

fact, go broke in the year 2002. I think we know the reasons for it, and I will not get into that.

Quoting from the report, it says, Medicare is "severely out of financial balance and the trustees believe that Congress must take timely action to establish long-term financial stability for the program. The trustees believe that prompt, effective and decisive action is necessary."

Madam President, these are the trustees that were appointed by President Clinton, and what has happened since that time? Absolutely nothing. We have not heard one word out of the Clinton administration. We hear a lot of people criticizing Republicans because we want to do something to save a system, and they come up and say, "The Republicans are suggesting that they are going to cut Medicare in order to pass a tax reduction." Nothing could be further from the truth, and that certainly is not true. But for the President to do nothing in facing this crisis is something that cannot be tolerated.

The proposal that has been discussed by the Budget Committee chairman, Senator DOMENICI from New Mexico, has suggested that we put caps on the system, somewhere around 7 to 7.5 percent growth caps. In other words, the Republican budget is suggesting not that we have cuts in Medicare, but that we have increases in Medicare, but those increases will be capped somewhere between 7 and 7.5 percent, at an amount that has been actuarially determined that we will now have Medicare and it will not go bankrupt in the year 2002.

Right now, Madam President, we have some 36 million people on Medicare. It is projected by the time 2002 comes, we will have something like 50 million Americans, 20 percent of all Americans, including myself, will be eligible for Medicare at that time.

So I only say, it is time to stop the demagoging. We have a very serious problem on our hands. I believe the Republicans have a solution to that problem, but we should be getting some leadership from the White House at this time. This is not something with which we should be playing politics.

I yield back to the Senator from Pennsylvania.

A CRISIS IN MEDICARE

Mr. SANTORUM. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Oklahoma for his comments. I wholeheartedly agree with him. I think this is a question of leadership, what kind of leadership we are going to see not only out of the White House but out of the U.S. Senate.

I think the rhetoric to date has not served this institution well. There is, indeed, a crisis in Medicare. I know there are a lot of folks on the other side of the aisle who are saying we knew about this crisis, you folks denied there was a health care crisis. We are not talking about a health care cri-

sis, we are talking about a Medicare crisis. We are talking about a trust fund problem that says there is not enough money in the trust fund to be able to fund Medicare past a 7-year window. That is immediate, that is real, and that is something that we have to deal with, and I believe we will only deal with if we do so in a bipartisan way.

If this becomes a partisan issue where one seeks to take political gain at the expense of doing something that is responsible action, we will not succeed and the trust fund will continue to go further and further to the brink of insolvency, and we will be left with not a lot of options but very dramatic choices that are going to affect a lot of taxpayers and a lot of seniors and the availability of Medicare benefits into the future.

The other comment I keep hearing is, "Well, this crisis has been around a long time and we have known. This is not the first trustees report that has been published that says Medicare is in trouble and will go bankrupt in a few years."

That is true. In fact, over the last 10, 15 years, the average solvency of the Medicare trust fund has been about 12 years. Now it is at 7, which is I think a low. That is the shortest timeframe that we have seen recently where Medicare is in trouble and scheduled to go bankrupt. So it is important, but we are usually running around 12, 14 years as the average.

So why the big hullabaloo now? The reason for that is, once we get through the next 12 years or so, to the year 2010, we can do that pretty well by doing a fix. Senator DOMENICI's budget calls for roughly \$250 billion in reductions in the growth rate of Medicare over the next 7 years. That will fix Medicare, again, to make it solvent for about 12 years from now, which will be about average of where the fund has been.

The problem with that is not the 12 years, it is what happens in the 13th, 14th, 15th year and beyond, because after 12 years from now or 13 years from now that is when the baby boomers begin to retire and that is when Medicare really takes off.

Spending in Medicare just goes up astronomically once the baby boomers and that big chunk of the population starts getting into this program. So when we look at Medicare funding now, we have to look at it with a whole new ball game in mind. We have to preserve the long-term funding and solvency of this program through a period where we are going to see a rapid escalation, not in the cost of Medicare and inflation, but in the number of people in the program.

So when we look at Medicare now, and I hope we will have this informed discussion, that we will look at it over the long term recognizing that Medicare costs, just by demographic reasons, are going to escalate beyond what we have ever seen before in the history of the Medicare program.

So I am hoping we can have this kind of constructive dialog and we will not use brinkmanship for political gain, that we will have a good, bipartisan solution to the problem that faces this country.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO THE NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I want to take some time today to belatedly honor the North Dakota State University women's basketball team. Outside of North Dakota, most people probably don't know that this team won the NCAA division II national championship. Not only did they win it this year, but the Bison women have won this honor for 3 straight years. I think they deserve some national recognition.

The NDSU women had the additional honor of being the first ever division II women's team to make it through a season undefeated. This remarkable team ended its season 32-0, and they did it by focusing on one game at a time.

I think we can all learn some important lessons about life by watching these champions—about perseverance, about working together and helping each other, about being a good sport.

I want to congratulate each of these women for the year of hard work that culminated in their ultimate victory: seniors Linda Davis and Lynette Mund who provided experience and leadership, juniors LaShalle Boehm, Jessica DeRemer, Jenni Rademacher, and Lori Roufs; sophomore Kasey Morlock, who was the most valuable player of the tournament, and her fellow sophomores Rhoda Birch and Andrea Kelly; and freshmen Tanya Fischer, Erica Lyseng, Amy Ornell, and Rachael Otto.

These women are even more special because they will not be making millions of dollars playing in the NBA when they graduate. They are playing basketball because they love the game, and in the process they are serving as good role models for many young girls who need active, successful young women to look up to.

A lot of the credit for the success of the NDSU program rests with Head Coach Amy Ruley. She has led the Bison to four championships in the last five seasons. In fact, she is doing such a good job that the University of Illinois and Long Beach State—two division I schools—both wanted her for their programs, but I was glad to hear recently that she has decided to stay with us in North Dakota.

We also can not overlook the assistant coaches, Kelli Layman and Kathy Wall; student assistant Darci Steere; volunteer assistant Robin Kelly; student trainer Nikki Germann; and student manager Mary Schueller. Their work behind the scenes plays an important role in the team's success.

We in North Dakota have a lot to look forward to from the NDSU women's program in the future. All but the two seniors will be returning, and this team knows what it feels like to win. For now, though, we can just savor the feeling of having national champions in our midst.

WAS CONGRESS IRRESPONSIBLE? THE VOTERS HAVE SAID YES

Mr. HELMS. Madam President, the skyrocketing Federal debt—which long ago soared into the stratosphere—is in a category somewhat like the weather—everybody talks about it but almost nobody had undertaken the responsibility of trying to do anything about it until immediately following the elections last November.

When the 104th Congress convened in January, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a balanced budget amendment. In the Senate only one of the Senate's 54 Republicans opposed the balanced budget amendment; only 13 Democrats supported it. Thus, the balanced budget amendment failed by just one vote. There will be another vote later this year or next year.

As of the close of business yesterday, Monday, May 8, the Federal debt stood—down to the penny—at exactly \$4,856,502,980,514.90 or \$18,435.37 for every man, woman, and child on a per capita basis.

YOUNG AMERICA

Mr. COHEN. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to the captain and crew of *Young America*, which as many of my colleagues know, is the yacht that came very close to winning the Defenders' series of the America's Cup competition on April 26.

Young America, owned by the Maine-based PACT '95 syndicate and originating out of my hometown of Bangor, was very strong in the competition but was beaten in the finals by America's Cup veterans and past victor, Dennis Conner and his boat, *Stars & Stripes*.

While *Young America's* captain, Kevin Mahaney, did not have Dennis Conner's experience, he sailed boldly and impressively and displayed the kind of leadership and perseverance for which Mainers are renowned. Kevin had captured the silver medal in sailing at the 1992 Olympics, but it was his first America's Cup competition. He and his crew sailed with excellence throughout the competition.

Last summer, before Kevin even had a boat to compete in, he started to assemble a crew with John Marshall, head of the PACT '95 syndicate. Marshall was an experienced sailor and former crew mate of Dennis Conner in past America's Cup bids. Even so, many people on the sailing circuit did not assign much credibility to their efforts and saw little threat from their entry. However, Mahaney and Marshall and the crew they assembled soon

made yachting enthusiasts begin to take notice of the boat from Bangor.

This is not to say that *Young America* encountered smooth waters during its ascent to the top ranks of yachting. Mahaney had to rely heavily on the tenacious crew that he assembled to overcome obstacles and make it as far as they did.

Young America's bid for the cup was threatened last January when a tornado ripped through the compound where it was stored, causing extensive damage to the boat. In March, bad luck struck again when *Young America* suffered significant structural damage while being towed through heavy waves. This damage was particularly ill-timed, and the crew had to rush to make repairs in the final days before the Defender semifinals. John Marshall saw the silver lining in these clouds and commented that the times of hardship were when the crew really came together as a team.

Ironically, the crew that worked so hard to bring *Young America* to the forefront of the yachting world had the bittersweet experience of now seeing their boat compete against New Zealand in the America's Cup finals without them aboard. Shortly after his victory, Dennis Conner, full of admiration for Mahaney's triumphs, asked John Marshall if he and his crew could sail *Young America* in the final competition. Diplomatic to the last, Marshall honored his request. He said that both the crews from *Stars & Stripes* and *Young America* will emerge as victors if the Americans beat New Zealand.

The quiet but determined efforts of Kevin Mahaney and his crew justifiably make Mainers proud. While they are not manning the boat that is competing against the New Zealand vessel this week, everyone's mind will be on the come-from-behind boat known as *Young America*.

RECOGNIZING BILLINGS, MT, POSTAL SERVICE

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, today I would like to recognize the outstanding achievement of the Postal Service in Billings, MT. As is the case most of the time, we know how to do it right in Montana.

Billings' delivery of overnight first-class mail is first in the Nation, No. 1. The lucky residents of Billings received their mail 94 percent on time, the country's highest performance level this year. The score also ties for the highest mark achieved by any city since the measurement began. In an era when public and private mail volume continues to increase, I am proud of the ability of the Billings Postal Service to rise above the rest and top the Nation.

I would like to congratulate and thank everyone involved in the mail process in Billings for serving Montana and our Nation with such capability.

PROTECTING MEDICARE

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, yesterday before the Senate Finance Committee I spoke about the importance of the Medicare Program to Montanans. I would like to take this opportunity to share those comments with the entire Senate.

There being no objection, the comments were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Mr. Chairman, here in Washington, people often lose the forest for the trees. I'm afraid we may be doing just that on Medicare. So I hope we can begin by remembering what life was like for older Americans before Medicare.

The fact is, before we created Medicare, our senior citizens lived in fear.

Everyone over sixty knew that private insurance was shaky and expensive at best, and would cost them more every year.

And a serious illness—or even a common ailment that required treatment but did not threaten life—was not only a health problem, but something that could reduce a whole family to poverty.

Today, Medicare has removed that fear from our lives. Those of us with short memories have forgotten it ever existed. But let me tell you about some people who don't.

Two weeks ago I spent some time at the Seniors Center in Great Falls, Montana. The people at the center know exactly what Medicare and Social Security mean to their lives.

It means a little financial security. Some faith that illnesses will be treated and that families won't be wiped out by the cost. A hundred and twenty-five thousand Montanans are eligible for Medicare, and each one of them knows exactly what Medicare means.

Listen to Margaret and Frank Jackson of Billings, who wrote me last week:

"Social Security and Medicare are not only necessary, they are absolutely essential to our survival in Montana. Higher costs such as higher property tax, increase in school levies, fuel in a cold climate, and medicine take a toll. There is just too much month at the end of our money. Needless to say, additional cuts would put a burden on us."

Or Joyce Hert, also from Billings:

"I am 58 years old and for the past 18 years have had chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, emphysema, Renaud's Disease, degenerative arthritis and a disease of the connective tissue. . . . My medication costs approximately \$677 a month* * *. Please don't turn your back on those of us who need Social Security and Medicare."

The leadership now proposes something like \$250 billion in Medicare cuts. It is staggering. It is a reduction of nearly a quarter in Medicare services by the year 2002. And to add insult to injury, the House would do it in part to pay for tax cuts for Americans who are already very wealthy. Some in the Senate want to do the same.

What would it mean if this happens?

Montana Medicare beneficiaries would pay up to \$800 more a year out of their own savings. These are people who live on fixed incomes, and eight hundred bucks is an awfully big bite.

We would see thousands of operations and hospital stays put off.

Thousands of people would decide to go without home health care.

And, as the federal government cut reimbursement, more rural hospitals would be pushed to the edge, forced to choose between serving their patients and remaining solvent. Some Montana hospitals get 60% of their