

doubt that Medicare costs over the last 10 years have not grown as quickly as they have in the private sector. But that, in part, is because we are continuing to do what I just said we do not want to do any more. We do not want to pass Medicare costs on to the private sector. We do not want to say, in the name of reform, all we are going to do is let the private sector take on greater responsibility for health costs.

We have to solve the problem of skyrocketing costs in the private sector, as well as those costs in Government. And that is exactly what I said this morning and what I hope we can continue to focus on as we consider the Medicare debate.

DAVID PRYOR: A TRUE PUBLIC SERVANT

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I could not help but listen to the distinguished Senator from Arkansas just a moment ago. All of us will greatly regret his absence beginning in the next Congress.

As we all know, last week, the distinguished Senator from Arkansas, Senator PRYOR, announced his plans to retire.

As the Senate Democratic leader, I feel like pleading with him not to go; to change his mind.

What we heard just this afternoon was another illustration of the value that he is to all of us, the unique individual that he truly is.

While he has been known around town as one of the President's closest friends on Capitol Hill, he is one of my most indispensable allies in the Senate and one of the closest friends that most of us have here in the Senate.

I have constantly drawn on his experience and wisdom for advice and guidance. And I have constantly found his calming influence amidst many a Senate tempest to be essential for my own personal well being as well as that of the U.S. Senate.

But while I recognize that he is a kind, southern gentleman of the first order, I also warn, do not let that calm demeanor fool you. In the Senate, there is not a more tenacious or aggressive fighter for the causes in which he believes than DAVID PRYOR.

Shortly after his election to the House of Representatives, Congressman PRYOR went undercover as an orderly to investigate conditions in nursing homes. When the House refused to conduct hearings on the plight of America's elderly, he rounded up volunteers from local colleges, rented a trailer, and conducted his own hearings in an abandoned gas station a few blocks away from the House Office Building. When the Speaker of the House refused to establish a Committee on Aging, then-Congressman PRYOR turned his trailer into the ad hoc House Trailer Committee on the Aging and continued its investigation.

The House finally established—to no surprise of anyone who watched all of this—a Select Committee on Aging.

When OPM claimed to have cleaned up its act and made Government jobs accessible to all applicants, Senator PRYOR sent his office interns down to that agency to apply for jobs.

He then called them to testify before his Subcommittee on Federal Services, where they informed the Senate about the continuing abuses in that most important Federal job recruiting agency. The list does not end.

He has taken on the IRS and authored and steered to passage the taxpayers' bill of rights to make our tax system fair and equitable to every citizen and every business.

He has taken on the Beltway Bandits, as he has conducted hearings and demanded more than 40 GAO reports on Government use of what he calls America's shadow government—private consultants.

He has taken on the pharmaceutical companies for the high prices they charge for prescription drugs.

He has stopped production of unsafe and unworkable chemical weapons, even though it meant jobs in his State of Arkansas.

He has conducted a longstanding crusade against what he considers time-consuming and time-wasting Senate procedures like filibusters, dilatory floor tactics, quorum calls, and extended rollcall votes.

But throughout his fights, Senator PRYOR has remained the gentleman that he is. His fights have always been constructive, not destructive, to the national interest. We need more, not less, positive-minded, cooperative, dedicated Senators like DAVID PRYOR.

While I am tempted to ask him to stay, as his friend, I fully understand and support his reason for leaving.

He has given a lifetime of public service. As a teenager, he worked in Washington, first as a page for Representative Oren Harris, and then in the post office in the House of Representatives.

He had successful careers as an editor-publisher and as an attorney, but he always came back to public service. In 1960, he was elected to the first of three terms in the Arkansas State Legislature.

In 1966, he was elected to the first of four terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. He served two terms as Governor of Arkansas.

Since 1979, he has served in the U.S. Senate. His work in this Chamber has consumed so much of his time and attention. In addition to his most important work as chairman of the Special Committee on Aging, he has been active on the Finance Committee, the Committee on Agriculture, the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, the Governmental Affairs Committee. And, yes, even the Ethics Committee.

In addition to all that, he has also served as Democratic Conference secretary.

Senator PRYOR now wants to enjoy life after politics—and there is much to

say for that kind of life. Senator Mitchell told me so just the other day.

Senator PRYOR's love for the Senate is exceeded only by his love for his family and his love for the beautiful State of Arkansas—both of which he will now be able to enjoy even more. I wish Senator PRYOR, Barbara, and his family the best in the years ahead and can only say that their gain is our loss.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DOLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is H.R. 956, and the Gorton amendment is the pending amendment.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business until 5:30 p.m., with Senators allowed to speak for not to exceed 5 minutes each.

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

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, last month, the Medicare Board of Trustees issued its annual report. Four members of this committee are appointees of President Clinton—three of them currently serve in his Cabinet.

The trustees concluded that Medicare will begin to go broke next year, and will be completely bankrupt by the year 2002.

If this were to occur, no payments, by law, can be made by Medicare to pay for hospital care or for any other services paid for by the trust fund.

Thirty-three million seniors and four million disabled individuals depend on the Medicare Program every year.

It is for them, and for those who will follow, that we must commit to preserving, improving, and protecting the Medicare Program.

Tuesday, the Speaker of the House and I extended a verbal invitation to President Clinton to sit down with us and to begin working on a bipartisan plan to preserve, improve, and protect Medicare.

Judging from the President's actions in the past weeks, and from remarks he delivered earlier yesterday at the White House Conference on Aging, it appears that the President has once again chosen partisanship over leadership.

Instead of heeding the advice from his trustees, the President heeded the advice of his political pollsters, using yesterday's speech as an opportunity to engage in scare tactics and to mislead America's seniors.

Nevertheless, Speaker GINGRICH and I are willing to give the President the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps he did not watch the news Tuesday evening or read the paper yesterday morning. Perhaps no one at the White House told him of our invitation.

So, yesterday afternoon, a letter from the Speaker and myself was delivered to the White House, and I ask unanimous consent that the text of that letter be placed in the RECORD following my remarks.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. DOLE. In this letter, we once again extend our invitation to the President, asking him to join us in a bipartisan effort to preserve, improve, and protect Medicare. It was precisely this type of bipartisan effort which saved Social Security in 1983, and it is what is needed today.

And I know a little about the 1983 Social Security effort, because I was a member of that Commission, along with Democrats and members from the private sector, appointed by the then majority leader Howard Baker in the Senate, appointed by then Speaker O'Neill in the House, and President Reagan. And it worked. A lot of people felt at that time Social Security was in deep trouble, and it was in deep trouble. It was about to go broke. The trustees had warned us it was about to go broke. It warned us years ahead it was about to go broke. As often happens around this place, nobody really thought it was going to happen.

When it finally became critical, we moved and we acted, and thanks to the efforts of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, both sides of the Capitol and President Reagan's effort, we were able to put together a compromise which, since 1983, has secured the solvency of the Social Security trust funds. In fact, Social Security is going to be in good shape for a fairly long time. Some day we will have to address it, but right now the 1983 Social Security fix has worked.

It also appears to me that Treasury Secretary Rubin, Labor Secretary Reich, and Health and Human Services Secretary Shalala, all trustees, all of whom signed the report calling for action now have a great deal riding on the President's response.

The President's inaction to this date suggests one of two things: Either he believes his trustees are incompetent and have reached an erroneous conclusion, or he accepts their conclusion and just does not believe it is the duty of his administration to solve the problem, in which case his trustees are irrelevant. Relevancy has been a matter of some debate around this town.

If, however, he treats the recommendation of his trustees seriously, then he has only one choice: To stop searching for campaign issues and to join Congress in searching for solutions.

I hope that the President, in the same spirit we have been working with the President on welfare reform, on antiterrorism legislation, on NAFTA, GATT, and other examples I can point out where Republicans provided the majority of the votes, working with a Democratic President, I hope the Presi-

dent of the United States will take a look at the trustees' report.

I know there is a conference on aging, and I know the temptation frightens people, scares people and they may pick up a few seniors' votes for the President, but if we do not fix Medicare, as I have indicated, we are not going to be able to make the payments.

The year 2002 seems like a long way off. Why worry about it in 1995? Let me just suggest, by the time you get it put together and by the time you start to implement it, the time will roll by more quickly than we think.

I cannot speak for everyone on this side of the aisle, but I think most of my colleagues are ready and willing to make hard choices. We are not talking about cuts—the President says, "Oh, we can't cut services, we can't do this, we can't do this." We are suggesting every dollar saved in our efforts to protect, preserve and improve Medicare go back into Medicare; not to cut taxes for the rich—as we hear from time to time from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle—or not for budget purposes, except so far as Medicare is part of the unified budget.

So I hope that the President has received our letter and that he will seriously consider it and that he will come to the Capitol, or we can go to the White House—it makes no difference—or we can meet halfway, whatever, and talk about what we may do in a bipartisan way to begin working on what is a serious problem with Medicare.

They are the President's trustees. They are people of integrity, as far as I know; people of competence, as far as I know; people of good judgment, as far as I know. I assume this trustees' report was based on the best information available and they said we should act now. Now means precisely what now means—now, 1995.

So we are prepared to work with the President and members of this administration, we are prepared to work with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, we are prepared to work with House Members, Democrats and Republicans, and my view is, if we are serious about this, we can do it in a very brief period of time.

So I hope that we can have some response from the President.

The other day I suggested we maybe have a bipartisan commission. That is how we made recommendations on Social Security in 1983. The President called that a gimmick. Well, it was not a gimmick. It was an idea that Speaker O'Neill had at the time and Majority Leader Baker and President Reagan had at the time, and it worked. It was not a gimmick. They made solid recommendations to Congress, and the Congress adopted the recommendations of the commission. I was proud to be a member of that commission, along with Claude Pepper, I might add, who was probably the seniors' greatest representative and voice in Congress, a Democrat from the State of Florida.

So, Mr. President, I certainly hope the President will follow up.

SENATE SCHEDULE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, let me say with reference to the schedule, right now there are discussions going on so we can have a substitute offered by Senators ROCKEFELLER and GORTON, and then it would be my intent to file cloture so we can bring the debate on product liability to a close. We have been on this now last week and most of this week. I am not quite certain when they will have the product complete.

I do not believe there will be any further votes today because, frankly, we wanted to move to another matter but it was objected to by my colleagues on the other side. So we will just have to wait and see what agreement can be reached, and then the substitute will be filed and then the cloture motion will be filed.

It is my intent to have the first cloture vote on Monday and if cloture is not obtained, to have a second cloture vote on Tuesday. So I say to my colleagues, we are going to have a cloture vote on Monday. It is very important we be here. We have been on this bill for 2 weeks. I do not want to frighten anybody or discourage anybody, but I can see the August recess going out the window. As much time as we take on every piece of legislation in the Senate, it does not leave the leader any alternative than to say, well, August would have been a great month to be off; a lot of us would like to have done a lot of things.

But the first thing we must do is complete our work, and as slowly as we are proceeding, I do not see how it can be done. Maybe there can be some agreements in the next few weeks, but we are behind schedule now and, I must say, unless we can catch up, I do not believe the American people expect us to be off for 30 days when a lot of the work is not done.

So we will be right here catching up unless we can do so in the next—we have time if we work together, let me put it that way.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. I withhold that request.

Mr. DOMENICI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, what is the order of the Senate, morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business. Senators have up to 5 minutes each to speak.

A SERIOUS PROBLEM AND A SERIOUS SOLUTION

Mr. DOMENICI. Thank you, Mr. President. First, I just happened onto the floor while our leader was speaking. I compliment him for the subject matter and for what he said. It is obvious we have a very serious American problem, and that is Medicare, and a