

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT GETS PORKER OF THE WEEK AWARD

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

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, the earned income tax credit [EITC], is designed to help workers not poor enough for welfare, and may have been a good idea at first, but it has turned into a bureaucracy out of control.

In hearings last year, both the Treasury secretary and the IRS Commissioner admitted that the fraud and overpayment rate in the \$20 billion program could be as high as 45 percent. Get that: \$9 billion in waste. It should come as no surprise that the IRS actually made the problem worse.

The agency's 1992 experiment that gave about \$400 million in EITC benefits to those who had not applied but seemed entitled only created a monster: \$175 million of erroneous payments. Part of it was poorly recorded paperwork. After all, 90 percent of the benefit checks, up to \$2,500 each, go to those who pay no income taxes in the first place—including illegal aliens and prisoners.

For wasting money through a near-sighted bureaucracy, the earned income tax credit get my Porker of the Week Award.

SENIORS LOCKED OUT AND LOCKED UP WHILE THE DOCTORS MAKE A DEAL

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday two contrasting events showed just where the Republican majority wishes to take us on Medicare. On the one hand, Mr. Speaker, Speaker GINGRICH was in the room with the doctors, the AMA, and they were negotiating a deal. On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, a group of seniors who wished to be heard were actually arrested and handcuffed, although the charges were later dropped, for daring to try and speak to one of the committees that has their future in its hands. Simply, the doctors were in a room cutting a deal. I ask, Why weren't the seniors at the table? All they got, Mr. Speaker, was locked out and locked up.

Mr. Speaker, if the doctors made a deal and got their cut, the only cut the seniors got was to their benefits. This shows what is going on here. Very simply, they are lining up the providers and giving them what they want and telling the beneficiaries, the senior citizens who have worked so hard, "You are going to suffer."

Mr. Speaker, we must stop this Medicare plan. It is unfair, unwise, and unbalanced.

ONLY THE REPUBLICAN PLAN SAVES MEDICARE

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

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, after languishing for months without a plan to save Medicare, the Democrats have at least finally proposed something, even though it does not address the heart of the problem.

Their plan to find \$90 billion in Medicare savings is not about saving Medicare; it's about saving Democrats for the next election. The Democrat plan does nothing but postpone Medicare's bankruptcy for 3 years. Furthermore, under the Democrat plan, when the baby boomers begin retiring in 2010, Medicare will be more than \$300 billion in the red.

The Republican plan, on the other hand, makes a real attempt to address what is a long-term problem. Changes will be made in an attempt to make a 1960's program both functional and affordable in the 1990's. And our plan will make Medicare solvent through 2010.

Mr. Speaker, there are two plans to change Medicare. But only one saves it. And it's being offered by the Republican Party.

BACKROOM DEALS BEING MADE WHILE SENIOR CITIZENS GET ARRESTED

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, if you want to understand how the special interests are winning out over the public interest in this Congress, just read today's newspapers. There are two stories about two different groups who came to Washington to protest parts of the Republican Medicare cuts. One group got a private meeting with the Speaker of the House. The other group got arrested.

When the American Medical Association and its high paid lobbyists came to Capitol Hill, they were given a closed-door meeting with Speaker GINGRICH. A backroom, billion-dollar deal was made and the AMA reversed its position and endorsed the Medicare cuts. When the National Council for Senior Citizen's came to Capitol Hill, its members got no meeting with the Speaker, its members got arrested. Yesterday, 15 senior citizens were arrested and taken away in handcuffs. Their crime? Asking to participate in our democracy.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans are not afraid to listen to the special interests. Why are Republicans afraid to listen to the people?

HOW CAN THIS BE CALLED A CUT?

(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, the part A in Medicare is going to be bankrupted which has been financed by FICA payroll taxes. That is not enough. Beneficiary pay half, employer contribute the other half. That is not enough. What we trying to do is trying to fix the bankruptcy part A program without raising taxes of those younger people.

Let us take a look at the part B. This is financed by one-third by beneficiary, two-thirds by the other taxpayers. Used to be half and half. If we do nothing, it is going to end up 10 percent paid by beneficiary, 90 percent by the other taxpayers, which is not fair.

All we are trying to do is maintain the ratio, one-third as is now by beneficiary, and two-third by the other taxpayers. How could my colleagues call that a cut? Is it really cut? We are trying to fix part A and part B from bankruptcy without cutting it. I am tired of this rhetoric.

REPUBLICAN LEVEL OF INTOLERANCE RISES TO NEW HEIGHTS

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

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, October 11, 1995, is a day of infamy as 15 senior citizens were taken prisoner of war in the Republicans' assault on America. These gray-haired ladies in wheelchairs and veterans walking with canes were not mugged in some back alley. They were hauled off in handcuffs from the Committee on Commerce of the U.S. Congress.

Mr. Speaker, 1 week earlier dozens of Republican lobbyists lined up, streamed into our committee, took mailbags full of letters in support of the Republican rape of Medicare, but that was fine because the leadership agreed with that position, and no effort was made to stop them. In fact, even though the letters came from nonexistent senior citizens, that action was endorsed. But when live senior citizens in an orderly manner tried to approach the dais yesterday to ask why no Medicare hearings had occurred on the legislation, they were silenced immediately.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican level of intolerance rose to new heights in a disgraceful show of authority and force to these seniors, and, I repeat, some in wheelchairs, others walking with the aid of canes, were arrested, handcuffed, and taken out of the people's House and taken to the big house.

MORE HEALTH CARE CHOICES

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

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, the new majority plan to save Medicare

includes new health care choices for seniors.

I heard something about unfairness over here a moment ago, but currently this is unfair. Medicare recipients are limited to a one-size-fits-all type of contract designed 30 years ago. It is time to expand those options. Why? Because giving seniors the right to choose from a variety of quality health care plans will create competition among health care providers, it will drive down costs, and it will allow seniors to pick a plan that meets their individual health care needs.

My colleagues, our plan is about more choice, not less. More; we do not force seniors to give up their current coverage. If a senior likes the current system, he or she can stay in traditional fee-for-service Medicare. No questions asked. But if a senior wants to try something new, maybe a plan that covers prescription drugs and limits out-of-pocket costs, there is one for him. We provide that option.

Mr. Speaker, more health care choices for seniors, not less. It is that simple.

MONEY BUYS ACCESS—PROTEST GETS YOU ARRESTED

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

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, today, senior citizens can choose their doctor, their hospital, any kind of medical care they want under current Medicare rules. Why are the Republicans offering more choice; why are the Republicans forcing more choice? Because the Golden Rule Insurance Co. gave \$157,000 to GOPAC, the political arm of Speaker GINGRICH, another \$45,000 to Speaker GINGRICH's two campaigns. They sponsored Speaker GINGRICH's TV show, and they have given almost \$2 million to Republican causes. That is why they want to force senior citizens into medical savings accounts.

Mr. Speaker, I say to my colleagues, if you have money, you have access to the Republican plan for Medicare. The doctors met with Speaker GINGRICH in the middle of the markup of the Medicare bill in the Committee on Ways and Means. They got \$3 billion—\$3 billion. Golden Rule gives money to campaigns; they got millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars, in businesses.

Senior citizens approached the chairman of the committee yesterday and asked about the future of Medicare. They were arrested. I say to my colleagues, if you have money, you can cut deals. If you need health care, you get arrested.

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SAVE, PRESERVE, AND STRENGTHEN MEDICARE

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

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we took a number of positive steps forward in our effort to save, preserve, and strengthen Medicare.

The House Ways and Means Committee passed their portions of the Medicare Preservation Act and the American Medical Association—one of the largest health care providers in the country—endorsed the House Republican plan.

When I first ran for Congress, Mr. Speaker, I ran on the promise of reform—repeal of the status quo and change for the better.

Our Medicare plan delivers on this promise of reform. By increasing seniors' control of their health care dollars, providing greater choice of providers and ensuring long-term solvency, we are keeping our word.

There are those who will continue to throw stones at us from the sidelines, but as we enter the final phase of our efforts to save Medicare, I would encourage them to join us.

The American people are sick of the politics-as-usual mentality that they are expressing and want us to save Medicare.

The medical care of 37 million people is on the line, and until the Democrats face up to this fact rather than their own reelections, the American people will continue to discount all that they say and all that they do.

THE REPUBLICAN PLAN IS A MERCY KILLING OF MEDICARE

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, the bloom is finally off the Republican pay-more-get-less plan. There it is, in all its ugly splendor. Let us look at the real details of the plan. To protect the Medicare trust fund, let us drain 4 years of revenues from the fund. To fight Medicare fraud, cut any fraud law enforcement. To reduce soaring medical costs, let us permit doctors to charge higher fees. That is the only way they will support the plan. To secure last-minute support from one of America's fattest lobbies, let us give them a sweetheart deal that they say will mean billions of dollars for them.

Yes, this is real Republican doctoring of Medicare, doctoring it up so all Americans will know what it is. But the model for that doctoring is Dr. Kevorkian. Our Republican colleagues really have in mind a mercy killing for Medicare. To save Medicare, let us kill it. That is the real Republican pay-more-get-less plan.

DEMOCRATS ARE SCARING SENIOR CITIZENS ON MEDICARE ISSUE

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, the Democrats in Congress would like everyone to believe that Republicans are cutting Medicare, allegedly to give tax cuts to the rich. That is garbage and they know it. First of all, we are not cutting Medicare. Our plan will slow the growth, give seniors more options, all in order to save, protect, and preserve Medicare, to keep it from going bankrupt.

Second, our tax cuts in the Contract With America are paid for. They were paid for last April, when we passed our bill on the floor. Who will benefit from these tax cuts? Every family in America. Our \$500 tax credit for children is the main part of our tax relief package. Do Democrats think any family with a child is rich? Apparently they do. They seem to think that anybody who has a job in America is a rich person. I do not think that is true.

Mr. Speaker, together we should be working to save Medicare, not just trying to scare our senior citizens, which apparently is what the Democrats are stooping to doing.

CUTS IN MEDICARE WOULD HURT OUR MOST VULNERABLE CITIZENS

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to protest as strongly as I can the disastrous cuts the Republicans are proposing for Medicare and Medicaid. In my small State of Vermont, 67,000 senior citizens and disabled Vermonters will have to pay higher premiums and higher deductibles for a weakened Medicare system. Most of those 67,000 Vermonters today are having a hard time paying for their prescription drugs and other health care needs. Cuts in Medicare will be absolutely disastrous for them. To add insult to injury, the Republican Medicaid cuts will be terrible for low-income seniors, for the children, who are the most vulnerable people in our society. In Vermont, at least 20,000 Vermonters, low-income kids, low-income elderly, and low-income disabled, stand at risk of losing their entire Medicaid coverage. That is wrong.

NO AMERICAN SOLDIER SHOULD SERVE UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMAND

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

Mr. FUNDERBURK. Mr. Speaker, last year when American soldiers were killed over Iraq, Vice President GORE told the widows and orphans of those