federal government would appropriate for these two programs and converting them from individual entitlements to state block grants, they would force the states, over time, to pay for a bigger share. In return, the states would be given much wider leeway, immediately, to redesign the programs to their own taste.

The hope is that this will encourage experimentation that may reduce costs while actually improving outcomes for beneficiaries. The Medicaid population could benefit from moving into managed-care programs, it is argued. Welfare programs could be tailored more easily to local circumstances, helping people move off the dole and into paying work.

The critics' fear is that instead of innovating, the states will engage in a ''race to the bottom'' that shreds the social safety net.

In back-to-back speeches to the governors, Dole argued that the first of those results is likeliest; Clinton said he worried that the second would be the case.

No one can be certain, but logic and experience suggest that the second scenario is more likely. What would happen when federal funding is reduced and federal standards are eliminated is that the 50 legislatures would become the arena, each year, in which the welfare population would have to compete against other claimants for scarce dollars.

The reality is that, as Clinton said, ''the poor children's lobby is a poor match'' for other interests that pressure the legislatures. Teachers, road builders, law enforcement people, county and local governments, universities all have more clout. That was demonstrated this year in states from New York to California, where welfare benefits were trimmed to avert deeper cuts in other parts of the budget.

Dole, who is shepherding the welfare bill in the Senate and who would like to challenge Clinton in next year's presidential race, cozied up to the governors by expressing his indignation at Clinton's ''race to the bottom'' charge. ''I wonder which states he thinks would participate in such a race,'' Dole said. ''Which states does he believe cannot be trusted with welfare, education and protection of their people?''

But it is not a question of trust. The political realities of the legislatures are much as Clinton described them. To ignore that reality is to court trouble—not just for the aged and the poor but for the federal system.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). The Clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LANDMINES—A DEADLY THREAT TO AMERICANS ABROAD

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last night, I along with a number of our colleagues in both bodies, Republican and Democrat, those who have responsibility for foreign policy decisions, gathered with the President for nearly a couple of hours to talk about the situation in Bosnia, and whether and under what circumstance American troops might be sent there.

And in the future, when the discussions in Dayton, OH, are over, I will speak more about what I think can be and should be America's role in Bosnia, as the leader of NATO. But during the discussion last night, I could not help but think, whoever goes into the former Yugoslavia, assuming there is a peace agreement and the fighting has stopped, and the tanks are rolled back and the troops withdrawn, there is 1 killer that will remain—actually, not 1 killer, there are over 2 million killers that will remain in the former Yugoslavia. Those are, of course, the landmines that have been put there.

These landmines do not sign peace agreements. The landmines do not withdraw. The landmines do not say, ''We have agreed to stop killing.'' In fact, the landmines do not agree that they will kill and maim only combatants. They will destroy the life of whoever steps on them, civilian or combatant.

I have spoken many times about landmines on the floor of the Senate, and also in the halls of the United Nations where I had the privilege of serving as a delegate from the United States.

The immense human misery that is caused by landmines is finally becoming known. Just last week, on the CBS program ''60 Minutes,'' they showed how Cambodia has become a land of amputees from the millions of landmines that have littered the country. Tim Rieser from my office has been there and seen that, as have many others who have worked with me on the landmine problem.

Each one of those landmines waits silently. It is hidden until some unsuspecting child steps on it, loses a leg or their face or eyes or their life from loss of blood. And people who have come back from Cambodia, like so many of the countries that are strewn with landmines, and have told me that after awhile they become almost inured to walking down the street and seeing men, women, and children with a leg missing or an arm missing or their face horribly scarred and blinded, all from landmines.

We think how terrible it is in these countries, where unlike in our own country where we can walk safely almost anywhere, the people there cannot even go out to the fields to raise crops or to feed their animals, get water, or go to school. Whenever they venture outside they know that any minute could be their last.

But ours is a false sense of security, Mr. President, because landmines also maim and kill Americans, whether those are Americans in combat missions, the brave men and women of our Armed Forces who are sent into combat or on peacekeeping missions, or Americans who are on other missions overseas.

I have spoken many times about my friend Ken Rutherford of Boulder, CO. Two years ago, he lost a leg from a landmine in Somalia where he was working for the International Rescue Committee, a noncombatant on a humanitarian mission. He has undergone at least seven operations to save his other foot that was badly damaged.

Those who were in the Senate hearing room when he testified about the explosion when the landmine blew apart the vehicle he was riding in, remember the image of him sitting there in shock holding his foot in his hand trying to put it back onto his leg—an impossibility, of course—those who were there remember, as did people operating the cameras from networks who stood there with tears running down their faces, witnesses and others who had heard similar horrible stories before, were stunned into silence listening to this man.

Last June, two Americans, one from Long Island, the other from Minnesota, both in the military but on their honeymoon—on their honeymoon—were killed from a landmine in the Sinai Desert on their way to a resort on the Red Sea, even though peace had long since come to the area.

Less than 2 weeks ago, another American fell victim to a landmine in Zaire. Marianne Holtz of Seattle, WA, was working for the American Refugee Committee on the Rwanda border doing the highest of missionary and humanitarian work. She was following, really, the precepts of the Bible, of caring for these, the least fortunate of our brothers. She lost both legs, part of her face and today she is on a respirator in a hospital thousands of miles from home fighting for her life from internal injuries, because the vehicle she was riding in was blown apart by a landmine.

That is not an isolated incident. Four people have died and over 20 were injured in two separate incidents in the past 2 months in Rwanda where landmines blew up a Red Cross ambulance and a truck filled with refugees.

Mr. President, if there were a Red Cross ambulance filled with refugees and humanitarian workers, and a soldier were to fire a weapon at them and blow up that truck, we would say, ''What an outrageous thing. Don't they know this is the Red Cross? Don't they know these are noncombatants?'' It would be a war crime. But the landmine does not know that, and the landmine exploded and it is just as horrible.

This is happening, Mr. President, every 22 minutes of every day. Somebody in one of the 60 countries infested with mines loses an arm, leg, or is killed.

I have talked about four Americans who are among the tens of thousands of innocent people who have been killed or horribly mutilated by landmines in recent months. They are in addition to the 18 Americans who died from landmines in the Persian Gulf. In fact, a quarter of all the American soldiers who died in the Persian Gulf war died from landmines.

With 100 million landmines in over 60 countries, more Americans will be among their victims. Millions more landmines are being laid each year, and

sooner or later, we have to realize whatever the military utility these insidious weapons have, it is time we paid attention to the terrible human suffering it is causing indiscriminately day after day after day. It is time, as civilized nations on this Earth, to join together to end the use of these indiscriminate, inhumane weapons.

I yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized. The Chair advises the Senator from Massachusetts that morning business is set to expire at 12 noon—just to advise the Senator.

PART B MEDICARE PREMIUMS

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, in just a very short period of time, we will address the continuing resolution, and I want to bring the attention of our colleagues to a provision in there which I find objectionable and will either personally offer an amendment or will join with others to address what I consider to be an unacceptable inclusion in the proposal, and that is dealing with the part B Medicare premium.

We have had a debate on the issues of Medicare during earlier consideration, about the unjustified, I believe, cuts in the Medicare system that are being advanced by our Republican colleagues in order to justify the tax breaks for wealthy individuals. And now as a result of the actions that we have taken, we are seeing put into play the first of the results of the actions that have been taken by the Senate and the House. It is being added to this continuing resolution.

I hope that the President will veto the proposal. I join with him in rejecting the attempt to try and blackmail the President of the United States on this continuing resolution into accepting this particular provision, and I would like to outline to the Senate the reasons why I find it so objectionable.

The amendment would strike from the continuing resolution the provision increasing the part B premium by $136 next year, compared to the level provided under the current Medicare law. This proposal is a part of the overall Republican assault on Medicare, does not deserve to be enacted into law and it certainly does not belong on a continuing resolution.

If the Republican program becomes law, it will devastate senior citizens, working families and children in every community in America. It extends an open hand to powerful special interests and gives the back of the hand to hardworking Americans. It makes a mockery of the family values the Republican majority pretends to represent.

The Republican assault on Medicare is a frontal attack on the Nation's elderly. Medicare is part of Social Security. It is a contract between the Government and the people that says, ''put into a trust fund during your working years and we will guarantee good health care in your retirement years.'' It is wrong for the Republicans to break that contract, and it is wrong for Republicans to propose deep cuts in Medicare in excess of anything needed to protect the trust fund, and it is doubly wrong for the Republicans to propose those deep cuts in Medicare in order to pay for tax breaks for the wealthy.

The cuts in Medicare are too harsh and too extreme: $280 billion over the next 7 years, premiums will double, deductibles will double, senior citizens will be squeezed hard to give up their own doctors and HMO's.

The fundamental unfairness of this proposal is plain: Senior citizens' median income is only $17,750; 40 percent have incomes of less than $10,000, and because of the gaps in Medicare, senior citizens already pay too much for the health care they need. Yet, the out-of-pocket costs that seniors must pay for premiums and deductibles will rise by $71 billion over the next 7 years—$71 billion rise over the next 7 years—an average of almost $4,000 for elderly couples.

The Medicare trustees have stated clearly that $89 billion is all that is needed to protect the trust fund for a decade, not $280 billion.

The Democratic alternative provides that amount and will not raise premiums an additional dime, will not raise deductibles a dime. It will give senior citizens real choices, not force them to give up their own doctor.

The Republican Medicare plan also deserves to be rejected because of the lavish giveaways to special interest groups. In the House and Senate proposals, insurance companies got what they wanted—the opportunity to get their hands on Medicare and obtain billions of dollars in profit; the American Medical Association got what it wanted—no reduction in fees to doctors and limits on malpractice awards. The list goes on and on. Clinical labs no longer have to meet Federal standards to guarantee the accuracy of tests. Federal standards to prevent the abuse of patients in nursing homes will be eliminated. Pharmaceutical firms will be given the right to charge higher prices for their drugs.

Because of this unjust Republican plan, millions of elderly Americans will be forced to go without the health care they need. Millions more will have to choose between food on the table or adequate heat in the winter, paying the rent or paying for medical care.

Senior citizens have earned their Medicare benefits. They pay for them and they deserve them. It is bad enough that the Republicans have proposed this unjust plan, and it is worse that they have taken the single largest cost increase for senior citizens, the increase in the Medicare part B premium, and attached it to the continuing resolution.

Cuts in payments to doctors are not included in the continuing resolution. Cuts in payments to hospitals are not included in the continuing resolution. The only Medicare cut that is in this bill is a proposal to impose a new tax on the elderly and disabled.

The Republican strategy is clear: Try to rush through your unacceptable proposals because you know they cannot stand the light of day; try to blackmail the President into signing them, with the threat of shutting down the Government if he does not go along.

The part B premium increase is particularly objectionable because it breaks the national compact with senior citizens over Social Security. Every American should know about it, and every senior citizen should object to it. Medicare is part of Social Security. The Medicare premium is deducted directly from a senior citizens' Social Security check. Every increase in the Medicare premium is a reduction in Social Security benefits.

The Republican plan proposes an increase in the part B premium and a reduction in Social Security, which is unprecedented in size. Premiums are already scheduled to go up, under current law, from $553 a year today, to $730 by the year 2002. Under the Republican plan, according to the Congressional Budget Office, the premium will go up much higher, to $1,068 a year.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair reminds the Senator that the time for the period of morning business has expired.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 5 more minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, under the Republican plan, as I say, and under the existing law, by 2002, it will be $730. It will go up under this proposal to $1,068 a year. As a result, over the life of the Republican plan, all senior citizens will have a minimum of $1,240 more deducted from their Social Security checks. Every elderly couple will pay $2,400 more.

The impact of this program is devastating for moderate and low-income seniors. It is instructive to compare the premium increase next year to the portion of the Republican plan tucked into the continuing resolution to the Social Security cost-of-living increase that maintains the purchasing power of the Social Security check.

One-quarter of all seniors have Social Security benefits of $5,364, which is indicated here on the chart. The COLA for a senior at this benefit level will be $139 next year. The average senior citizen has a Social Security benefit of $7,874 a year. The COLA for someone at this benefit is $205.

But under the Republican plan, the premium, next year, will be $126 higher than under the current law. The average-income seniors will be robbed of almost two-thirds of their COLA. Low-income seniors will be robbed of a whopping 90 percent of their COLA. That is, with the increase of $136, which would