

Doing nothing might be the easiest course politically, but in my view that is not an option. The crisis must be addressed now. If Medicare goes bankrupt, by law, no payments can be made for hospital care for Medicare beneficiaries or for any other trust fund-paid services. This means that anyone age 58 or older today will be immediately impacted in 2002. And if the system is not then made solvent, millions of Americans who are much younger will be hurt.

Medicare can be fixed right now. And if we do it now, we can make the trust fund solvent without reducing current Medicare expenditures.

Those who oppose reform will make wild charges of draconian cuts. But when you hear those charges ask yourself what opponents of reform are proposing as a solution. The only other options are to either postpone the crisis a few more years, or substantially raise payroll taxes.

While three members of the President's Cabinet are Medicare trustees and signed onto the trustees report, the President's first budget included no reforms. The only response the President and his Democrat colleagues gave to this problem was criticism. However, the new Clinton budget has changed all that.

President Clinton has admitted that a balanced budget is best for our Nation—though his budget falls close to \$1 trillion short of the amount actually needed to achieve a balanced budget. But most importantly for our seniors and soon to be seniors, the President admits that Medicare must be reformed and saved from bankruptcy. Still, even with this, many of his Democrat colleagues still only criticize.

In order to reform the Medicare system, we have slowed the rate of growth from over 10 percent to 6.5 percent a year—a rate that will still exceed private-sector health care spending increases and inflation rate increases. Even with this level of reform, the country's annual Medicare spending will still rise from the current \$4,700 per beneficiary to \$6,400 per beneficiary in 7 years. Similarly, in my own State of Colorado, overall Medicare spending between 1995 and 2002 will increase 60 percent, which results in an increase of \$1,385 per beneficiary.

Much of the reform can be accomplished with more private sector involvement in the program, and by giving seniors more choices and more power over the way their health care dollars are spent. Currently, Medicare beneficiaries are given only one option—the bureaucratic, outdated, 30-year-old, one-size-fits-all program. It is time to bring Medicare into the 1990's. No longer should the Government interfere in the relationship between patients and their doctors. We should ensure that Medicare beneficiaries and soon to be beneficiaries are able to continue their existing coverage—including their choice of doctors and hospitals, or choose new coverage that

better fits their health care needs—such as coverage for prescription drugs, dental, or even to establish a medical savings account.

The goal is to save Medicare. It will not be easy or painless, but it will be much less painful if we do it now, rather than pass the buck one more time. My hope is that reform can be accomplished in a serious manner, without a high level of misinformation and distortion. Congress is now working carefully on a reform plan. Many organizations, such as the American Medical Association, and individuals are providing helpful proposals. The final plan will be available in early fall.

Two things in particular should be kept in mind as the debate progresses. First, no one is proposing any cuts in Medicare, only a slower rate of growth. Second, those who decry the proposed reforms should be challenged to present their solution. Strengthening Medicare is too important to be left to politics as usual. Doing nothing is not an option.

THE MINIMUM WAGE BILL—WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

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

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, in February, the President proposed a modest increase in the minimum wage. Following the President's proposal, the Democratic leader introduced H.R. 940, the Working Wage Increase Act of 1995. Under H.R. 940, the minimum wage would be increased, in two steps, to \$5.15 by Independence Day in 1996. There are currently 91 cosponsors of H.R. 940.

Nothing has happened on the minimum wage bill since its introduction. Could this be because all of the sponsors are Democrats? It should be a bipartisan effort to raise the minimum wage. It has been in times past. Both Speaker GINGRICH and Senator DOLE have supported minimum wage increases. The minimum wage needs to be increased now for two major reasons. First, to help improve the quality of life for all of our citizens.

And, second, to raise the standards of our workers so that they can keep pace with changing technologies and be better prepared for competing with workers around the world.

WELFARE REFORM—AN UPDATE

While minimum wage is stalled, Congress is moving very fast to drive citizens off welfare. I support welfare reform, but with provisions for training and the minimum wage increase. The welfare reform bill, H.R. 4, passed the House on March 24 of this year and passed the Senate Finance Committee on May 26.

The House-passed bill would block grant cash welfare, child care, school breakfast and lunch programs, and nutrition programs for pregnant women

and children. Unwed mothers under the age of 18 and repeat mothers already on welfare, would be purged from the rolls. Fortunately, the Senate bill is less radical in the changes it proposes to welfare programs. And, with passage of other bills, like the farm bill, more level thinking may prevail.

FOREIGN TRADE—ITS IMPORTANCE

At the same time of these actions, a bill was introduced on June 7, H.R. 1756, which proposes to eliminate six programs from the Department of Commerce and to privatize or transfer into other departments, many other Commerce programs. A similar bill, S. 929, has been introduced in the Senate. The bill would eliminate the Economic Development Administration, the Minority Business Development Agency, the Office of the Secretary, General Counsel and Inspector General at Commerce, as well as several other programs under the Department. Indeed, this bill effectively dismantles the Commerce Department which has been the engine that has helped expand job opportunities in the global market.

ANALYSIS

It is obvious to me that in our zeal to cut spending and balance the budget, we are being penny wise and pound foolish. We are putting people out of work, taking benefits from people without giving them work and keeping those who are working at poverty levels. We are creating a larger, and perhaps more permanent, underclass by these irrational actions.

This blind march toward the year 2002 fails to take into account that the best welfare reform is minimum wage reform. This irresponsible cutting of trade programs fails to take into account that foreign trade has created 274,000 jobs in my State of North Carolina alone.

I have consistently stated that I am for welfare reform. I have also consistently maintained that I support a balanced budget. The problem, however, with the direction we are taking is that we have closed our eyes to the impact of our acts. We can cut programs, refuse to raise the minimum wage and save money.

But, the money we lose by these deeds could far exceed the amount we gain. For example, while we are reducing our domestic deficit, we are ignoring our trade deficit, and our trade deficit is soaring. We may save a few billion dollars through eliminating Commerce to help reduce the deficit, but we will lose \$20 billion through an increased trade deficit. What sense does it make to eliminate the very structure that assists American businesses in expanding, large and small, and helps create jobs for American workers?

SUPPORT THE MINIMUM WAGE

The President's minimum wage proposal, combined with the earned income tax credit we passed last Congress, will go a long way in pushing millions of working Americans out of

poverty. Yet, some of us are in the midst of cutting the earned income tax credit. It makes no sense. Sixty percent or 6 out of every 10 of those who are minimum wage workers are women. Many of them have children. And, most minimum wage workers are poor. Increases in the minimum wage have not kept pace with increases in the cost-of-living.

That is why a worker can work full-time, 40 hours a week, and still be below the poverty level. Surely we can increase the minimum wage for the first time since April, 1991, a period during which the cost of housing, food and clothing has greatly risen for the minimum wage worker.

The best welfare reform is a job, at a livable wage. I support this constrained request to lift millions of workers out of poverty. If we lift workers out of poverty, we will have less of a demand for welfare. If we have less of a demand for welfare, we will have less of a burden on this Nation's resources.

If we have less of a burden on this Nation's resources, we can compete more effectively in the global marketplace. And, if we compete more effectively in the global marketplace, we can reduce the trade deficit, further reduce the domestic deficit, create more jobs, put people to work and restore America. Mr. Speaker, it makes sense to me. I can not understand why it does not make sense to my colleagues. True vision is the art of seeing things invisible. We see what we want to see. We can keep many of our workers at low wage, unskilled jobs, or we can pay them better and train them better.

This is not 1945. The world community need not buy refrigerators from us. They can buy them almost anywhere. But, if we want to sell our refrigerators, we better have workers who can make them well. Let's reform welfare. But, let's also pass H.R. 940, the modest minimum wage bill.

WHAT A DISGRACEFUL DAY TODAY IS

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

Mr. DORNAN. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues who may have clicked on the floor proceedings in their offices this morning, and to a handful of visitors in the gallery, and to the million or so people that track the proceedings of this, the world's greatest legislature, over C-SPAN, I rose this morning to discuss again that 11 July of 1995 is a disgraceful day in the history of our country because the Commander in Chief down at the White House in a Rose Garden ceremony—I gag on the words a Rose Garden ceremony—is going to extend the honor and the dignity of diplomatic relations to the war criminals, the Communist war criminals, who sit in power, and oppressive power, in Hanoi. The Americans that we left behind in Laos, 499 men shot down, some of them captured on the ground, Special Forces men, performing special operations, they may still be alive. There is no proof that they

are not. They may be executed by this deed of infamy in the Rose Garden at midday today.

Last night I did a 1-hour special order. I had Robert Strange McNamara's evil book in my hands, this book that the New York Times has on the best seller list. Boggles my mind that people would pay money to read the words of this man who walked off the battlefield in Vietnam, blood dripping from his hands, resigned on February 29, 1968, leap year day of that year, probably a deliberate choice of day. Lyndon Johnson disgracefully gave Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense, the choice of when he would resign. He made a speech in Canada in October 1967 saying we could not win the Vietnam war, and LBJ, instead of firing him the next day, gave him 4 or 5 more months of payroll, and that February 29 he resigned in a rainy ceremony over on the Mall, had canceled his flyby, thank you God, no Air Force veterans of that long struggle in Vietnam had to fly by and honor this disgraceful man, and then guess where Mr. McNamara went, Mr. Speaker? He went skiing at Aspen and then took a diversionary side trip in March 1968 down to the Caribbean, back for more skiing at Aspen while the hospitals in Vietnam were filled with the broken bodies of young Americans, some of them triple and double amputees, and I remember one quadruple amputee, all from that massive Tet offensive that we won, and Walter Cronkite is writing off our effort to LBJ, forcing him to resign or to say he resigned from the Presidential campaign on the 30th of March, and Bob McNamara is still skiing at Aspen.

Here is what McNamara said in his book, page 105. I am reading from last night's CONGRESSIONAL RECORD where I inserted this. He writes:

It is a profound, enduring and universal ethical and moral dilemma: How, in times of war and crisis, can senior government officials be completely frank to their own people without giving aid and comfort to the enemy?

There is McNamara talking about Hanoi, North Vietnam calling him the enemy, and they were, and they still are, and he is talking about giving aid to the enemy in Hanoi, comfort to the enemy in Hanoi, and, less than 2 years after that, Bill Clinton was in Moscow giving aid to the people in Hanoi, giving comfort to the people in Hanoi, giving aid and comfort to the Communist forces in Hanoi, and then went down to Prague and did it some more. It is unbelievable that of all the human beings that should be in the White House, in the Oval Office, in the Rose Garden, it is a man who let three high school men go in his place. Maybe one of them was this young missing in action American, Jimmy Holt, captured February 7, 1968, disappeared into the midst of Southeast Asia the very month that McNamara is resigning, and this disgraceful book of McNamara is called "In retrospect." Clinton said it vindicates his

stand to give aid and comfort to the Communist forces in Hanoi. What a disgraceful day today is.

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 30 minutes a.m.) the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

AFTER RECESS

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

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PRAYER

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

From the first hours of new life to the last rays of the Sun, from the opening of each day of grace to the final moments of our time, may we, O gracious God, not neglect our words of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. While we know how easily we are absorbed in our tasks and our eyes miss the heavenly vision, we know too that You do not forget us; we acknowledge that our lives stray here or there, yet we know too that Your goodness and Your love sustain us all our days. For these and all Your blessings, O God, we offer these words of thanksgiving. 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 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 400. An act to provide for the exchange of lands within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, and for other purposes; and

H.R. 716. An act to amend the Fishermen's Protective Act.