

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans have finally unveiled their budget proposal. And as expected, the news is not good for our senior citizens.

House Republicans returned from their party conference last week united by a plan to cut Medicare in order to pay for their \$345 billion tax cut for the wealthiest Americans. Under this proposal, 37 million seniors will lose \$900 a year while a very lucky 1.1 million taxpayers—those making more than \$230,000 a year—will enjoy a \$20,000 bonus.

When President Clinton came to office, the Medicare Trust Fund was due to run out of funds in 1999. Through tough actions that this administration passed, and every Republican opposed, the trust fund was strengthened for an additional 3 years. The President then proposed a highly detailed health care reform proposal that would have significantly strengthened the Medicare Trust Fund, and again was opposed by most Republicans.

Since last year's election, the President has made clear that he still wants to work on Medicare cost issues with the Republicans, but that it has to be in the context of real health care reform that protects the integrity of the program, expands coverage, and protects choice as well as quality and affordability. No responsible person should stand by and allow Medicare to be used as a cover to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and, in doing so, break our historic contract with the senior citizens.

REPUBLICANS SUBMIT AN HONEST BALANCED BUDGET PROPOSAL

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

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, my daughter is grown and she and her husband have a 1½-year-old son and another child on the way. The last time an official House committee submitted a bill to balance the budget, she was 2.

Today, House Republicans present the first honest attempt to balance the budget. We do so not for politics, but for our children, my daughter and son, and my grandchildren. We do so because my family, your family and families across the country cannot achieve the American dream if we do nothing.

If we do nothing, we will pay more interest on the debt than we spend for defense. Moreover, my grandchildren will pay more than \$185,000 in their lifetimes just to pay interest on the debt.

We will not stand by and watch any child in this country be subject to that type of cruelty. Yet the Democrat Party, which needlessly frightened children of the impending doom of school lunches is utterly unmoved by the threat to the dreams and future of those same kids.

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TRADE DEFICIT WITH JAPAN

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, the battle for a balanced budget is not taking place in the Halls of Congress. The battle for a balanced budget is raging in the Pacific over the protectionist trade policies of Japan. You know that, I know that, and the American worker, they absolutely know it. Watch them at election time.

I commend President Clinton for his efforts. The President's fight is absolutely right. I just hope at the last minute they do not make another compromise washed-down deal.

Let me say this: The hammer is in the hands of Congress. I recommend imposing a 15-percent across-the-board tariff on Japanese products, all products until they open their market. Think about it. That worked for Washington. That worked for Lincoln. And that worked for Japan.

There is nothing wrong with winning and losing is contagious. Let us join the President's fight. Let us take action against Japan. They are not going to open their doors on a voluntary request.

WHERE'S THE DEMOCRATS' PLAN

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Republicans produced a historic plan to bring us to a balanced budget by the year 2002. The liberal Democrats here in Congress have already jumped on the whining, moaning, and groaning bandwagon to denounce our plan in every way they can.

But let me just ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle one question, Where's your bill? Where's your plan to balance the budget?

The fact is that you don't have a plan. You haven't submitted anything in writing to balance the budget. Instead, you are content to sit there maintaining the status quo while our children's future goes down the drain.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans care about the future of our country. Republicans will pass a balanced budget. We will keep our promise to the American people.

KEEPING THE MEDICARE PROMISE

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

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, after waging a war against our Nation's children by slashing school lunch and child nutrition programs, the Republicans have turned their sights on America's senior citizens.

Yesterday, they released the details of a Republican budget that finances

tax breaks for wealthy Americans by gutting Medicare.

The Republicans intend to write their wealthy friends a check for \$305 billion. And to finance this giveaway, they plan to force seniors to cough up an extra \$900 a year.

By targeting those with the most yet to give, our children, and those who have made the greatest sacrifice—our seniors—the Republicans are undermining a fundamental, moral obligation.

This debate is not about deficit reduction. It is about sacrifice. The generation of Americans who now receive Medicare benefits sacrificed to bring this Nation great prosperity.

A senior from my district—from Vacaville, CA—wrote to tell me that these programs are: "promises made to people who earned these benefits."

Promises? Where have I heard that word before? "Promises made, promises kept."

Obviously, this is one promise the Republicans do not intend to keep.

THE WRONG WAY TO GO WITH SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans are solving something that has bothered all the people, but I do not think they are doing it the right way. Older people have complained to me; I am not talking about the wealthy older people who will be the beneficiaries of the Republican tax cuts but the average older person for whom Social Security is a major part of their income. And they have complained that, as the Social Security cost of living has gone up, Medicare has come and taken it away. And they have been virtually equal in many cases.

Well, no longer under the Republican budget plan will the cost-of-living increase that older people get be equal to the increase they have to pay in Medicare. But the Republicans are solving this in the wrong way.

Older people are going to have to pay more for their Medicare, and under the Republican plan they will get less for their Social Security. So every year older people will see under the plan an erosion in their incomes because the Republicans will reduce the cost of living.

They want to cut taxes for wealthy older people who will be making \$150,000 or \$200,000 a year, but they will cut the cost of living for an older person living on \$9,000 or \$10,000. That is the wrong way to go.

REPUBLICANS PROMISES ARE BROKEN

(Mrs. LOWEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, the Republican budget cuts \$24 billion from Social Security. Seniors who have worked hard their whole lives will lose hundreds of dollars in Social Security benefits. Social Security is a contract that we've made with our Nation's seniors. The Republican budget tears that contract into pieces.

The Republican budget cuts \$283 billion from Medicare. The Republican budget will eliminate Medicare as we know it by herding seniors into HMO's and by charging them \$3,500 more for their health care. Seniors who depend on Medicare will be out of luck.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican budget breaks faith with the millions of American seniors who depend on Medicare and Social Security to make ends meet.

Day after day we have heard how the Republicans have kept their promises to the American people. One after another the Republicans told us that promises made are promises kept.

Well Mr. Speaker, today we learn that Republican promises made are promises broken.

Speaker GINGRICH and the Republican majority promised that they would not cut Social Security benefits. They promised not to devastate Medicare.

But what is the truth? What does their new budget say?

This is how the Republicans keep their promises: By cutting Medicare. By cutting Social Security. The American people deserve better.

BROKEN PROMISES

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, Republicans love to get up here everyday and talk about promises made and promises kept, but it seems that my GOP colleagues have forgotten our sacred promise to take care of America's senior citizens. In fact, under the GOP budget proposal, released yesterday, seniors take a double hit.

First, Republicans cut health care for seniors. The GOP budget reduces Medicare spending by \$283 billion over 7 years—a 25-percent reduction in the year 2002. Then, to make matters worse, Republicans turn around and reduce Social Security benefits for seniors by \$24 billion between 1999 and 2002.

Now, Speaker GINGRICH calls these cuts painless. But, they are not painless to the millions of seniors who rely on Medicare and Social Security to help pay the bills and make ends meet.

Republicans promised to protect Medicare. Republicans promised that Social Security would be off the table during this budget debate. Promises made, promises broken.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET AND NATION'S CHILDREN

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

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, we had a long day in the House Committee on the Budget yesterday. I am here to tell Members about one aspect of the Republican plan to balance the budget that they do not want to talk much about. That is about the deep cuts in Medicare, \$184 billion over the next 7 years. And the impact of these would take health insurance away from 5 million kids that now have it. It is taking a health care problem in this country and making it much worse by depriving 5 million kids of health insurance coverage.

The plan does not stop there, because it also assaults the elderly that depend upon Medicaid to help them defray the cost of nursing home expenses when they have exhausted their personal accounts. What will happen to some in a nursing home that has exhausted their life savings? Will they be put out on the street when the Republican Medicaid cuts begin to hit and there are no more funds available? Will they be forced to move in with their children who are already struggling to make it and provide for the college education of their children?

These are questions that need to be answered as we flesh out the Republican budget. Disaster for kids; disaster for seniors.

SHRINKING THE BUDGET

(Mr. WISE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, if they are making a movie this summer of the Republican budget, I think it can be titled "Honey, I Shrunk the Budget and I Blew Up the Economy." I blew it up by gutting Medicare, cutting it up to 25 percent. And who will pay for that? Senior citizens, by not getting care; businesses and young people, by having to pay more insurance premiums; hospitals that have to close because they cannot absorb these kinds of losses.

Blew up the economy by cutting programs that bring growth. Student loans cut by \$33 billion. Student loans that affect almost every person in this country. The Economic Development Administration, the linchpin for so much industrial development, the Appalachian Regional Commission terminated. These grow the economy; the Republican budget shrinks it. Balancing the budget, Mr. Speaker, is important for a strong economy. But not with this budget and not one that bankrupts the economy.

KEEP PRESSURE ON JAPAN

(Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts asked and was given permission to address

the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, recently the United States and Japan resumed automobile trade talks and these talks have collapsed. The talks were aimed at opening the Japanese market to autos and auto parts.

The United States presented new proposals in the two priority areas—improved foreign access to Japan's auto markets and increase sales of auto parts in both the United States and Japan. Japan's auto market remains closed. It has been stated Japan sells as many cars in a week in the United States as United States automakers sell a whole year in Japan.

Japan continues to maintain a closed economy which discriminates against United States auto exports and effects international economics. Japanese officials have expressed dismay over what they termed new demands at a late stage of talks.

Currently, there is a \$36.7 billion United States-Japan gap in trade in autos and auto parts. This gap has to be decreased. Japan's market share of auto imports is only 4 percent. In addition, Japan's market share of auto imports is only 2.4 percent.

Nearly 2 years of negotiations have failed to produce an agreement in the United States-Japan auto trade talks. The administration announced tough trade sanctions against Japan. These sanctions will probably entail higher tariffs on Japanese imports worth billions of dollars a year.

I urge USTR and the administration to remain tough on Japan. The United States-Japan gap in trade is not reflective of the competitiveness of United States autos and auto parts. The United States is manufacturing auto and auto parts that are capable of competing in the Japanese market. The quality of United States products would gradually bring about a reduction of the deficit, if Japan would only begin to open their market.

We need to send Japan a clear message that we will not back down on the opening of their markets to auto and auto parts. If they refuse to negotiate, we should promptly enact tough sanctions.

CLEAN WATER ACT PROTECTIONS THREATENED BY H.R. 961

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 961 because I know that rolling back essential protections of the Clean Water Act will not contribute to the health and welfare of my constituents. In communities such as mine, water quality problems still persist. In addition to New York City-wide problems with giardia, a bacteria that causes stomach ailments, the families in my district