

that has been perpetrated on the American people, is absolutely no excuse for Waco.

And I feel for the people of Waco. Friends of mine that I loved were lost at Waco. But this is a crisis of leadership. It is ludicrous. And this fascination with guns is not propelled by the Constitution of the United States. A concealed weapons law being discussed in Texas is not called for.

Oh, yes, we have the right to have a militia to protect the security of this country, and we should not infringe upon your right to safely own guns. But to perpetrate violence, to have children trying to understand why adults are calling law enforcement officers just boot-wearing thugs? And putting it in print is not called for.

I call upon this Congress to be responsible. Vote against the repealing of the assault weapons ban. We have lived freely without the perpetration of mass gun warfare in this Nation. Let us not have a crisis of leadership.

Former President Bush, I thank you, and I ask you, the American people, to keep your voices raised high. President Clinton, I thank you for your opposition to this kind of talk because this is not a political issue. It is a question of security and life and liberty. It is a question of our children. It is a question of responsible speech. It is a question of integrity. And I maintain, have hearings on the militia now. Understand that gun warfare is not called for in this Nation, and let us wrap ourselves in the Constitution, yes, for freedom and liberty, but for safety and the future of this Nation.

COMMENTS ON THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I have some charts that I wanted to share with you this morning that talk about the budget, because we are going to be talking about the budget all week and are going to be passing for the first time since 1969 a balanced budget resolution. It will show a very important number at the end of the year 2002. It is a small number, it is a round number, it is the zero number, and that is going to be the amount of the deficit in 2002.

I want to show you this chart to begin with because I think it pretty well delineates where the problems are with the budget that we have to get control of. This is essentially the President's budget here. What you see is projections from 1995 to 2002. You will see the two accounts that are increasing or projected to increase twice as fast as any others, and those are Medicare and Medicaid, the medical accounts. Ten percent for Medicare, 10.3 percent for Medicaid. What about Social Security? Five point three percent.

One of the arguments that you are going to hear this week from the other

side repeatedly is that well, we cannot possibly slow the rate of growth of health care spending, Medicare and Medicaid, because of the demographics, more people coming into the system, and because of inflation. Your numbers do not take that into account.

The fact is that Social Security takes that exactly and precisely into account, and, as you can see, the Social Security number increases at 5.3 percent per year. That is in the projected budget. This is our number, this is the President's number, this is current law. This is the way that it is, because we are not touching Social Security in this budget.

Yet, adding the same new seniors, because you qualify for Medicare at the same time you qualify for Social Security, and taking into account a cost of living adjustment, a COLA, and that does not even reflect the small adjustment we are projecting is going to take place in CPI, you can see that clearly Social Security does not run out of control, but Medicare and Medicaid do. So this is where the problem is with the Federal budget. This is where the challenge is in getting it under control.

The other here, which is everything else, is at 4.1 percent. If we move that down to about a 2-percent rate of growth, we win. Winning means winning for our children, it means winning for the future of this country, and winning for the next generation.

Let us look at the trust fund itself. This is the part A trust fund, Medicare. Empty in 2002. You can see, according to the projections, if we do not change things, this is where we will be in 2002. There will not be any money in that trust fund account.

I think better than the graphic illustration of it is exactly what the Medicare trustees concluded on April 3, 1995. This is under the worst case scenario. They said, "The fund is projected to be exhausted in 2001."

Now, who said this? Is this a partisan statement by Republicans who are trying to fearmonger so that senior citizens are worried they will not have Medicare to look forward to? Is that who is saying this? Is this created by Citizens Against Government Waste or the AARP? Has this been created by the Heritage Foundation or Cato Institute? Is it an interest group?

No, it is not. It is the trustees, the President's trustees, the trustees that must be appointed to guard the assets, to safeguard the future of the Medicare trust fund. Robert Rubin, Robert Reich, Donna Shalala, three members of the President's Cabinet. The fund is projected to be exhausted in 2001.

So what do we do? What is our solution? What we say is we are going to increase spending from \$158 billion in 1995 to \$258 billion in 2002. We are going to increase spending at the same rate of growth that Social Security is increasing, is growing. In other words, the same rate of growth that a very similar program that is a Federal program is increasing at, 5 or so percent.

That is what we are increasing Medicare. That is not just on a gross basis, but also on a per capita basis, from \$4,700 to \$6,300 per recipient in the budget we are going to pass this week. It increases about 5 percent per year, the same amount as Social Security.

I bring this to your attention because what you are going to hear from the other side this week is a repeated chorus, a litany, over and over and over again, that we are cutting Medicare and that this is going to hurt seniors. These are the facts. Keep the facts in mind.

A SMALLER, LESS-INTRUSIVE GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, the House Committee on the Budget under the very capable leadership of JOHN KASICH is to be commended and congratulated for producing for us and for the Nation a credible balanced budget plan. As the budget plan was released last week amid the howls of those who would defend the status quo, one could almost sense a collective nationwide sigh as it sank into the American people that at long last there is a Congress that is dead serious about balancing the budget and confronting our debt problem.

The litany numbers had become all too familiar to millions of Americans: Seventeen percent of Federal revenues for interest on the debt; \$200 billion deficits as far as the eye can see, \$1 trillion of new debt in the next 5 years. We will pay more on interest than on national defense by 1997. The impending bankruptcy of Medicare is spelled out by President Clinton's own trustees; \$18,000 in debt assumed by every new baby born in America.

But there is a glimmer of hope in America this week as we prepare to vote on this budget plan. Oh, it is mixed with a lot of skepticism. Twenty-five years of deficit spending breeds a lot of skepticism.

But there is a feeling that maybe, just maybe, this Congress means business. Under the GOP budget plan there will be a smaller, less intrusive and more efficient Government. It forces us to do what scores of corporations have had to do, and that is downsize and eliminate wasteful spending. It terminates 283 programs. As I talked about the budget in my district this past weekend, it was that line that received the most applause, above all others, 283 programs eliminated. It eliminates 14 agencies and 68 commissions. It makes real cuts in discretionary spending. And the squealing has already begun. We will hear from the "Prince of Walls" over and over this week as the defenders of the past wail "You can't do this."

Sure, there are provisions in the budget I wish were not there. But that is the beauty of it. Nothing is excluded. Everyone will feel the squeeze. While Federal spending increases each year under the plan, it increases at a slower rate to allow revenues to catch up with spending, or, as William Safire wrote yesterday of the civil war general, who instructed a gunner to "elevate them sights a little lower."

Under the plan, power and money are shifted back to the States and local communities. In welfare, Medicaid, nutrition programs, and job training, there is consolidation, elimination of needless duplication, and block granting to the States.

The budget plan would save Medicare from bankruptcy. On April 3d of this year, the Medicare trustees, three of whom are Clinton administration appointees, sounded the alarm with their warning that Medicare part A would run out of money in 2001. This budget plan puts a tourniquet on Medicare to stop the hemorrhaging while a task force develops long-term solutions. Meanwhile, the President has been unwilling to assist in finding those solutions. Here again, expect the fear mongers and the scare tacticians to be out in force.

Under the Committee on the Budget assumption, spending on every Medicare beneficiary would actually increase, from an average of \$4,684 now to almost \$6,300 in the year 2002.

But I believe that the most important feature of this budget plan is the tax relief for the hard-pressed American family. This budget plan provides for the full \$500 per child tax credit. It provides for our correction of the marriage penalty. It allows the implementing of the adoption tax credit and the elder care credited. It allows for the raising of the earnings limit on Social Security recipients. These very meaningful pro-family policies will only be a reality if we pass the House GOP budget plan.

It was Alan Greenspan who, in pointing out some of the benefits that would happen if we balanced the budget, said if our economy was not constrained by Federal deficits, the balanced budget would mean a lower interest rate, higher productivity, improved purchasing power, reduced inflation, and accelerated long-term economic growth. Paul Johnson, the noted historian, asserts that the legitimization of envy is that which a stable society should fear the most. And there are going to be repeated efforts to legitimize envy by pitting one group of Americans against another group of Americans.

I think Thomas Jefferson, one of our Founding Fathers, said it best when he said, "To preserve our independence, we must not let our rulers load us with public debt. We must make our choice between economy and liberty, or confusion and servitude."

That is the choice that this Congress will face this week. I believe that most Americans know in their guts, that most Americans know instinctively, that

balancing the budget is the right thing to do, and we must do it for our children and for our grandchildren.

PRESERVING MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, my colleague that just spoke certainly has eloquently expressed the importance of making sure we preserve, protect, and make sure we continue Medicare as we know it here in the United States.

Medicare provides an important source of health security for 32 million of our Nation's senior citizens and 4 million disabled persons. But Medicare spending has been rising 10 to 11 percent a year, and if costs continue to soar, everyone will have to pay more.

Medicare can be preserved, protected, and improved while increasing its spending, but at a slower rate of growth. Last year in its annual report, the Social Security and Medicare board of trustees projected that part A trust fund, the hospital insurance trust fund, starts going broke in 1996. Next year the Medicare part A trust fund will spend \$1 billion more than it takes in. The trustees who included Labor Secretary Robert Reich, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, and then-Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, all members of the Clinton Cabinet, concluded that the Federal hospital insurance trust fund, which pays inpatient hospital expense, will be able to pay for only about 7 years, and is severely out of financial balance in the long range.

Again, Just last month, the trustees, including now-Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, replacing Bentsen, issued an equally gloomy forecast, which indicated that the part A trust fund would be bankrupt by 2002.

The trustees have called for prompt, effective, and decisive action to save the fund from insolvency.

Despite recommendation of this Presidential commission and the disclosure by his own Cabinet officials, President Clinton has failed to act on Medicare. What is more, the financial pressure on Medicare will only grow when baby boomers start to retire.

Our efforts to protect Medicare from bankruptcy and to balance the budget by the year 2002 are taking place simultaneously. It is crucial that the American people understand that Medicare has to be reformed, irrespective of the budget deficit. Even if we had a zero deficit today, we would still have to take action that is prevention for Medicare's bankruptcy. It is a fact if Medicare goes bankrupt by law, no payments can be made for hospital care for Medicare beneficiaries or from any other trust fund paid services.

Just a few weeks ago it was not well known about this impending disaster because the Clinton administration had

swept it under the rug. As Medicare travels the road toward bankruptcy, President Clinton has been AWOL, absent without leadership. He has even refused to participate in a bipartisan effort to save Medicare. Not until the Republicans stepped forward to talk openly and honestly about the Medicare crisis was anybody aware of the extent of the problem.

Republicans believe we owe it to our senior citizens to save Medicare from bankruptcy. House Republicans have determined to save Medicare by using new approaches, new management, and new technologies, to improve it, preserve it, and protect it. Congress has an unprecedented opportunity to want to take a fundamental reform of the Medicare Program. Action on Medicare will run parallel to and occur during the same period as action on the budget.

One of the steps we will be taking is to create a Medicare preservation task force to look at the various proposals and determine what steps need to be taken to eliminate fraud and abuse in the system, and to make sure it is more efficient.

One of the other creative thoughts on the system is to make sure that we give our senior citizens incentive to cure the system by paying them 25 percent of any waste or fraud that they can find in their own bills. It would be one way to strengthen and empower our senior citizens in making sure a better system is improved.

House Republicans will increase Medicare spending, from \$4,700 per retiree today to \$6,300 per retiree by 2002. That is a 34-percent increase in Medicare spending per retiree. There is no proposed cut in Medicare. We will preserve the current Medicare system for seniors. No one will be forced into the system. But at the same time we need to develop a new series of choices so senior citizens can control their own destiny.

We want to enter into a dialog with the people and to make sure Medicare, that is important to all of our seniors, is, in fact, preserved.

We as a nation must undertake this effort to continue the dialog, to work together for change, and to make sure that both sides of the aisle are working to make sure that Medicare is preserved, protected, and, in fact, is even stronger in years ahead.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 42 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 o'clock a.m.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 10 o'clock a.m.