

Medicaid program which primarily pays for nursing home care in this country and they are eliminating all nursing home standards. Basically unless the State steps in, the nursing homes can do whatever they want.

The other thing they did was to eliminate any protection for seniors, the spouse who stays back at home when the other spouse goes to a nursing home. Right now if your spouse has to go to a nursing home and pay for it by Medicaid, you can keep your home, you can keep your car, you can keep something like \$14,000 in assets. That is gone.

The assault on senior citizens both with the changes in Medicare and Medicaid continues. It is very unfortunate. I think it is incumbent upon us to continue to speak out against it.

REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP ON MEDICARE

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

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to underscore the importance of the Republican leadership in being at the forefront to help senior citizens here in the United States.

We have looked to the leadership of this House, the Republicans, who in a bipartisan fashion this year rolled back the unfair tax that is on our Social Security recipients that was placed there in 1993. As well, under that same leadership, in a bipartisan vote but led by Republicans, the seniors, who have been capped at \$11,280 for income for those under 70 without having deductions from their Social Security allotment, in fact now can earn under our new legislation up to \$30,000 a year without any deductions from Social Security payments.

This is what many senior groups have asked for and we have responded by in fact approving such legislation in this House.

Now let us look to the major problem that we need to face to make sure that Medicare is in fact here not only for the seniors of today but for the seniors of tomorrow. We look to the fact that Republicans and Democrats in the House are looking to preserve, protect and hopefully strengthen Medicare.

Just look to the President's trustees, Mr. Speaker, back here in the spring of the year, when they determined, and that is the Secretary of Treasury Rubin, Secretary of Health Shalala and the Secretary of Labor Reich, they all said that by the year 2002 if we do nothing, Medicare goes bankrupt. No representative in this House or in the Senate could responsibly go home after this session and say we did nothing to preserve, protect or strengthen Medicare.

Therefore, we need to look to alternatives of what to do. How do we strengthen this system that has pro-

vided valuable health care services to our seniors the last 30 years?

We look at health care costs in the country today, Mr. Speaker. Four percent is the average health care cost increase that we are having. But Medicare has gone up 10 or 11 percent a year. If you just look to the fact that fraud, abuse and waste is taking \$30 billion a year, that has been documented by every important Government agency, including the GAO, you will find that that is a large part of how we can solve the Medicare crisis.

I had a Medicare preservation task force meet throughout my district this summer, a bipartisan group, asked seniors, those who are subscribers, insurance companies, they talked to people who are involved in the health care field and said, "What can we do to change it?" They came up with some solutions which I have passed on to legislative leaders of the House and we hope that as a result of those task force recommendations, Mr. Speaker, we will have some fundamental changes.

One of the changes they want to see is first, of course, the fraud, abuse, and waste eliminated but also the 12-percent cost we put toward paperwork—paperwork, Mr. Speaker—instead of health care. We have to reduce that. We also had from our task force recommendations that beyond having the fee-for-service as an option for our seniors, the continued fee-for-service, also talking about the possibility of a managed care option, with more services to seniors that they are not now getting, possibly dentures or eye care or pharmaceuticals included. Also talking about Medisave accounts, where you get \$4,800 a year as you do now, of course, up to \$6,700 by the year 2002, but whatever funds you would not use in your visits to the doctor, et cetera, will be rolled over, you keep the money or rolled over to the following year. Also our task force called for the Inspector General to actually implement some of the reforms from the HHS Inspector General which call for not paying those subscribers, not paying those who provide the health care service substandard care, that we make sure we get reimbursement to the system.

I am also working with the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SCHIFF] and the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. SHAYS] on legislation to speed up the enforcement, investigation and prosecution of those who would commit the fraud, abuse and waste.

I think that we can see, Mr. Speaker, that by working together in a bipartisan fashion, we can not only make sure that we have a health care system under Medicare for our seniors that is strong and is preserved for this generation of seniors but for the next generation of seniors to whom we also owe a responsibility.

REPUBLICANS WILL GET MEDICARE

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

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the 104th Congress came here with a mission: to balance the budget. I don't think there are many who would disagree that balancing the budget is a top priority. But I cannot, in good faith, balance the budget on the backs of the poor women, children, the elderly, and the disabled—people who need help the most. It is wrong for this Congress to abandon Americans in need.

Mr. Speaker, Webster's Dictionary defines the verb to "cut" as to hit sharply, to constrict, to reduce, to lessen, to hurt.

I understand that the Republican leadership is unhappy about us using the word "cut" to describe the Republicans' revolting and offensive Medicare plan. OK, fine, Maybe cut is not quite the right word. Well how about gut? According to Webster's, to gut is to demolish, to destroy. How do you like the word gut? The fact is that Republicans want to destroy Medicare's security and leave our seniors stranded to fend for themselves. Perhaps gut is a more appropriate word!

Mr. Speaker, during the August recess, I held 13 town meetings and met with 3,000 of my constituents. My constituents told me that they are outraged about the Republicans' reverse Robin Hood tactics—taking Medicare benefits from seniors in order to pay for a tax break for the wealthy.

The Republicans are trying to pull the wool over the eyes of 37 million of our Nation's seniors. Many of these folks will be forced to give up their doctors, premiums will rise, as will deductibles and copayments. For many of our Nation's low-income seniors, these cuts will be devastating. A thousand dollars extra per year is not small change.

Republican call it a cut in the growth of spending. I call a sneaky attempt to fool seniors. They say they are offering seniors choices. The truth is that seniors will pay more and get less. They call it progress. I call it a good old-fashioned bait and switch.

You know, the Republican Medicare plan reminds me of an old saying: you can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time. The American people will not be fooled by this game being played with the health care of the elderly.

Mr. Speaker, we are sent here to Congress to be a protector of the people. Thirty years ago, when President Lyndon Johnson signed Medicare into law, Congress made a social contract with the seniors of our Nation. Well, guess who opposed Medicare in 1965? The Republicans. Even before that, during the Eisenhower and Truman administrations, the Republicans opposed passing Medicare. That's why it's no surprise

to me that the Republicans are trying to gut Medicare now. Now, when the program serves as a security blanket for 37 million Americans. Now, when Medicare serves as a lifeline to our seniors. Well, let me say this to my Republican colleagues: we cannot balance the budget on the backs of our seniors. We should be celebrating and embracing our seniors, not stabbing them in the back by taking away their health care.

REPUBLICANS WORKING TO SAVE MEDICARE

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

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, shame on you, to my colleague from the fine State of Florida. What are you trying to do utilizing these scare tactics? You know they are inaccurate. You know they are false.

I just went to the Webster's dictionary. You like to quote the Webster dictionary. Let us quote another word out of the Webster's dictionary, called "save." Save means to rescue, save means to keep safe. Save means to preserve.

Do you think this is going to go away if you put your head in the sand? Do you think if you tell American people enough times that we are going to throw seniors out in the streets, that people are going to go hungry, that there is not going to be medicine provided by this fine and great country of ours, that they are going to begin to ignore the crisis that we have in Medicare?

When are you going to come to your sense that this thing is going broke?

Your President, my President, has. He appointed trustees and they came out and said if we do not do something about this program by the year 2002—

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. MCINNIS. I thank the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when will the gentleman recognize the fact that the Medicare Program is in very serious trouble? The President's trustees themselves have said that that program will be broke by the year 2002.

Is it the theory of some of the people—mind you, not all of the Democrats are opposing this. We have some bipartisan support to save Medicare, to rescue Medicare, to preserve Medicare. But there are some people out there who, by the way, do not have a plan of their own, who, by the way, do not talk about solutions, all they talk about is how do we use scare tactics, how do we scare the Republicans, how do we win the elections in November?

Why do they not put that selfishness aside and talk about the senior citizens in such a way to save the Medicare Program for them, to preserve the Medicare Program for them? Sure it is

easy to criticize the first person out of the foxhole.

We have been willing to take that leadership challenge. We are willing to be the first people out of the foxhole, because if somebody does not do it, Medicare is going to go bankrupt.

There are a lot of my colleagues who did the same kind of yelling and pulled the same kind of tactics on the deficit, a deficit that accumulates at a rate of \$35 million an hour. They hid their head in the sand, they told the American people, "Ignore it, ignore it, it's not happening, it's not happening, it's not happening," and they became convinced that some of the American people were becoming convinced that the deficit was not a problem.

□ 2045

Look where we are today. Look at the suffering that the American people have today because this Congress did not take the responsibility of running a balanced budget in the last 25 years. But to my colleagues on the House floor, we are going to face exactly the same kind of crisis with Medicare if we do not accept that responsibility. If you do not like the plan we have got, come out with a solution. Do not spend our fine time tonight addressing the people in this House, our colleagues, telling them criticism after criticism, quoting Webster's Dictionary. Go look up the word "solution" in Webster's Dictionary. That is where we ought to be working, Democrats, Republicans, unaffiliated. Let us all work for a solution.

I think it can work. I want Medicare saved. I want it rescued. I want it kept safe.

My dear colleague from the State of New Jersey, same kind of thing, same kind of rhetoric. Stand on this House floor, tell the American people that the seniors are going to go without health care, that they will not get to choose their doctors, mislead all you want, be inaccurate as you want, put in a scare tactic and ignore the true problem, that problem being that if we do not do something with Medicare, my colleagues, this thing is going to go belly up. It is not going to go belly up 20 years from now. It is going to go belly up while many of you are still serving in this House.

It is our obligation, a fundamental responsibility of our duty to this country, to save that program, to save the senior citizens, to make sure that senior citizens of this country do have the medical attention that is necessary. When we are done with that, we have got a lot of other things that we need to address, the deficit. And we are trying to address it.

I think we will get it done. I am optimistic we are going to be able to save Medicare.

I am used to people criticizing and never joining the team. We have got a lot of people that like to ride the wagon and not pull it. If some of my colleagues preceding me speaking to-

night would instead help pull the wagon instead of trying to get a ride on it or sitting on the side criticizing why we are not getting that wagon out of deep mud, we may not be able to get it out.

If some of my colleagues who spoke earlier come up with some solutions, work with us in a bipartisan fashion, we can pull that wagon out of the mud, and we can save the program.

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL TIME IN SPECIAL ORDERS

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, would I get an opportunity, maybe 30 seconds, to respond, since the gentleman called my name during his presentation?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALMON). The gentlewoman cannot be recognized for that purpose. She has already spoken for 5 minutes. However, if the gentlewoman would like to get some time from one of the Members speaking later, that would be acceptable.

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

[Mr. FARR of California 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 Ohio [Mr. BROWN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE NORMAN Y. MINETA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of California. Mr. Speaker, I hope that we can pause for a moment from the policy issues which divide us at this particular time, and they are extremely important issues, and move on to something that I think we can find a great deal more unanimity about.

I have taken the time this evening to say a few words in praise of our colleague, the distinguished gentleman from California [Mr. MINETA], and before I make my own remarks on this matter, I would like to yield to the distinguished gentleman from California [Mr. MATSUI] for a few words on this subject.

Mr. MATSUI. I would like to thank the distinguished dean of the California delegation for yielding to me and also setting up this special order tonight on behalf of our dear colleague, the gentleman from California [Mr. MINETA],