

THE WHITE HOUSE, July 28, 1995.

SUSPENSION OF MALDIVES FROM GENERALIZED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES PROGRAM AND DESIGNATION OF MOLDOVA FOR PURPOSES OF GSP PROGRAM—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 104-105)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed.

To the Congress of the United States:

The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program offers duty-free treatment to specified products that are imported from designated beneficiary developing countries. The program is authorized by title V of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended.

Pursuant to title V, I have determined that Maldives should be suspended from the GSP program because it is not making sufficient progress in protecting basic labor rights. I also have decided to designate Moldova as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP program because I have determined that Moldova satisfies the statutory criteria.

This notice is submitted in accordance with the requirements of section 502(a)(1) and 502(a)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE, July 28, 1995.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1289

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of the bill, H.R. 1289, the Newborn Infant HIV Notification Act.

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

There was no objection.

THE NEED FOR AN INDEPENDENT COUNSEL

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

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, we began this week hearing about how the House had found money for a protocol officer, the new Miss Manners. Many of us really questioned that. But we end this week with a whole raft of newspaper articles that are in the paper today saying that people are very concerned the House ethics committee is risking the charge of a coverup, in re the charges against the Speaker.

My colleagues, if we can find money for a protocol officer but we cannot find money for an independent counsel, the people are not going to accept it.

What is this? It is like pouring perfume on a garbage dump.

The people out there want us to get to the bottom of this, and they do not want some excuses about: Oops, we bungled it; oops, we made a little mistake; oh, my goodness, we are going to have to back away from this. This will not be acceptable.

I really hope this body reads the newspaper articles and many of the columnists calling for an independent counsel and moves forward.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the following article:

[From the USA Today, July 28, 1995]

GINGRICH ETHICS SCANDAL DEMANDS OUTSIDE COUNSEL

(By Barbara Reynolds)

"It's vital that the ethics committee hire outside counsel. The trust of the public will accept no lower standard."

That was Newt Gingrich in 1988, leading the charge against House Speaker Jim Wright for an ethically questionable book-publishing deal. Within two months after Gingrich filed a complaint, the House ethics committee unanimously agreed to hire an independent counsel.

Ironically, Thursday it was Gingrich who had to appear before the ethics panel because of a book deal. He signed a contract with HarperCollins to write a book about his plans for revitalizing America. HarperCollins is owned by media mogul Rupert Murdoch, who could benefit mightily from legislation now before Congress; and Gingrich could earn millions from him in royalties.

Despite that conflict, Gingrich sense calls for an independent counsel are "ridiculous."

The Murdoch deal is challenged in one of five ethics complaints filed by Democratic opponents. One has languished for 10 months. At a closed meeting in May, the five GOP members on the 10-member ethics panel voted down an outside counsel, according to a Washington Post report.

Is Gingrich above scrutiny? Allegations against him are serious. At the heart of the ethics charges is GOPAC, the powerful political action committee Gingrich used to train and bankroll GOP candidates. "Since 1986, it has raised about \$17 million, but he refuses to show us where it all came from and how it was spent," says House Democratic Whip David Bonior, D-Mich., who filed two complaints.

A complaint by Ben Jones, who ran against Gingrich in last year's election, alleges that, with GOPAC's help, two tax-exempt foundations organized a college course to advance the speaker's political mission. Tax-exempts aren't allowed to engage in partisan political activity. The complaint also says congressional staff helped prepare the course material.

What's wrong with that? If true, it means taxpayers helped subsidize a politically partisan course. And much of the course material is included in Gingrich's best seller, *To Renew America*.

Other issues not in formal ethics complaints also deserve scrutiny. Gingrich has touted his reading program, "Earning by Learning," which raises money from private contributors and gives \$2 to school kids for each book they read. "The money goes to the kids," Gingrich said in a televised lecture. Yet a Wall Street Journal article last week disclosed that 90 percent of the money last year actually went to Gingrich's official biographer, who runs the program, and two other professors.

Republicans on the panel, of course, have little interest in probing their leader. But

there may be hope. Rep. Nancy Johnson, R-Conn, whom Gingrich appointed panel chair, is under pressure at home to get things moving. A recent poll in her state shows 78 percent of voters want an independent counsel; 85 percent want open hearings.

The ethics panel should do both, and the hearings should be televised. What Gingrich said about restoring public trust in 1988 is still true today.

SUPPORT MEDICARE

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

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, Medicare is in trouble. It is in trouble all right because the Republicans are in control. The fact is that they do not share the commonsense values in terms of maintaining the commitment to quality health care for older Americans.

Medicare is about to celebrate its 30th anniversary this week. The celebration should be a positive one, but it has a very sour note because the fact of the matter is that the commitment is not there today in 1995 with the Republicans and with the majority in this Congress to support Medicare.

They did not support it when it was initiated. They do not support it today. They are busy looking for excuses to take apart Medicare. The reason for that, of course, is to provide a big tax cut for their wealthy friends.

The fact of the matter is we should be supporting Medicare, not tearing it apart.

Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Medicare, drastic cutbacks are being planned for the program.

Before Medicare was enacted 46 percent of seniors had health insurance. Today, because of Medicare, 97 percent of seniors have health insurance. And today, we face a difficult fight in order to preserve a promise that means everything to the security of all Americans.

Republicans are proposing to save the program by cutting \$270 billion. Seniors will have to pay an additional \$3,400 over the next 7 years in health care costs. Some life saver this new GOP majority. The GOP in effect destroys the Medicare Program to save it. These added costs will be a tremendous burden to seniors trying to make it on a fixed income.

Ironically, these additional costs would not even go to the portion of Medicare which has been projected to become insolvent in 7 years. The reality is that these cuts are meant to pay for \$245 billion in tax breaks for the most wealthy Americans.

Instead of sacrificing the health of the seniors of this country to provide a bonus to the wealthiest in America—many of whom don't seek such tax breaks—it is crucial for older Americans and for all Americans that we remain focused on ensuring that Medicare has a bright future and is around for the celebration of its 50th anniversary.

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 Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we are facing this weekend is the 30th birthday of Medicare. Many of us have been trying to talk about this issue in quiet voices because we think 30 years old is not old enough for Medicare. We would like to see it survive and survive in a very healthy mode.

One of the things that we found out yesterday was the gentleman who put together the "Harry and Louise" commercials and did everything they could to derail, and did derail, health care reform, was given a lecture that somebody taped, so we were able to hear it yesterday.

The point of the lecture was what to do to scare people about Medicare so they would stampeded, and you could raid that little piggy bank to use it for the tax cuts that the other side wants to use it for. As we watched, almost everything we heard on that tape is coming true today.

What I am trying to say is that on the 30th anniversary of Medicare's birthday, that people should be very mindful of what is going on. There are big, big, big economic interests circling around Medicare that cannot wait to get their little mitts on it.

First of all, there are a lot of people talking about if you really cut it and you try to find a way to downsize this whole thing, the first trick will be to lure the healthy out, to transfer them out into the private sector. That is why I think so many private insurance companies have been willing to fund this group that is going to go out and say "Oh, we have got to change Medicare to save Medicare."

You know what will happen and I know what will happen. They will lure those healthy people out but the minute that they get sick, I will bet you no one will get an insurance policy that guarantees renewal no matter what their health condition. You can lure them out, make money on them, and the minute they get sick, boom, transfer them back over to the Federal Government or cut them off and leave them hanging out there. That is where I think we have to look to see where it is that we are going.

When this lecture was given that we got to hear yesterday, they were say-

ing that the only way you could get people to change the status quo was to scare them, scare them to death, and so we see people waving these reports around that the Medicare trust fund is in trouble. No one will ever stipulate that it has not got some problems. Yes, it has got some problems, and this side of the aisle has been dealing with those problems year after year after year.

The way we deal with them is you look at the number of beneficiaries, you look at the cost of the care, you try to see if there is anything you can do to streamline, get the waste out or whatever, and then any savings you get, you plow it back into that trust fund.

The question I have to those waving this report saying how much trouble Medicare is in, how terrible it is going to be if we do not do something, the question I have for them is then why are they proposing that they should take \$270 billion out, not plowing it back in, but taking it out? If it is already in trouble, where is the scenario where just removing the funds is going to make it healthier? I think it only puts it on a faster downhill trend, but I think they are hoping people only hear parts of the message and do not think it all the way through to the end.

As we get ready to celebrate this birthday, and I guess one of the reasons I feel so strongly about this birthday is it is the same birthday as mine, but as we get ready to celebrate this birthday for the 30th anniversary of Medicare, I am saying to people, please listen carefully. Please ask questions about why some companies will put so much money up, to do everything they can to agree to take all this money out of Medicare.

Maybe it is because they think they are going to be enriched if they can get that to happen, that they are going to make some money out of it. I really rather doubt that they are putting all this money up for this big PR effort because they are doing it just in the name of good government or just as a charitable contribution or something they would like to do for older folks. I think we really have to pierce the veil of those kind of entities and find out who is standing behind them and find out if they stand to be enriched if these things transpire.

I think playing with people's trust funds is just too scary. There are too many problems and too many people who really distrust the Federal Government to add this to their list of things that make them angry. Most people like Medicare. Let us hope it is still in as good a shape as it is now on its next birthday.

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

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

SAVING MEDICARE

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

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the 30th anniversary of Medicare. Over the past 30 years, this program has provided essential health care coverage to many seniors. Yet today Medicare faces imminent bankruptcy.

President Clinton's own Social Security and Medicare boards of trustees, which include three appointed Cabinet members, issued their annual report this last April. I have a copy right here. In this report, they indicated that the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund will be able to pay benefits for only about 7 more years. By the year 2002, seniors who depend on this program as their primary source of health care will lose coverage unless we act now to protect Medicare.

Let me share the conclusion from this report. This is President Clinton's report, his trustees:

We strongly recommend that the crisis presented by the financial condition of the Medicare trust funds be urgently addressed on a comprehensive basis, including a review of the program's financing methods, benefit provisions and delivery mechanisms.

I have heard little or nothing from the minority party as to how to fix it. They have criticized the Republicans but they have not offered any specific methods to fix this problem.

We have two options: We can either do nothing and allow Medicare to face bankruptcy or we can strengthen, simplify and save Medicare.

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We must strengthen this program by making it financially sound and safe.

Mr. Speaker, the current growth of Medicare is unsustainable. Instead of continuing to increase spending at 10 or 11 percent each year, we must slow the growth to about 7 percent. Even under this plan, spending for each beneficiary will increase from \$4,800 per year to \$6,400 by the year 2002.

We must simplify this program and make it easier for seniors to use. We must reduce fraud and abuse in Medicare. We must give seniors the right to choose their own health plan. We must go beyond the scare tactics. If we take immediate action now, we can save Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, this is indeed the 30th birthday of Medicare. We on this side of the aisle say "Happy Birthday" and many more.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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