

Since the beginning of this Congress, Republicans have been committed to ending business as usual here in Washington. That means not ignoring bad news—not even about Medicare. This spring, the Medicare trustees board reported that Medicare will go bankrupt in 7 years. Democrats, have completely ignored this news. They offer no ideas on how to save Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans will not let Medicare go bankrupt, and we will not allow Medicare to become a political football in a cheap game of generational warfare.

CONTINUE AMERICORPS

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

Mr. BAESLER. Mr. Speaker, I have been a consistent supporter of AmeriCorps. I have seen the difference it has meant for my State of Kentucky and charities all over the country.

AmeriCorps is lean and nonbureaucratic, has moved much of the decisionmaking out to the States, and is accountable.

When I see an organization that can take tough actions, it impresses me. The Corporation for National Service just made a very tough decision: it cut off a grant in midstream to the ACORN Housing Corporation.

After a demonstration by a different ACORN in March stopped a speech by the Speaker, some asked whether AmeriCorps had been involved. AmeriCorps acted immediately. They got a signed statement that no AmeriCorps member was involved, and that the two ACORN's were entirely separate.

AmeriCorps could have stopped there. But it didn't. The CEO of the Corporation asked the IG to investigate, and to find out if any of the AmeriCorps money was being used to benefit ACORN.

The IG didn't find any AmeriCorps members involved in the demonstration, but did find that there was a close relationship between the two ACORN's. AmeriCorps has always said it wouldn't permit advocacy, directly or indirectly, so it stopped the grant in its tracks.

Now, it's a better news story when an AmeriCorps program does something great, as they do every day in Kentucky. But it's also important when AmeriCorps does something that won't make the news, but shows the ability to do the right thing just as clearly. I just hope that this Congress also does the right thing, and continues AmeriCorps.

MEDICARE BASHING

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

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I am tired of listening to this Medicare bashing. I

want to point out exactly what we are proposing on Medicare on this chart. I want Members to pay attention to this.

This black line is trust fund balance. Right now we have a \$150 billion balance, but it is rapidly depleting. At the year 2002, the money will disappear. This blue line is spent. By the time we hit 2002, there will not be any money to spend. There will be a stop payment to all the elderly people.

We recognize this problem because the trust fund commissioned their report back in April. They are the ones that said that, not we; we did not say it. They are the ones, all the members are Clinton appointees. So we come up with this idea. All we try to do is slow down the increase, rate of increase a little bit.

The red one is Mr. Clinton's plan; as we can see, not much difference. All we are trying to do is lower a little bit. We are still spending more money. Mr. Clinton recognized we have to see this problem on this Medicare plan. I do not know why they keep calling this a cut. Is it a cut to the Members?

THE GINGRICH CORPORATE WELFARE MODEL

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this morning Speaker GINGRICH will present a check to students who participate in the Earning by Learning Program which pays schoolchildren \$2 for every book they read.

Speaker GINGRICH has touted this program for years, stressing the low overhead as a major selling point. In a speech this January the Speaker declared:

The money only goes to the kids * * * So if you have \$1,000 you can pay for 500 books, whereas in the welfare state model, if you have \$1,000, you pay \$850 of it for the bureaucracy.

But, lo and behold, according to the Wall Street Journal this week, Mr. GINGRICH's official biographer, Mel Steely, also happens to run this program. And according to this report Mr. Steely and two friends were paid 90 percent, yes 90 percent, of the money raised in the past year for the program.

Ninety percent for the Speaker's friends and 10 percent for the children; this is the way, this is the way things work in the Gingrich corporate welfare model.

THE AUDIT WILL CONTINUE

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

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, we had the accounting firm of Price Waterhouse do an audit of the House books. When I say we, I mean House Republicans. We had promised as a matter of the Contract With America that the first thing that we would vote on on the first day

was to have an audit of the House books that have not been audited as far as I know of in history on an exterior basis. We have never had an external audit of the House books. We did that.

They published their audit just yesterday. I want to read three lines from it. First of all, they say: The House lacks the organization and structure to periodically prepare financial statements. The methods of accounting was simplistic and ill-suited for an organization the size of the House. And in conclusion, because the House's accounting and reporting methods were outdated and of limited utility, we do not express, we cannot express an opinion on the accompanying consolidated financial statements.

What they are saying is our books are such a mess that they cannot even render a financial opinion. We promised that we could fix this. We did the audit. We will continue to do the audit. We will bring the reforms and make good on the promises that we made.

EARNING BY LEARNING CRONYISM

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

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a new program initiated by Speaker GINGRICH called Earning by Learning, a reading program which purports to pay schoolchildren \$2 for every book they read. However, according to a story in Monday's Wall Street Journal, last year 90 percent of the money went to an old friend of the Speaker, who is working on the Speaker's biography and was, in fact, on his congressional payroll. That left only 10 cents on the dollar for the kids.

This stands in marked contrast to what the Speaker has said a million times, including a televised lecture on January 21, 1995, that "The only money goes to the kids." He elaborated and said, "So if you have \$1,000, you can pay for 500 books." But what we see is typical cronyism.

Mr. Speaker, use all of the money for books, don't mislead the American people, especially when you are using our Nation's children as your stage props.

PERMISSION FOR SUNDRY COMMITTEES AND THEIR SUBCOMMITTEES TO SIT TODAY DURING THE 5-MINUTE RULE

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the following committees and their subcommittees be permitted to sit today while the House is meeting in the Committee of the Whole House under the 5-minute rule: The Committee on Banking and Financial Services, the Committee on Commerce, the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, the Committee

on International Relations, the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Science, the Committee on Small Business, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

It is my understanding that the minority has been consulted and that there is no objection to these requests.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HEFLEY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

TREASURY, POSTAL SERVICE, AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 190 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares in the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2020.

□ 1035

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2020) making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain independent agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes, with Mr. DREIER in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Tuesday, July 18, 1995, pending was amendment No. 6 offered by the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER], and title V was open for amendment at any point.

Pursuant to the order of the Committee of that day, further debate on that amendment and all amendments thereto will be limited to 80 minutes, equally divided and controlled by the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] and the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT].

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT].

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] is detained in full committee. In order to facilitate the debate, we have an agreement with the minority side that I would yield time to the gentlewoman to present her debate and they will yield that time back to us after the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] arrives.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York [Ms. VELÁZQUEZ].

The CHAIRMAN. Is this time yielded from the majority or is this time taken from the side of the minority?

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, it is yielded from the majority's time with the understanding the minority is going to yield an equivalent amount of time back out of theirs so we still end up with the division we agreed on yesterday.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlewoman from New York. [Ms. VELÁZQUEZ] is recognized for 4 minutes.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of this amendment. A far-right, self-righteous minority in this Chamber has inserted a repulsive, antiwomen provision into this bill. I implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me and the majority of the American people in rejecting paternalistic measures such as these.

Some million hard-working, public-minded women currently serve their Federal Government in every State of this Union. They often work under difficult circumstance, and usually for modest pay. Radical zealots in this Congress would now single out these women for discrimination.

No matter that two-thirds of private fee-for-service plans provide the full range of reproductive health services.

No matter that 70 percent of HMO's provide abortion coverage.

No matter that the majority of the people of this Nation support a woman's right to choose.

These self-appointed morality police would nevertheless deny over 1 million women their constitutional right to choose.

The supporters of this extreme provision may argue that they do not require a woman to bring their pregnancies to term—at least not yet. They would merely refuse to fund abortions under the Federal Employees' Health Benefits Program.

For many women, that is a distinction without substance. This antiwomen ban has no place in this appropriations measure. It signals a return to a very recent, shameless decade when this Government presumed to substitute its reproductive judgments for those of mature adult females and their health care professionals.

It is also a first, giant step backward toward the grim, not-to-distant past when back alley abortions were common horrors.

I urge my colleagues not to turn back the clock. Support this amendment, and preserve every woman's right to control her health, and her body, and exercise her sound judgment.

□ 1040

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I will yield to the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT] such time as was used by the gentlewoman from New York.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. OLIVER], a former member of our subcommittee.

Mr. OLIVER. Mr. Chairman, I thank the ranking member for yielding the time to me.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Hoyer amendment.

The right to choose is the law of this land. It is constitutionally protected.

Eliminating this right for one group of women—just because they happen to work for the Federal Government—is discrimination.

Under present law, a Federal employee who opposes abortion can choose 1 of the 345 plans which does not cover abortion.

But under the bill before us, no Federal employee is allowed the option of a plan which covers abortion.

Women in the Federal service should not be singled out and given no choice.

We must support the right of all women to choose. We must support the Hoyer amendment.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York [Mr. NADLER].

(Mr. NADLER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this amendment which would remove from this bill dangerous language that once again strikes out at women. The language we are seeking to remove today says that women who work for the Federal Government—women who have made a commitment to public service—should not have the same rights offered to women working elsewhere.

Mr. Chairman, women in this Nation have a constitutionally protected right to choose whether to have an abortion. This is the law of the land.

But some Members of this House, realizing that the vast majority of the American people support a woman's constitutionally protected right to choose, are trying to do away with this fundamental right bit by bit, woman by woman.

We must not allow this to happen.

Because abortion is a legal medical procedure, most major health plans provide coverage for women who choose to have an abortion. Private insurance companies recognize that their female customers are perfectly capable of making this deeply personal choice without interference.

Do we think that our moral judgment is superior to that of the thousands of women serving our communities and our Nation? What do we know that major insurance companies, U.S. corporations, and the majority of our constituents do not know?

It is time to get off the high horse, to quit playing political games with the rights of women and to respect the moral judgment of the women we represent. I urge the adoption of this amendment.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 6½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SMITH].

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Chairman, I rise in very strong opposition to the Hoyer amendment, and I urge Members to realize that this is a pro-abortion amendment and would provide and facilitate abortion on demand. It would force taxpayers to underwrite the cost of abortions, and premium payers would also have to pay for abortions as well.

Mr. Chairman, let me remind Members that we contribute as taxpayers,