want to stay with your doctor if that doctor decides to sever himself from the system.

This Congress began the 104th Congress with very loud chanting of a Contract With America. Medicare, Mr. Speaker, is a Contract with America. It is a contract that was made 30 years ago at a time when one in three senior citizens in this Nation lived in poverty, when it was common for senior citizens to have to decide whether they were going to heat, whether they were going to eat, buy medicine, or pay the rent. It was a common problem prior to Medicare for the children of those senior citizens to have to decide what they would do with their assets, how much they would spend or how much they would sell off if mom or dad got sick. This is the 1930's, and 1940's, and 1950's, prior to Medicare that the Republican plan wants to take us back to. This is the \$270 billion that they want to cut, \$270 billion they want to cut, and, yes, dollars are fungible. These dollars are not going into, this \$270 billion that we are cutting from growth of the program, is not going to prop up Social Security. It is not going to prop up Medicare. Dollars being fungible, it is

going to pay for that \$245 billion tax cut.

Now, I know that my colleagues on the other side say we are not cutting, we are not cutting. We are slowing the increase. The question is this:

Will seniors get less? Yes. Will seniors pay more? Yes. They are going to pay more and get less. That is a cut. Will the part B premium double over 7 years from \$46.10 now to over \$90? Yes, that part B premium will be doubling. Will it go back to prop up the part A that the trustees' report deals with and that seniors are upset with? No, it will not be used to prop up part A. Did one Republican vote for the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 that at that time saved Medicare? Not one, not in this body and not in the other body, and that was in 1993 when we were told the same thing that we are being told now, that we have to make adjustments on Medicare. Not one Republican vote went up to save Medicare in 1993. Yet, now they have got all their concerns, and in fact how many Republicans voted for Medicare back in 1965 when it went into law? The fact of the matter is 93 percent of them voted against it.

The majority leader takes to the well of the House and says in a free country he would have no part of Medicare, and yet we hear Member after Member stand up saying, Trust us, trust us. We want to save Medicare. We are all for it now.

I say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, Your actions speak much louder than your words and speak many more volumes than your words, that in fact it is evident to us that you have not ever supported Medicare and you are not supporting Medicare now.

This whole idea of a Medicare savings account, what a joke it is. Senior citizens in my district, very poor to moderate income in coal-mining and steel towns of southwestern Pennsylvania, many of my seniors live only on Social Security, and I know Social Security was not intended to be the sole support of people in their final years, but a point of fact: For many it is. Those people cannot afford to plow in thousands of dollars that they would spend in a few moments of having major health problems. They cannot afford it, and in fact I heard from a lady just several weeks ago who said to me, "Congressman KLINK, the fact of the matter is that after I pay the expenses that I have to pay, my rent, my utility bills, I've got \$87 that's for food, that's for everything that I am going to spend for the rest of the time I'm here."

Medicare savings accounts will not help people like that. Vote no on the Republican plan to rape Medicare.

REPUBLICAN PLAN BRINGS HEALTH CARE INTO THE NINETIES

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

tleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, you know we all elected 435 Members of this body on certain campaign promises and representations, and, you know, some of it is campaign rhetoric and some of it is not, some of it is righteous indignation, and some of it is accurate, some of it is not. But when you get elected, we know you do have to do the hard job of governing, and some of the job is very, very difficult, some of the decisions that you have to make.

Now one of the things that we as the new majority were faced with this year was the bankruptcy of Medicare, and that is from the chart right here where the trustees, the Medicare trust fund, said that the plan is going to go bankrupt in 7 years. We got to deal with that. We cannot hide our heads in the sand.

Now just think what would happen in a good bipartisan effort if the best ideas of the Democrat Party, the best ideas of the Republican Party, came together and said, By golly, this is—these are our moms and dads. We got to come together and save this.

You know it is very difficult to get some things established in this town, or some things passed, when you have a whole group of special interest organizations out on both sides of the aisle convincing constituencies that the sky is falling. If the Republican plan goes through, or if the Democrat plan goes through, send me your \$25 check to prevent this horrible thing from happening, and yet, you know, I would think inside this body of the 435 of us would maybe be above that kind of foolishness, that we would say, you know, maybe there is something to be said for what the Democrats are saying, and maybe there is something to be said for what the Republicans are saying, and just maybe we can get our ideas together and do the best for both instead of all this that, oh, you are going to cut, you are going to throw senior citizens out on the street, you are going to do this, you are going to do that.

You know, I heard a speaker earlier tonight say we voted against the Clinton plan and we should not have voted for it. It added countless new bureaucracies and agencies in the health care system that clearly had rationing, and there were not choices of physicians. You know here is a plan that allows choice of physicians.

Now you know the Washington Post, which as my Democrat colleagues would say certainly is not exactly the Republican, you know, GOPAC brochure; you know what do they say about the Republican plan? They are saying that they are being responsible, this is credible, it is innovative, it addresses a genuine problem. That is what the Republican plan says.

Now you know on you folks it says what the Democrats do and it is scare tactics, demagogery, and it is wrong.