

with supporters from both sides of the aisle, and overwhelming support from the public.

This legislation is needed, Mr. Speaker, in light of recent court actions. Assisted suicide, or "aiding, abetting or encouraging the suicide of another," is a criminal offense in 40 States. Yet two Federal appeals courts, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals and the 2d Circuit Court of Appeals, have ruled assisted suicide is a constitutional right. One State has already chosen to actually legalize assisted suicide, and while that law has not taken effect in that State yet, the 9th Circuit Court could reinstate it any day, and that State's Medicaid director has publicly stated that Medicaid, which is a Federal program funded by Federal tax dollars, will pay for assisted suicide.

Unless the Supreme Court disagrees with these opinions, physician-assisted suicide could become a legal and a routine practice throughout our country. Taxpayers could be funding assisted suicides, no matter how strong their conscientious objections were and how much they objected to the practice itself.

Polling shows us that a majority of Americans, 83 percent, oppose assisted suicide. This legislation will preempt the use of taxpayer dollars by preventing programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, Indian health care, the military health care system, the Federal employees benefits plans and other Federal programs from paying for assisted suicide, euthanasia or mercy killing of an individual.

This bill does not affect the patient's right to reject or to discontinue medical treatment. It respects the wishes of the patient and it respects the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship. It does not affect recognized modes of pain relief. Doctors will be able to continue to administer pain medication in any dose necessary to control pain. This bill permits full funding of this type of relief and any other type of medically recognized comfort or pain care that does not assist in the killing of patients.

The sum, Mr. Speaker, this legislation has the modest goal of keeping the Federal Government out of the business of euthanasia and out of the business of using taxpayer money for assisted suicide. I urge my colleagues to give their support to this bill, the Assisted Suicide Funding Restriction Act of 1996.

FLORIDA'S WINTER FRUIT AND VEGETABLE FARMERS FACE GRAVE SITUATION

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, this morning in Lake Worth, FL, the Subcommittee on Risk Management and Specialty Crops held an important field hearing regarding Florida's winter fruit and

vegetable industry. I commend our colleagues, the gentleman from Florida, MARK FOLEY, and the gentleman from Illinois, TOM EWING, for making this effort.

Although I was not able to be there myself, I want to share the feedback that my staff who were there got, because it definitely matches the information from the recent meetings we have been having in my own southwest Florida district, and that information is not good.

The situation on the ground in Florida for these farmers is grave. Bankruptcy, in fact, looms for many, many of whom have been in farming families, growing winter vegetables and fruits in Florida, for literally generations. Planted acreage numbers are declining and they are declining rapidly. In some places we understand the contraction of the industry this year has been as much as 30 percent. That is a giant impact and it is a negative one.

We have also heard from local bankers in my district who, despite longstanding relationships with the farming community, today just simply have to say "no" to new loans because the risks are too high for them.

In the long term there are legislative steps this Congress can take, such as country-of-origin labeling laws, we know about and have been working on to assist our growers' in the transition to what we call a post-NAFTA trade system. In fact, the House has already taken action to relieve some farmers of unnecessary burdens by modernizing pesticide regulation, by voting for commonsense regulatory reform and doing things like that.

But the farmers face more immediate problems, a situation that I think now clearly calls for decisive action by the executive branch within the existing authority that it has to provide immediate assistance for our farmers.

Prior to the passage of NAFTA, I well recall the Clinton White House made a lot of promises to the Florida delegation and to the fruit and vegetable industry in our area, and today the Florida growers need the administration to take action to halt the potentially unfair Mexican trading practices we are seeing; to get full enforcement of NAFTA and its side agreements; to utilize existing mechanisms, notably section 316 of NAFTA, to consult with their Mexican counterparts; and to simply give growers a chance to compete on a level playing field. They think they can win competitively, and so do I, if they have a level playing field.

So we are looking to the administration for help. We only hope the White House will honor the pledge they made to these hard-working Americans and give them a chance to prove that they can do the job in a fair field.

Mr. MILLER OF Florida. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GOSS. I yield to my friend and colleague from the west coast of Florida, DAN MILLER, who knows this prob-

lem as well as I do and is working just as hard to bring a satisfactory conclusion.

Mr. MILLER OF Florida. Mr. Speaker, both of our districts have a very significant amount of winter tomato raised in our area. We have two crops a year in our area. We have one in November and one in May. The Florida tomato farmers are really hurting. They really are.

Last season the imports of Mexican tomatoes went up 44 percent. The production of Florida tomatoes went down 23 percent. Another set of numbers is that in 1991, 5 years ago, there were 230 growers of tomatoes in Florida. Today there are only 80 growers in Florida. They are going out of business. And these are families that have been around a hundred years. Third and fourth generation. One hundred years in Florida is a long time. That may not be very long in Massachusetts, but it is in Florida.

So they are really hurting, and the question is, is the administration doing everything they should be doing.

When NAFTA was voted on, at the very end it was the Florida delegation who held out to make sure that agriculture was taken care of properly under NAFTA. Because Florida agriculture competes directly with Mexican agriculture. Michigan tomatoes do not compete with Mexican tomatoes. Mexican tomatoes only grow in the winter, and that is when we grow our tomatoes.

And it is not always a fair trade that is going on. There is a difference between free trade and fair trade. We want to have both. To make it fair, we need a level playing field. It is not always a level playing field, and we think the administration can and should do more, and they promised to do everything they could back when we talked about NAFTA in the fall of 1993.

I am really delighted that the gentleman from Illinois, Congressman EWING, was able to have the hearing down in Florida today, and so they are trying to get to the bottom of what can be done. There are certain limits to what we can do, but the gentleman is right, the administration has some ability, and I think the Department of Commerce is getting ready to come out with a ruling soon and maybe will tell us what is available for us.

One of the things that make it a fair trade issue, and one of the things I have been working on, is the situation of methyl bromide. The administration should be more cooperative. The President spoke out in California about the issue and he said, yes, I will help on that issue, but then, when he gets back to Washington, he turns it over to the EPA and they say, no, we are not going to do anything.

A University of Florida study showed the impact of methyl bromide to be a 43 percent reduction in production of

those agriculture products where methyl bromide is eliminated. It would destroy Florida agriculture; not just tomatoes but winter vegetables in general.

So it is very important to work with us on that issue. They have beat us up with the Mexican tomatoes, so why can they not allow us something to give the farmer. The minimum wage will hurt our tomato farmers, so we need to see what can be done.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I am glad the gentleman brought these points out because this is a half billion dollar industry for Florida and there are a lot of folks who have nothing else. This is what they do. They are small farms. They have been growing for years and generations, and they are being displaced and the administration is not keeping the promises it made to help in the enforcement and the side agreements on the NAFTA compact.

It is quite clear the Mexicans, indeed, are dumping. They are selling below cost. This is putting our farmers at an unfair disadvantage. And I believe if they comply with the laws of NAFTA that our farmers can beat the socks off the Mexicans, but they have both got to play by the same rules.

TIME TO DISCUSS TRULY CRITICAL EVENTS OF 104TH CONGRESS

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I think that in these closing days of this Congress, it is particularly important that what we try to do is to organize the remaining time that we have to discuss the truly critical events of this 104th Congress. Quite honestly, that has not always been easy to do, and time and again in the Gingrich Congress Members have been gagged and have been unable to talk about truly critical events.

In fact, this week we mark an anniversary. A year ago, Democrats were forced to go out onto the lawn in front of the Capitol to hold a hearing on the cuts in Medicare that were proposed by Speaker GINGRICH and the House Republican leadership. We held these hearings out on the lawn, and my colleagues will recall that we did that because the committees of jurisdiction were only going to hold one hearing.

I repeat: One hearing on their proposal to devastate Medicare with a \$270 billion cut, a cut, I might add, that was going to be used to pay for something coined the crown jewel of the Contract With America. And that was a tax cut, as it turned out, where we saw a tax cut for the most privileged people in our country.

On that day, while we held these hearings on the lawn, to give a full airing to the impact of these cuts, we had a number of stalwart seniors who protested at the sham hearing that was

being held. Those seniors, and sometimes we forget past events, those seniors were arrested.

So, sadly, the history of this Congress has been a relentless attempt to keep the truth from coming out about the impact of some of these proposals.

It is particularly important to note and to talk about again because what we are seeing in a proposal that has been offered by the standard bearer for the Republican Party, by Bob Dole, his economic plan, which, if we take a hard look at it could have devastating impact on Medicare.

We also need in this context to recall what Senator Dole said about his own vote on Medicare, and I quote. Being only 1 of 12, proud to have been 1 of 12 who voted against the creation of Medicare because, he said, and again I quote, we knew it would not work. End quote.

So Senator Dole has a track record on Medicare that seniors need to be informed about. Their families need to be informed about this track record. And, frankly, they need to be concerned about it.

Under the Gingrich-Dole plan, Medicare could be cut by as much as \$300 billion by the year 2002, even more than what NEWT GINGRICH and this Republican Congress tried to cut in 1995. If my colleagues will recall, that number was \$270 billion, and no coincidence between the number 270 in Medicare cuts and the \$245 billion that they wanted to provide in tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans.

So if we take a look at what this \$300 billion means to seniors, it means even higher out-of-pocket costs and lower quality health care for seniors. These Medicare cuts would help to pay for a tax plan in which more than 40 percent of the benefits would go to the wealthiest 5 percent of Americans.

And the best evidence of how we would treat Medicare is what Republicans proposed to do to Medicare when they took over the Congress in 1995, and it is worth repeating.

First, they proposed cutting \$270 billion from Medicare to pay for a \$245 billion tax cut for the wealthy.

□ 2045

Second, they proposed policy changes that would have doubled premiums and would have reduced senior's choice of a doctor. Third, they proposed creating risky medical savings accounts that would skim the healthy and the wealthy out of traditional Medicare, thereby weakening the system and increasing premiums for those who remained in the program.

Let me quote to you Dr. Joseph White from the Brookings Institution, a nonpartisan Washington think tank. He said recently, "I have to look at the numbers, at the campaign statements and at what then Senator Dole and his colleagues supported in 1995 and I have to conclude that the risks to Medicare from candidate Dole's economic program are substantial."

Finally I want to point out that this assault on Medicare is part of a larger attack on America's retirement security. Think about it. When Americans look forward to retirement, the three pillars of a secure retirement that they can count on are Medicare, private pensions and nursing home care. These were all under attack in 1995.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO WALTER "CHICK" HOLTkamp

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

MEDICARE

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON].

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio. I wanted to show this chart, which apparently the previous speaker might not have read the bill, but it does show clearly that the Republican plan, which is a reaction to the Clinton trustees saying that Medicare is going bankrupt, our plan to strengthen, save, and preserve Medicare is very much on target and increases the amount per recipient from about \$5,200 to over \$7,000. In my neck of the woods and I think in Ohio that is not considered a cut. I know here in Lala land, Washington, DC, you can call anything a cut, just as you can call Clinton a conservative.

Mr. HOKE. Is there a rule that you have to be truthful on the floor in what is said.

Mr. KINGSTON. Not that I know of. But the fact is that this is available publicly. What is very important is that we do Medicare on a bipartisan basis. It is not time to scare the seniors. It is not time to bring out all the demagoguery and partisan politics. It is time only to save the program for your mom and dad.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for pointing that out.

I rise, Mr. Speaker, tonight to recognize one of northeast Ohio's leading citizens, Mr. Walter "Chick" Holtkamp. Chick is the retiring CEO of the Holtkamp Organ Co., our Nation's leading manufacturer of pipe organs. It is my purpose tonight to pay tribute to the all-inspiring contributions that he has made to his craft. On October 28, 1996, in Cleveland, OH, a gala in Chick Holtkamp's honor aptly dubbed chickfest is bringing together the world's foremost organists, composers, and artisans of the trade to recognize Chick Holtkamp and his remarkable career.