

I do not want Medicare to die on the vine. I want it to live and to continue to provide health care and security to our older Americans.

The Speaker and the Republicans have been saying for weeks now that what they were trying to do was to save Medicare. We told you that was not their purpose. Now the truth is out. They never wanted Medicare. They never wanted Medicare in 1965. And now they want it to die on the vine.

We have got to fight to keep it living and serving our senior citizens. We cannot let Medicare die on the vine.

MORE ON THE MEDICARE DEBATE

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

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, again, we say the Speaker made a mistake. Last weekend I happened to be in Phoenix with a number of senior citizens at a senior housing project, El Prima Vera, and they were concerned that we were taking away Medicare. I said, what is it, the Democrats in the debate scaring you?

They said, no, our fear has been reassured, reconfirmed, because we have heard the Republican leadership plan and clear, plain English, with the Senate President telling us that he did not support Medicare because he thought it would fail, which is false because that is a safety net that many seniors today rely on to get their medical health care.

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And then to top it off, it was the Speaker who was not concerned about the administration but who wanted to abolish Medicare, and that is the plain English truth.

REPUBLICANS HAVE THE ONLY PLAN

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

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, President Clinton says he thinks we can balance the budget in 7 years. Republicans have passed a bill that balances the budget in 7 years.

President Clinton says he wants to cut taxes. Republicans have passed a bill that cuts taxes for families and promotes economic growth.

President Clinton says he wants to save Medicare from bankruptcy. Republicans have passed a bill that saves Medicare for this generation and sets the stage for the baby boomers.

President Clinton says he wants to end welfare as we know it. Republicans have passed a plan to revolutionize the failed welfare system.

Mr. Speaker, talk is cheap. If the President is going to veto our balanced budget bill, then he is obligated to show us specifically what he would do differently. Balancing the budget is

about more than just press conferences and talking points, it is about specific plans. And right now Republicans are the only ones with a legitimate plan.

THE DEFICIT HAS ALREADY BEEN CUT

(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, Members, we hear talk about the 7-year balanced budget and the 10-year balanced budget.

We did not develop the debt that we have or the deficit in 7 years or even 10 years. In fact, in the 1980's, the deficit exploded, but it took us decades to get the financial house in the shape that we have it now. In fact, in 1992, the last year of a Republican administration in the White House, we had a \$290 billion deficit. This year, that deficit is down to \$163 billion.

Now, whether we talk about 7 years or 10 years, that is all a political game. What we are talking about is that we reduced the deficit under a Democratic President, without cutting Medicare, without cutting education, and without raiding the pension plans.

We do not need to let Medicare wither on the vine, Mr. Speaker.

KEEPING OUR PROMISES

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

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, apparently the previous speaker does not understand the difference between the debt and the deficit. We are not talking about paying off a debt that it has taken some 40 years to run up. We are talking about balancing the budget and bringing the deficit from \$200 billion down to zero.

No question about it, when you have a \$5 trillion debt, it would be very difficult to pay that off in a 7-year period. Unfortunately, this budget does not do that. It does not, in fact, pay off any of it, but what it does do is it gets us down to zero in terms of deficit.

Last week we did pass a balanced budget bill for the first time in 25 years. In doing that, we kept our promise. We kept our promise.

The President made a promise 3 years ago he was going to balance the budget in a 5-year period. He did not keep that promise.

In fact, he gave us a bad budget agreement in 1993 that showed \$250 billion deficits as far as the eye can see.

We made the promise to balance the budget. We kept that promise, and that is probably the most important promise that we could have kept.

Because what does it mean? It means lower interest rates. It means more prosperity. It means more jobs. It means we are not going to be taxing our children for our own profligacy.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON VA-HUD BILL TO ELIMINATE ENVIRONMENTAL RIDERS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, there is going to be an effort this afternoon which I support to try to eliminate environmental riders that were put into the EPA appropriations bill by the Republican leadership. These Republican riders would severely hamper the EPA's ability to enforce regulations that are the veritable backbone of environmental protection in this country, leaving the EPA severely crippled and the environment utterly defenseless.

These provisos, supported by the Republican leadership, would limit EPA's ability to spend funds on activities related to the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, RCRA, and Superfund. They even prevent the EPA from establishing drinking water standards for radon and arsenic, both known carcinogens.

These provisions are criminal in terms of the effects they will have on the environment. Then again, letting the environmental criminals off the hook is exactly what these provisions are all about.

I hope we are successful on a bipartisan basis this afternoon in eliminating these riders that severely hamper our ability to prevent the degradation of the Nation's environment.

IT IS TIME TO SET OUR COUNTRY ON THE RIGHT COURSE

(Mrs. SEASTRAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, what do the American people want? They want a Federal Government that is smaller, less costly, and less intrusive. They want us to cut spending and balance the budget. They want relief from taxes. They want us to reform the broken welfare system. And they want us to save Medicare from going bankrupt.

This is exactly why the people elected a Republican majority for the first time in 40 years. They wanted change from the status quo, and we have delivered that change. They wanted Republicans to keep our promises to balance the budget, cut taxes, reform welfare, and save Medicare. We have kept our promises.

Now it is our President's turn. Will President Clinton keep the promises he made? It is time to set our country on the right course. It is what the people want.

DO NOT SHUT DOWN THE GOVERNMENT

(Mr. DURBIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell those who happen to be mortgage holders across America they have a surprise in store. It is the Republican Christmas tax.

Here is what it is all about: In order to force the President's hand on this budget negotiation, Speaker GINGRICH has suggested he would close down the Government.

Major economists know if that occurs interest rates go up. People who have adjusted rate mortgages, where the interest rates vary as those interest rates go up, will have to pay more on their monthly mortgage payment.

So Merry Christmas, America. What Speaker GINGRICH would like to do is close down the Government, raise the interest rates, force higher payments on people's home mortgages.

We just read in the paper this morning working families are finding it tougher than ever to get by. They do not need to receive this sort of Christmas gift from Speaker GINGRICH, this kind of hidden tax, that imposes a greater burden on families in America. It is unfair.

What we need is a bipartisan, commonsense approach that does not cut Medicare, that does not provide a tax break for the wealthiest of Americans. That is what people sent us to Washington to do.

TAXPAYER-SUBSIDIZED LOBBYING

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

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, if one were to take the time to explain the current controversy over taxpayer-subsidized lobbying to the average American, I have no doubt that the Istook-McIntosh-Ehrlich language would win easy approval.

Most of my constituents are flabbergasted to learn that taxpayer-subsidized lobbying occurs at all. They do not believe it is an appropriate use of their tax dollars. It is only inside the beltway that it is considered normal for groups to receive Federal grants that enable those same groups to lobby for more Federal grants. Mr. Speaker, this pernicious practice must end.

A few weeks ago, the House voted to retain the Istook language in an appropriations bill. Now, it is doubtful that that bill will ever make it to the Senate floor. And Senate conferences on a different vehicle have refused to add it to that bill. Mr. Speaker, the instincts of the average American are right. No one can plausibly justify the continuation of taxpayer-subsidized lobbying as we have come to know it.

Mr. Speaker, let us say no to business as usual and at the same time stand up for the taxpayer. Yes to the Istook-McIntosh language on Treasury—Postal.

PROHIBITING DEFENSE CONTRACTORS FROM LOBBYING

(Mrs. SCHROEDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, basically what is going on here is not a debate about will we cut the budget. Of course. It is not a debate about will we cut the deficit. Of course. The question is who bears the brunt of the cuts, and is that fair.

You know, we just heard a 1-minute about charities lobbying. Well, I have an amendment trying to prohibit defense contractors from lobbying. Guess what, it got turned down. You talk about federally subsidized lobbying, and boy, did it pay off. They are getting about \$8 billion more in defense dollars than the President asked for or the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked for.

So to get to a balanced budget then, if you are going to let those paid lobbyists have their way, you are going to have to cut someone else. So who are we cutting? Well, we hear the Speaker saying he hopes Medicare dies on the vine, so I guess we are going to cut the older people. We see people saying we have got to do away with nursing home provisions and so forth.

So the issue is not will we, the question is how we, and the question is who we listen to.

VOTE "YES" ON THE PARTIAL BIRTH ABORTION BAN

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

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Mr. Speaker, my friends, can 3 inches really be our guide to death over live?

Can 3 inches determine the definition of "person" under the 14th and 5th amendments?

Have we become so hardened in our hearts that not even the killing of a child during birth can be recognized as wrong?

It was not always so in America. At one point in our history, "We held these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life * * *"

God have mercy on us.

I urge a "yes" vote on H.R. 1833, the partial birth abortion ban.

SAVE SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

(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, adjust your hearing aids, purchase new spectacles. Yes, if you were surprised to hear NEWT GINGRICH telling the truth for a change that he wanted, as his words say, "Now, we don't get rid of it

in round one," referring to Medicare, "because we don't think that is politically smart, and we don't think that is the right way to go through a transition period; but we believe it is going to wither on the vine," then you have not been listening and you have not been watching.

Because there is nothing new about this plan to wreck Medicare. It was only in February that his very own Progress and Freedom Foundation newspaper entitled their lead editorial "For Freedom's Sake, Eliminate Social Security," and proceeded to say it is time to slay the largest Government entitlement program of all, Social Security.

What we have had here this year is round 1 of eliminating and destroying Medicare and Social Security.

The Republicans did not come to this Congress to save Social Security and Medicare. They came to bury it.

WHAT DOES THE PRESIDENT REALLY WANT?

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I suspect that most Americans are confused as to what the President wants in a Federal budget. The President has said that he wants, one, a plan that will balance the Federal budget in 7 years; two, a plan that will save Medicare from bankruptcy; three, a plan that will end welfare as we know it; and, four, a plan that will cut taxes for families and reduce the capital gains tax to spur job creation and economic growth.

But the President has never presented a plan that would balance the budget and do these other things. The Congress has. However, the President has announced he intends to veto this plan that will balance the budget the House and Senate will shortly send to him.

Mr. Speaker, I, for one, do not understand why the President would veto the only plan that will balance the Federal budget and accomplish the goals he says he supports which is also what the American people want.

Why go through all of that trouble? What does the President really want, Mr. Speaker?

PLAYING WITH FIRE

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

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, there are some in this House who have suggested that perhaps the United States should default on its debt limit and, therefore, default on Treasury bonds.

As one who came to this House from the private sector, who came to this House from the securities industry, let