

MEDICARE

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

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, after hearing the debate on MediGap this morning, I am here today to make a plea on Medicare. Let us stop the demagoguery—let us roll up our sleeves and deal with the problem. The Medicare trustees have just reported to us that if we do nothing to save the system, the part A trust fund, the heart of the program starts to go broke next year and is bankrupt entirely in 7 short years—not unanticipated by those who have been following it closely—but sobering nonetheless.

Let us deal with it—and the sooner the better. The new CBO Director told us the obvious in recent testimony: "Any delay will require dramatic cuts and program changes in the future." If we start to reform the system now, I believe we can accomplish the twin goals of saving the program from bankruptcy and improving it through private sector innovation, expanded choice and cracking down on fraud. We can do it because, as President Clinton told the AARP in 1993, "Today, Medicaid and Medicare are going up at three times the rate of inflation. 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." Let us act now in a bipartisan manner before the problem gets out of hand.

The Medicare trustee report itself stated, "these programs are too important to be politicized and [we] urge that a highly professional, nonpartisan approach continue to be followed."

DON'T LET REPUBLICANS SLAM THE DOOR SHUT ON STAFFORD LOANS

(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, I rise to speak in opposition to the Republican budget proposal as it specifically relates to higher education. Yesterday, I talked about cuts in our elementary and secondary education funds that will hurt our children in public schools. Today, I am going to talk about the House proposal that will increase college costs for 4.5 million college students by eliminating the in-school interest subsidy on Stafford loans. Families who rely on Stafford student loans would pay up to \$3,000 more for the cost of a college education.

These extra costs could put a college education out of reach for many young people in my district. I have a picture

here of a young lady, Yuroba Harris. Yuroba is an honor student at the University of Houston. In order to earn extra money for books and tuition, she works in my district office part time, serving the constituents of the 29th District in Houston, TX.

Elimination of the in-school interest subsidy could put college out of reach for a lot of young people like Yuroba and other middle-class and poor young people all over my district. There is an old proverb: Give a person a fish and they will eat today. Teach them to fish and they will eat for a lifetime. Let us not cut education. Let us make sure they can eat for a lifetime.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF AMERICA'S FOREIGN AID PROGRAM

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, we have been debating the foreign aid bill for the last few days and we have heard a lot of criticisms about foreign aid programs. Some are justified and some are not, but undoubtedly some good things have been accomplished. I would like to include in the RECORD, following my remarks, a recent Cincinnati Post guest column written by my friend, Dan Radford, executive secretary-treasurer of the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council, who has had a very productive working relationship with the U.S. Information Agency.

Working under a grant from USIA, the AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union Institute has worked closely with trade union leaders from Ukraine and Kazakhstan. A delegation from those former Soviet States recently visited Cincinnati to get some positive exposure to our political and economic system, with the local labor council serving as host.

It is my hope that as we move toward a more streamlined and productive foreign policy apparatus, we will be able to work with groups like this and continue in a more efficient way to provide the means for such positive dialog.

I include the Radford article in the RECORD at this time as a valuable contribution to the discussion.

The text of the article is as follows:

LABOR UNIONS HELP NURTURE DEMOCRACIES IN EASTERN EUROPE

(By V. Daniel Radford)

Semyon Karikov and Gennady Nikitin, trade union leaders from Ukraine and Kazakhstan, visited our city recently to learn about the role institutions like unions play in the community and in our system of government. Their visit was made possible by the AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union Institute under a grant from the U.S. Information Agency. We at the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council served as their local hosts. I had already been on several educational exchange trips to Romania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic under the same FTUI/USIA program.

Why are these exchanges important, and why should our government support these

types of activities? Simply put, because it is in our direct interest to help the countries of Eastern Europe to build institutions—like unions—that bring the rule of law and economic stability to their countries.

Educational exchanges can assist in this process. During their visit, for example, Karikov and Nikitin met with county and city officials from both political parties, with union leaders and rank and file members, and with community political activists. They were given an overview of labor's role in protecting workplace rights and in expressing the voice of workers in politics and economics of a democratic society. They can take these lessons about involvement back to their unions and communities at home.

While Semyon and Gennady visited our city, we learned something too, about how hard life is in the countries of the former Soviet Union. Workers labor in dangerous conditions with no safety equipment and return home to eat their meager meals in the dark and cold because there is no heat or electricity. At times they go weeks and sometimes months without pay; they continue working just to keep their jobs.

Workers in Eastern Europe are still struggling for democracy. In Ukraine and Kazakhstan democracies are not established, and the rule of law doesn't exist. In Ukraine, for example, a man summoned to the police station for questioning was tried, convicted, and carted away to prison on the spot. In both countries, the so-called ex-communists have teamed up with former security officers and mafia-like criminal elements to dominate many aspects of society.

So, for humanitarian reasons alone, the U.S. should remain engaged in helping those who seek to build democracy in Eastern Europe.

It is in our own interest as well: the lack of stability in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and other countries in the former Soviet Union directly threatens the United States. Organized crime groups in Russia alone are roughly ten times larger than the American Mafia. According to FBI Director Louis Freeh "these same crime groups also pose a significant and direct threat to the United States * * * (they) are engaged in a wide range of criminal activities, including complex tax and health care fraud schemes, extortion, money laundering, and drug trafficking."

An even more ominous threat, Secretary of Defense William Perry recently warned, "are (the) still more than 20,000 nuclear weapons in four countries of the former Soviet Union; Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus." He points out that these weapons "could be reconstituted into a threat or that some of them could find a way to rogue regimes."

A growing web of international organized criminals who can control—and sell—sizable stockpiles of nuclear weapons: it's a crisis waiting to happen.

Only a firm, stable government and economy can keep these weapons and criminals under control. Democracy with worker participation can help stabilize nations like Kazakhstan and the Ukraine.

As we have witnessed with Solidarity in Poland, unions have been key in advancing the spread of democracy in the region. And, as we see here at home, unions have a crucial balancing voice in a market economy. During my FTUI visits, I saw Eastern European unions taking steps toward greater political and community involvement, pushing for free elections, a free press, and an understanding and control of economic forces. I think our educational exchanges helped move this process along.

It's fair to ask ourselves if in this time of cost cutting, we can afford programs like the one that brought Semyon and Gennady here.

In light of the potential serious threats the U.S. and rest of the world faces, and because of the benefits we all can gain from an exchange of ideas, we should consider whether we can afford not to.

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PERMISSION FOR COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY TO FILE A REPORT ON H.R. 1530, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996

Mr. DORNAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on National Security be allowed during the Memorial Day district work period to file a report on the bill (H.R. 1530) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1996 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 1996, and for other purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURTON of Indiana). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I will not object, and I would simply observe that this was cleared with the minority. We appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

THE VALUE OF EDUCATION

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

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone can dispute the fact that education is one of the keys to success.

All one needs to do is look around and see that the leaders in every walk of life are generally educated people.

Mr. Speaker, so many of our immigrants came here with no education and not much else either.

But they worked hard and sacrificed so that their children could have an education and reap the harvest of the bountiful opportunities in their wonderful new country.

As a result, each succeeding generation did better and we as a country enjoyed the fruits of that harvest.

Sadly, as hard as it was for the first Americans, it is not that easy anymore—costs are up and the economy is down.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the price of freedom is a well-educated people, and our Founding Fathers thought so too when they created a public school system to educate every young person in our country.

Now, as today's leaders, we should realize in a modern world that K through 12 is not enough to keep us competitive.

If this is true, and I think most would agree, then why is the leadership

on the other side of the aisle—who incidentally are both college professors and know the value of education—leading us away from a full education commitment in a way that will allow only the very rich of this country to be educated?

EXCERPT FROM "PRISONERS OF THE JAPANESE"

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

Mr. DORNAN. Mr. Speaker, I have been slowly going through an incredible book by a fine Australian author named Gavan Daws. The title of the book is "Prisoners of the Japanese." I have to return it this week to the Library of Congress, so I secured a copy from William Morrow Publishing in New York.

I would like to read a paragraph from the young publicist Justin Loeber and why I want to do an hour on this book and the broader theme of the unbelievably savage and brutal sadistic medieval torture of our POW's by Japan under its warlords.

Young Justin Loeber writes to me: "On a wider scale, this book, 'Prisoners of the Japanese,' is a story of compassion for the elderly. After reading Mr. Gavan Daws' book, I now have more patience for that old person who is standing in line at the post office—the person that has a limp or bad eyesight and moves a little slower than the rest of us. This person could have been tortured by the Japanese. Also, this book has taught me to commemorate Memorial Day as it should be, not at the mall celebrating the greatest sale of the year, but honoring those people who fought for our country. I"—this is Mr. Loeber—"will be going with Gavan Daws to the 50th reunion of the survivors of Bataan and Corregidor in Braintree, MA, over this Memorial Day weekend."

Mr. Speaker, I will do an hour on this later.

BE RELEVANT, MR. PRESIDENT

(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, just a few weeks ago the President insisted in a press conference that he was relevant. Mr. Speaker, it is time for him to prove his relevance.

As a freshman Member of this House, I was under the assumption that the President and the two Houses of Congress worked together diligently when legislation would affect the very future of our country and future generations. Saving our country from bankruptcy is just such an issue. Yet where is the President on this issue?

Last week President Clinton indicated to New Hampshire radio interviewers he would offer a plan to bal-

ance the budget in either 7 or 10 years. But insisting on remaining irrelevant, this week Mr. Clinton backed away from yet another campaign pledge and said he would not offer a plan to balance the budget and save the next generation.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the President is attempting to play politics with a very important issue. I hope he will reconsider his political stance and join the freshmen and other Members of this body as we attempt to give a future to our children that includes the ability to leave them the family farm and not simply the mortgage.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. OWENS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

LET'S BE TRUTHFUL ABOUT MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. EHLERS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, those in this Chamber who know me know that I am a person who values integrity. You also know that when I speak on the floor and discuss issues, I try to be as factual as possible; perhaps that is my scientific background, my scientific training coming to the fore.

But I have to confess that I was upset this morning. I have been upset over the past several weeks at the attempt of the other side of the aisle to beat upon the theme—and I really mean the word beat and beat and beat again—to beat upon the theme that somehow the Republicans are trying to cut taxes by \$300 billion and they are trying to cut Medicare by \$300 billion to pay for the tax cut.