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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. UPTON].

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 17, 1995.

I hereby designate the Honorable FRED UPTON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

As we look at the myriad decisions of the day and the options that are before us and all people, we pray, almighty God, for the assurance that Your Word does give. We know of the uncertainty of every life and we are aware of how our plans go awry, and yet we know too of the confidence we can have in Your love that sustains into every day ahead. May Your strong Word, O God, that brought the world into being and breathed into us the very breath of life, give each person the faith and hope and love to live each day with fullness and with grace. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on

agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed until later this afternoon.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. CHABOT] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CHABOT 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.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 32

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 32.

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

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would announce that he will entertain 15 1-minutes on each side.

STILL NO PLAN FROM THE PRESIDENT TO BALANCE THE BUDGET

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

(Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, Thomas Jefferson said, "We should consider ourselves unauthorized to saddle posterity with our debts, and morally bound to pay them ourselves." And yet as of yesterday, the national debt stood at \$4,881,377,281,278.42, an increase of \$22.2 billion.

At this rate, the national debt will have increased by another \$15,448,819 in the time it takes me to finish this short 1-minute speech.

The debt burden for each individual American, including those babies born yesterday, now stands at \$18,626.02, an \$89 increase—again that is per person.

It has been 76 days since we challenged the President to present his plan to balance the budget and 20 days since we asked him to help us help fix Medicare.

In the absence of leadership from the White House, Republicans have offered a plan to balance the budget by 2002 so that our children will have a future free from debt and a standard of living better than our own.

Mr. Speaker, where is the President's plan? We are still waiting.

SAVING MEDICARE?

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

Ms. RIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to point out some inconsistencies in many of the arguments that we are hearing today. In the Republican budget, the line item that guts Medicare is called saving Medicare.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, this is not about saving Medicare. This is

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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about saving the Republican's political behind. They have made promises to the most financially secure people in this country, and they choose to pay for them by taking from our most vulnerable.

If this were about reform, we would have seen more action from the Republicans. Where were they in February 1994 when this issue came up? They did not have anything to say. Where were they when fundamental health care reform was being debated in this country? They were obstructionists. Where were they when the Danforth-Kerrey proposal came out? They had nothing to say. Where was this issue when they were writing their Contract With America? It was a nonstarter. And where were they in February of this year when the trustees' report came out again? Nowhere to be seen.

Mr. Speaker, it is only when they have to make good on the promises to the wealthy that they have turned to the services to our elderly to get the money. Shame, shame, shame.

SAVING MEDICARE

(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, for the first time in 25 years Congress is actually offering a budget that will bring it into balance and deal with the Medicare crisis. As every Member in this Chamber knows, the Medicare trust fund begins to go bankrupt next year and will be completely insolvent in 7 years. As President Clinton's Medicare trustees said in their annual report, the trust fund: " * * * will be able to pay benefits for only about 7 years and is severely out of financial balance in the long range."

The report also says: "The trustees believe that prompt, effective, and decisive action is necessary."

Yesterday's Investor's Business Daily pointed out President Clinton's recent flip-flop on Medicare. And I quote the President:

We propose to let it go up at two times the rate of inflation. That is not a Medicare or Medicaid cut. So when you hear all this business about cuts, let me caution you that that is not what is going on. We are going to have increases in Medicare and Medicaid, and a reduction in the rate of growth.

Mr. Speaker, where is the President now?

VOTE FOR A BALANCED BUDGET NOW

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

Mr. PETE GEREN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, a balanced budget is good for America. The status quo is bad. Bad for children, bad for seniors, bad for the middle class, and bad for the present and bad for the future.

The status quo means Medicare goes broke in 6 years, not cut by 5 percent, not cut by 7 percent, but goes broke. The status quo means financial ruin. That destroys our ability to defend ourselves, feed our children or meet our health care needs.

Folks, the status quo means we go broke. Tomorrow we have a choice between four balanced budgets. I urge my colleagues to pick one. A balanced budget is good for America, good for all Americans, young and old. The time is now.

WORK TOGETHER TO SAVE MEDICARE

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, let us go over it one more time. According to the President's own advisors, the Medicare Trust Fund will be bankrupt by the year 2002. Republicans have crafted a bill which will save Medicare.

Let me refer to this chart. In doing so, we have proposed that Federal spending on Medicare increase from \$178 to \$258 billion. Let me repeat that. Medicare will go up under the Republican plan. And what is the Democrat Medicare plan? Are they working tirelessly to save a system that their own leaders maintain is going bankrupt? Not a chance.

What they are doing is running, one after another, to the camera, the nearest camera, to proclaim that Republicans are cutting Medicare. It is not true.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to my Democrat friends that the American people are not going to fall for their distortions. But they might help. I think the American people are going to wonder why the Democrats are not helping to save Medicare. Let us work together to save Medicare.

THREE CHEERS FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Hear, hear, Mr. Speaker. Three cheers for the White House, who has finally slapped Japan with a big time 100-percent tariff on luxury vehicles.

And guess what? Acura is a crying, Infiniti is now finite, Toyota is toasted, Nissan is nixed, Mazda is maxed, Mitsubishi is busted, and Lexus is nauseous. But in the words of Bob Dylan, how does it feel, Japan? Because you see, we here in America know that Lincoln had been shrinking, Cadillac had been lacking, and Chrysler was almost mort.

So think about it, Members. It is about time we used a 2 by 4 and open those markets. Open those markets in Japan if you want to straighten out the budget in America.

And one thing, Japan, think of this: When you hold your own trade program to your nose, it doesn't smell too rosy, does it? In the words of Bob Dylan, how does it feel? Big time tariffs. I yield back the balance of these huge tariffs.

SOLUTION TO SAVE MEDICARE

(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, here is the problem. The fund is projected to be exhausted in 2001. Signed by the Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Health and Human Services. Medicare is going broke. Projected to be exhausted, 2001. Here is our solution.

We increase spending from \$4,700 to \$6,300 per capita, at the same time slowing the rate of growth from about 10.5 to 5.5 percent. We save Medicare, we balance the budget, and we preserve the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

Here is the President's plan.

Let me go over this one more time. Here is the problem. The fund is going to be exhausted in 2001. Here is the solution. We are increasing spending while reducing the rate of growth. And here is the President's plan.

Yes, that is an ostrich.

PROPOSED CUTS TO MEDICARE AND MEDICAID TITLE

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

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, some of our colleagues have proposed drastic cuts to the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Over the next 7 years, their budget would cut them by over \$465 billion. At the same time, their budget proposes a tax break for the people that are earning over \$250,000 and will cost more than \$340 billion over the same period.

I have spoken to several people in my district who would be affected by these changes. The comment of one older gentleman struck me as particularly on target. He told me that he understood that the Medicare system is broken and needs to be fixed. All seniors ask of the Congress, he said, is that we make changes in a considered and rational way that will actually help to save the system.

Yes, we must slow the growth in Medicare and Medicaid spending. And yes, we must absolutely ensure the solvency of the Medicare Part A Trust Fund. America's seniors are willing to contribute their fair share to this effort.

However, we must not balance the budget on the backs of senior Americans. Nor should we ask our senior citizens to endure these cuts while we use the savings to pay for proposed tax