

"Gentlemen, I fear we have awakened a sleeping giant and filled him with a terrible resolve."

If this sneak attack on Medicare passes tomorrow, the American people will again be filled with a terrible resolve and they will know how to repay the attackers.

RENEWING MEDICARE COMMITMENT

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

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

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. KINGSTON. We are trying to elevate this debate and I just heard that the Republican Medicare plan is the same as the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. I really believe you owe my father, a World War II veteran, and most Medicare recipients an apology for such a statement. I am offended by it. I think the veterans of America are offended by that.

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

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. No, I will not yield, Mr. Speaker. I have only got 5 minutes and I have got to get up in the morning, so I want to get my 5 minutes out of the way.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the people of the Fourth District of Oklahoma sent me here to Washington to work for what I believe in and talk about what I believe and since coming to Washington in January, I think that I have been doing just that. But tonight I would like to change pace and talk for a moment about what I do not believe.

First I do not believe that there is a single Member of this body who does not understand how important Medicare is to his or her older constituents.

Second, I do not believe there is a single Member of this body who does not understand that the Medicare system is going to run out of money if serious reforms are not enacted.

Finally, I do not believe there is a single Member of this body who would craft a bill to cast a vote that places the health care of America's senior citizens in jeopardy.

In 1965, the 89th Congress made a commitment to older Americans when it enacted the Medicare Program. At that time, health care for the elderly became part of our Nation's basic social contract with her citizens.

Today with Medicare facing bankruptcy, that commitment is in serious jeopardy. Tomorrow we have the opportunity to do something about that. We have the opportunity to renew our commitment to older Americans and an opportunity to revive a Medicare Program that is seriously in danger of default.

The plan to save Medicare that will be considered on the floor of the House

tomorrow is a responsible and desperately needed measure that addresses the serious financial problems facing the Medicare Program.

The rhetoric has run high here in the Chamber on the subject of Medicare but I ask the American people to stop and think for a moment. Every single Member who has worked on drafting these reforms and every single Member who supports these reforms has constituents, family, and friends who will be affected by the actions that we take.

I have heard Members in this Chamber say the reforms that we are proposing will be cataclysmic for our constituents. I have heard these reforms will be a monumental failure. I have heard these reforms will destroy the medical care system that we have put in place for our Nation's senior citizens.

I do not believe it, Mr. Speaker. I do not believe it, because it simply is not true. The Members who support these much needed reforms represent tens of millions of senior citizens who vote, who work on our campaigns, who trust us to do what is right. More than that, many of these golden-agers are our parents. Each of us takes that trust very seriously. That is why we have crafted a bill that guarantees that older Americans will have a viable and secure Medicare Program now and in the future.

Furthermore, we also have to work to preserve Medicare to the next generation, those baby boomers who are currently watching this debate and will fund this program until their retirement. It makes no sense to do otherwise.

I urge my colleagues to support the plan to save Medicare and maintain the contract we signed 30 years ago with America's senior citizens.

VOTE AGAINST REPUBLICAN MEDICARE BILL

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

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote against the Medicare bill tomorrow.

I am a senior citizen. I understand the issues in this bill, and I want to say to you, much of it is mendacity, in that what has happened here is that the senior citizens of this country are being sold a bill of goods and it is not right. Do not think that they are crazy. They are sophisticated. They understand that they are not getting full treatment here. They understand that they will not be able to get the high quality of care that they are getting now.

We could not bring a chart in front of every one of them here and prove to them that they are going to get the same quality of care when this bill passes, if it does, that they are getting now. So they know better.

The so-called Medicare Preservation Act of 1995 raises more questions than

it answers. The Republican plan is really not tough on waste, fraud and abuse because first of all it fails to really criminalize waste and fraud in the bill, and it does not give the high quality of care that I just talked about.

The burden of proof should not be placed on the Government, but it is in this bill. In terms of knowing why the Republican leadership raises premiums for the elderly at the same time that it makes it easier to rip off the Medicare system, I cannot understand.

One of their own Members here in this article from the Washington Times, a Republican ex-prosecutor upset by handling of the program's abuse, and I quote, he said here that I support the GOP Medicare reform generally but the fraud and abuse provisions are woefully inadequate. It fails to criminalize Medicare fraud, it raises the threshold of proof necessary to convict a doctor, hospital or other care providers under Federal anti-kickback statutes.

It is important that we know, that seniors know what is going on, they are aware of these things and we must be sure to keep saying it.

My constituents want to know why the Republican leadership bill will cut Medicare payments to hospitals that serve the poor. For years and years I worked in the Florida legislature to be sure that a proportionate share was given to those hospitals who serve the poor.

My constituents want to know why the Republican leadership is cutting Medicare by \$270 billion so that there can be a \$245 billion tax cut. Let me tell you how the Republican leadership plans to increase Medicare premiums will affect a constituent who wrote to me last month. She is 69 years old and her husband is 67. Their monthly income is \$811 from Social Security. She pays a rent of \$475, utilities of \$150, and insurance of \$98. That leaves the couple \$88 a month in cash along with \$96 in food stamps for everything else, for food, for clothing and for all medical expenses that they have to pay out of their own pocket. She has cancer and her husband has diabetes and cancer. The Republican leadership bill says that the part B Medicare premium which under current law would be \$43 per month next year will rise to \$54 a month next year and continue to rise until it reaches \$87 a month 7 years from now.

How is my constituent going to pay that? An extra \$11 a month next year may not seem like a lot of money to the people getting those big tax cuts but let me tell you, it is a lot of money to an elderly person. If you do not believe it, just talk to them, that has only \$88 a month for food, clothing, and prescription drugs.

Why does the Republican leadership want to raise Medicare premiums at the same time it is retreating in the war against Medicare fraud and abuse? That is what my constituents want to know. One of them called my attention

to a recent report by Citizens Against Government Waste, an organization that has 600,000 members. The report is called "Medicare Fraud: Tales from the Gyped." This report gives examples of Medicare fraud from all parts of the country.

Why is it we do not strengthen these laws instead of weakening them as Republicans do in this bill? FBI Director Louis Freeh has testified that cocaine distributors in southern Florida are turning to Medicare fraud. We need to strengthen that in the Republican bill instead of weakening it. It is so important that you realize that senior citizens in Florida and in other States must be given an opportunity for quality care, not a three-tiered level of care but one level of care that everyone can make their quality of lives much better.

I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, but there is an epidemic in this country of people who want to beat the system. Why should we make it better? Why should the Republican leadership do this?

There are a majority of Republicans who voted against Medicare, Mr. Speaker. Why is it now they are such proponents of Medicare? We should kill this bill tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

PRESERVING MEDICARE

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

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my friend and colleague the gentlewoman from Florida bemoan what she feels to be inadequacies in the new Majority's plan for Medicare reform.

Let me point out to the gentlewoman and indeed other Members of the Minority who may share her concerns that this Majority is listening. As a matter of fact, the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SCHIFF] will offer an amendment tomorrow, I think more than symbolic, I think symptomatic of the fact that we address that we have a serious problem here and we are looking for legitimate ways to solve it. So be on the lookout.

Mr. Speaker, I trust the gentlewoman from Florida will join us, as will many of her colleagues on the other side, to vote for a responsible amendment to add even more fraud and waste abuse prevention.

Let us tell you what the plan is doing right now even without the Schiff amendment. Here is what we are doing in the plan to strengthen Federal efforts to combat waste, fraud and abuse in the Medicare program.

First of all, we are providing monetary incentives for individuals who report a violation that results in savings to the program. Second, we are doubling sanctions for filing false claims or committing fraud. Third, we are authorizing direct spending from Medicare trust funds for the OHS Inspector General.

Again, let us address the fact that we will deal with waste, fraud and abuse. Some steps are taken, even more steps will be forthcoming tomorrow in the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SCHIFF].

It has been interesting to hear some of the debate tonight. While good people can from time to time disagree, and oftentimes we do in this Chamber, as is our right, being American citizens, I did listen with interest to one of the Members compare this with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. That has no place in this debate. That has no place whatsoever.

The gentlewoman from Florida used the term mendacity to talk about the new majority's plan. Mendacity to those building word power—the gentleman from Ohio went and checked the dictionary—and it refers to deceit or lies.

The facts speak for themselves. The Medicare trustees' report issued by a bipartisan group said the Medicare trust fund goes broke in 7 years if we do not move to solve the problem.

Mr. Speaker, one of my friends from Pennsylvania pointed out that when this Medicare bill was passed in 1965, only 7 percent of the then minority party, the Republican Party, voted for Medicare. I guess we could play historical one-upmanship. I guess we could come in and say, which party controlled the Congress when the slaves were freed, which party controlled the Congress when women were given the right to vote. In both instances, the Republican Party controlled this Chamber.

But we are not here to play historical one-upmanship. For the question is not who created a program, the question is who is willing to step forward to protect, preserve and defend a program? The fact is, we have to move now deliberately to save this program. Band-Aid approaches will not work.

I do champion the fact that at long last our friends on the other side have offered a plan. One newspaper analysis called it "a deathbed conversion." After months of saying do not do anything, things are going fine, do not change the system, the, suddenly, in the last nanosecond of the 11th hour, the new minority steps forward and says, "Well, yeah, there has got to be a change, but not too much of a change."

When the canard that failed to work, that these savings were somehow going to tax breaks, when that canard failed to sink in with the American people, then they said, "Well, we have to look for a plan." It is a plan, regrettably, symptomatic of the politics of the past, for what it calls for is a Band-Aid approach.

Let us get through the next election and maybe, if we are lucky, a few years beyond that. Believe me, when it comes to electoral health, I think everyone's impulse would be, gee, if we did not have to deal with the problem, we would not want to, but the fact is we are elected to govern. It is our respon-

sibility to save this program, reasonably, rationally. We passed a budget plan. We took care of the tax cuts way back in March. We have paid for the tax breaks. Even if the budget were balanced tomorrow, we would still have this problem with Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, friends on the other side, we may disagree. But it is incumbent on all of us to look to preserve a program for the future, and Medicare Plus does that and more. It offers choice. It offers freedom to the American people to choose the doctor they want and the health care plan they want. That is why I urge my colleagues to join with us in a bipartisan fashion to reform Medicare in the years to come.

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

Mr. MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

AGAINST THE MEDICARE BILL

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

Mr. OLIVER. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House will consider the Republican bill to dismantle Medicare. We should be not at all surprised, because 93 percent of Republicans voted against Medicare when it was created in 1965. Even the Republican leader in the other branch, the Presidential candidate, BOB DOLE, cast one of those no votes.

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Republicans have waited 30 years for their chance to dismantle Medicare. So who is backing them in this effort? Well, first off, private insurance companies are thrilled because they stand to make billions of dollars. It is insane to turn over billions of Medicare dollars, tax dollars, to insurance companies who will waste about 25 cents of every Medicare dollar on profits and administrative costs, when the current Medicare system only spends about 3 cents of every dollar on administrative costs. That takes senior citizens' health care dollars and gives them to insurance company profits.

Who else is with the Republicans? Well, the American Medical Association. By the way, they also opposed Medicare when it was created. But the October 12 headline in the Wall Street Journal tells the whole story there, and I quote, "House GOP Medicare bill wins over doctors with hidden enticements, promises of profits."

Republicans are not talking about comprehensive health care reform this year. They are cutting \$270 billion out of the Medicare budget to pay for a \$245 billion tax cut package. More than half of the tax cuts go to persons who make