

# CONSUMER REPORTS LABELS GOP MEDICAID PROPOSAL BUM DEAL FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I would just say to the prior speaker that, in fact, that credit counselor would say, "You are crazy." Crazy that in a difficult time economically for our country, that we are about to provide a \$245 billion tax break for the wealthiest Americans. That is a free lunch for the wealthiest Americans.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent a lot of time in this Congress talking about the cuts in Medicare contained in the GOP budget. Democrats believe that those cuts go too far, too fast and would be harmful to the 37 million seniors who rely on Medicare for their basic health care.

But, it isn't just Medicare cuts which threaten the health security of our senior citizens. The proposed budget also makes deep cuts in Medicaid which put seniors and their families at risk.

Last week, the Consumers Union, better known as the publisher of Consumer Reports, warned that the Medicaid overhaul would add significant new financial burdens on husbands, wives, and adult children of nursing home residents that could force families into poverty. The group estimates that the \$163 billion in proposed cuts will cause hundreds and thousands of nursing home residents to lose their Medicaid coverage.

We all know Consumer Reports as the publication that tells us if we're getting a good deal or a bum deal on a new car or a new computer. This time, they've looked at the Republican Medicaid proposal from a consumer's point of view and have declared it a bum deal for American families.

Currently, Medicaid covers 60 percent of nursing home patients nationwide. The average cost of nursing home care is approximately \$38,000 a year. Without Medicaid, nursing home care would be beyond the reach of middle-income Americans.

According to the Consumers Union, families of nursing home residents can expect the following changes if these Medicaid changes are approved:

Adult children may be held financially liable for the nursing home bills of their parents.

Family assets including homes may be sold or seized by Medicaid liens.

No one is guaranteed Medicaid nursing home eligibility; States may set unreasonably low income levels so that thousands of people will be denied help in paying the high costs of nursing home care.

Families may be forced to spend their life savings for long-term care of a loved one.

A representative from the National Senior Citizens Law Center, Patricia Nemore, said of these changes: "Con-

gress is taking us back to a time when it was commonplace for Americans to lose their homes and their life savings to ensure that their husbands, wives, or parents had adequate nursing home care." She is right, this policy is wrong.

Yesterday, I met with people in my district who have parents in nursing homes. They told me that these changes would be devastating to their attempts to take care of their parents in their old age.

Jack and Patricia D'Urso of Branford, CT, have seven children and two parents, both in nursing homes. Without the help of Medicaid, they don't know how they would care for their parents. While comfortable in their retirement, they simply do not have the resources to pay approximately \$80,000 a year to pay for long-term care of two parents.

Zelda Cooper of Hamden, CT, has two parents receiving nursing home care. She could not believe that Congress would consider ending the guaranteed coverage that her family relies on and has no idea how she would care for her parents should they be forced out of their nursing home.

Now, my Republican colleagues have made much ado of late about losing their message on the budget. They theorize that the American people aren't with them because they haven't heard the Republican message. The opposite is true. The message is coming through loud and clear to the American people. In fact, the more the American people know, the less they like the Gingrich budget.

It's not a bad message that is hurting Republicans, it's bad policy. It is bad policy to ask families to hawk their homes to pay for the nursing home care for loved ones. It is bad policy to impoverish middle-income families to balance the budget. That's why Consumer Reports has labeled the GOP Medicaid proposal is a bum deal for American families.

□ 1315

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Rabbi Motty Berger, Aish HaTorah Yeshiva, Jerusalem, offered the following prayer:

In a sorely troubled world, filled with all too much hatred, violence, and human misery, we pray to You, dear God, for divine guidance; such guidance is needed for all of us, in and out of government, as we work toward a better day for all mankind. We pray to You, our Father, who taught us to love our neighbors and to seek peace, to imbue us with both the wisdom and the will to apply Your teachings in relations between nations as well as between individuals. Let us reflect on the enormous power available to mankind, power which we may use for good or evil, to build or to destroy. It is ours to choose: life or death. May we be inspired by the prophetic message, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts," and thereby choose life. Amen.

## THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. BARR] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BARR led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

## WELCOME TO RABBI BERGER

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

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Rabbi Motty Berger who gave the opening prayer of today's session of the House of Representatives. I was fortunate enough to meet Rabbi Berger several years ago at the College of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem where my wife and I enrolled in one of his courses on Jewish philosophy. During a time of tremendous transition in the Jewish community, I found Rabbi Berger to be an extremely perceptive speaker on topics surrounding the heritage of the Jewish people. He talked passionately about his desire to promote the continuity of Jewish traditions and values.

Rabbi Berger was born and raised in the United States and after graduating high school attended Ner Israel Rabbinical School in Baltimore. After completing his rabbinical studies, he went on to teach Jewish philosophy in Jerusalem and became extremely active with the Aish HaTorah organization. This yeshiva has dedicated itself to creating a warm environment that promotes Jewish unity. With that said,

it is a tremendous honor to welcome Rabbi Motty Berger.

#### DISPENSING WITH CALL OF PRIVATE CALENDAR

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the call of the Private Calendar scheduled for today be dispensed with.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

#### AGREEMENT BETWEEN REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC OFFICIAL OBJECTORS RELATIVE TO PROCEDURES FOR CONSIDERATION OF PRIVATE CALENDAR

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that at this point in the RECORD there be inserted an agreement between the three Republican and three Democratic official objectors to the Private Calendar relative to procedures used for the consideration of the Private Calendar during the 104th Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

The text of the agreement is as follows:

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to set forth some of the history behind, as well as describe the workings of the Private Calendar. I hope this might be of some value to the Members of this House, especially our newer colleagues.

Of the five House Calendars, the Private Calendar is the one to which all Private Bills are referred. Private Bills deal with specific individuals, corporations, institutions, and so forth, as distinguished from public bills which deal with classes only.

Of the 108 laws approved by the First Congress, only 5 were Private Laws. But their number quickly grew as the wars of the new Republic produced veterans and veterans' widows seeking pensions and as more citizens came to have private claims and demands against the Federal Government. The 49th Congress, 1885 to 1887, the first Congress for which complete workload and output data is available—passed 1,031 Private Laws, as compared with 434 Public Laws. At the turn of the century the 56th Congress passed 1,498 Private Laws and 443 Public Laws—a better than three to one ratio.

Private bills were referred to the Committee on the Whole House as far back as 1820, and a calendar of private bills was established in 1839. These bills were initially brought before the House by special orders, but the 62nd Congress changed this produce by its rule XXIV, clause six which provided for the consideration of the Private Calendar in lieu of special orders. This rule was amended in 1932, and then adopted in its present form on March 22, 1935.

A determined effort to reduce the private bill workload of the Congress was made in the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946. Section 131 of that Act banned the introduction or the consideration of four types of private bills: first, those authorizing the payment of money for pensions; second, for per-

sonal or property damages for which suit may be brought under the Federal tort claims procedure; third, those authorizing the construction of a bridge across a navigable stream, or fourth, those authorizing the correction of a military or naval record.

This ban afforded some temporary relief but was soon offset by the rising postwar and cold war flood for private immigration bills. The 82nd Congress passed 1,023 Private Laws, as compared with 594 Public Laws. The 88th Congress passed 360 Private Laws compared with 666 Public Laws.

Under rule XXIV, clause six, the Private Calendar is called the first and third Tuesday of each month. The consideration of the Private Calendar bills on the first Tuesday is mandatory unless dispensed with by a two-thirds vote. On the third Tuesday, however, recognition for consideration of the Private Calendar is within the discretion of the Speaker and does not take precedence over other privileged business in the House.

On the first Tuesday of each month, after disposition of business on the Speaker's table for reference only, the Speaker directs the call of the Private Calendar. If a bill called is objected to by two or more Members, it is automatically recommitted to the Committee reporting it. No reservation of objection is entertained. Bills unobjected to are considered in the House in the Committee of the Whole.

On the third Tuesday of each month, the same procedure is followed with the exception that omnibus bills embodying bills previously rejected have preference and are in order regardless of objection.

Such omnibus bills are read by paragraph, and no amendments are entertained except to strike out or reduce amounts or provide limitations. Matter so stricken out shall not be again included in an omnibus bill during that session. Debate is limited to motions allowable under the rule and does not admit motions to strike out the last word or reservation of objections. The rules prohibit the Speaker from recognizing Members for statements or for requests for unanimous consent for debate. Omnibus bills so passed are thereupon resolved in their component bills, which are engrossed separately and disposed of as if passed separately.

Private Calendar bills unfinished on one Tuesday go over to the next Tuesday on which such bills are in order and are considered before the call of bills subsequently on the calendar. Omnibus bills follow the same procedure and go over to the next Tuesday on which that class of business is again in order. When the previous question is ordered on a Private Calendar bill, the bill comes up for disposition on the next legislative day.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to describe to the newer Members the Official Objectors system the House has established to deal with the great volume of Private Bills.

The Majority Leader and the Minority Leader each appoint three Members to serve as Private Calendar Objectors during a Congress. The Objectors are on the Floor ready to object to any Private Bill which they feel is objectionable for any reason. Seated near them to provide technical assistance are the majority and minority legislative clerks.

Should any Member have a doubt or questions about a particular Private Bill, he or she can get assistance from objectors, their clerks, or from the Member who introduced the bill.

The great volume of private bills and the desire to have an opportunity to study them carefully before they are called on the Private Calendar has caused the six objectors to agree upon certain ground rules. The rules limit consideration of bills placed on the Private Calendar only shortly before the calendar is called. This agreement adopted on

December 5, 1995, the Members of the Majority Private Calendar Objectors Committee have agreed that during the 104th Congress, they will consider only those bills which have been on the Private Calendar for a period of seven (7) days, excluding the day the bill is reported and the day the calendar is called. Reports must be available to the Objectors for three (3) calendar days.

It is agreed that the majority and minority clerks will not submit to the Objectors any bills which do not meet this requirement.

This policy will be strictly enforced except during the closing days of a session when the House rules are suspended.

This agreement was entered into by: The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. Sensenbrenner), the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Coble), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Goodlatte), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Boucher), the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. Mfume), and the gentlelady from Connecticut (Mrs. DeLauro).

I feel confident that I speak for my colleagues when I request all Members to enable us to give the necessary advance consideration to private bills by not asking that we depart from the above agreement unless absolute necessary.

F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER,  
JR.

HOWARD COBLE.  
BOB GOODLATTE.  
RICK BOUCHER.  
KWEISI MFUME.  
ROSA DELAURO.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 20 1-minute speeches on each side.

#### DO THE RIGHT THING: BALANCE THE BUDGET IN 7 YEARS

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, the President has refused to negotiate a balanced budget, just 17 days after signing an agreement to balance the budget in 7 years. There are three plans out there: His plan, which did not get one vote in the Senate, went down 96 to 0; then the Democrat Coalition plan, which did get some votes and does balance in 7 years; but the best plan is the Republican plan.

The reason I believe so is because it has the discipline of a balanced budget. It will balance in 7 years. It is the right thing to do. We will never get there unless we have the discipline.

Second, it deals with the tough issues like welfare reform. We believe it is the right thing for people to work for what they get, and not just get a handout, so they can believe in themselves. We trust States like Kansas to do what is right for those truly in need.

The Republican plan also trusts parents by giving them a \$500 per child tax break. It allows them to spend money on their children rather than the Government. It will strengthen families and it is the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, let us do the right thing for our country, for ourselves, and for