

have a very large elderly population that rely on Medicare and some who rely on Medicaid. In fact, if you just spend a minute and look at what has been going on in a State like Florida, for example, the Miami Herald did a story last year and identified in Medicare \$1 billion worth of waste, fraud, and abuse.

I sat on one of the other subcommittees in what was Government Operations that oversaw Medicaid. We identified about \$1 billion in Medicaid in Florida in fraud and abuse. One of the cornerstones of the Republican plan is to create some penalties, to root out waste, fraud, and abuse.

That is the main, major change we have proposed. People can still stay on Medicare. We do offer choices. But, again, we must address the problem of waste, fraud, and abuse.

Let me talk for a second, too, about nursing homes. The proposals that the Republicans have advocated, we provide some change there, also addressing fraud.

But the other major change we have that affects the folks in Florida is, we are not advocating lessening of regulations or wheeling people out on the street from nursing homes. What we have said is we should give people some more compassionate, some more cost-effective alternative. Right now people have to divest themselves of any savings. They must expend all their savings and basically go on this program for the poor or transfer their savings to their relatives.

□ 2100

Once they have done that, they lie, cheat and steal in some cases to get on the programs or divest themselves of life savings. And then what do we do? We give them one choice. You go in a nursing home.

What we said is why not allow the elderly to live with their families, pay for some attendant care. It could cost one-third, it could cost 20 percent, and they could live with their families. Why not, in fact, give some alternatives they could stay in their own home and not be forced into a nursing home, and we live longer and can live longer by ourselves with a little bit of help from our friends rather than this one forced option that we are forcing. So we can and we should make a difference for the elderly. And these are the choices we hold out for them.

I thank the gentleman.

Mr. SHAYS. If the gentleman would yield, just to close the loop on both programs, the bottom line to our Medicare plan is we do not increase copayments, we do not increase deductibles, we allow the premium to stay at 31.5 percent, we provide choice.

It is true, we ask the wealthiest of wealthy to pay a higher part for the premium for part B. I think sometimes Republicans do not like people to know we are asking the wealthy to pay more, and Democrats do not want people to know Republicans are asking the

wealthier to pay more, but we are in that instance, and that makes sense.

Most importantly, we are allowing for choice in the program and providing for the kind of innovation you and others have talked about. In this way we are trying to work to save the program from bankruptcy and to make sure it can continue for future generations.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I yield for one last minute to the gentleman from South Carolina. We are just about out of time. The clock is ticking.

Mr. GRAHAM. Welfare as you know it, we want to change it. One key difference, President Clinton's welfare bill says you cannot stay on welfare for more than 60 consecutive months. You can get off for 1 month or 1 day, and have 60 more months waiting on you. Our bill says 2 years, 5-year lifetime, big difference.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I thank everyone for joining us tonight. As we started with Winston Churchill's quote, "Truth is incontrovertible. Malice may deride it, ignorance may attack it, but in the end there it is."

Mr. SHAYS. If we can end with Mr. Rabin's quote that, "The politician is elected by the adults to represent the children."

Mr. GUTKNECHT. We have a moral responsibility to make sure we preserve this last best hope. If we do not make some changes, whether in Medicare entitlements, the way the Federal Government spends money, we are going to leave our kids a legacy no one can be proud of. If we continue down the same path, continue to do the same things, we are only going to get the same kind of results.

I wish we had more time to talk about the President's budget. Recently he gave it to us. It is 20 pages, now, not a whole lot of detail, but it really, you know, back in January he said that the era of big government is over, but on the other hand, when you take a look at the budget and get the facts about this budget, you start to see that that obituary may have been written prematurely.

CUTTING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. METCALF). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight because of my concern over some of the statements that were made by my colleagues on the Republican side during this last 1 hour where they talked about the Republican cuts, budget cuts on the environment and the changes that the Republican leadership have proposed with regard to environmental protection.

Particularly, reference was made to the fact that President Clinton was in my State, New Jersey, yesterday and was highlighting the fact that this

Congress, this Republican Congress, under Speaker GINGRICH and the Republican leadership, has done everything possible to turn back the clock or try to turn back the clock on environmental protection. The President was in New Jersey because of this concern over the Superfund Program, which is used by the Federal Government to try to force polluters, those who caused hazardous waste sites, to clean up their pollution, to spend the money to do it, and where the polluter cannot be found or the polluter is bankrupted or the corporation has ceased to exist anymore, the Federal Government steps in to do the cleanup itself.

The President was highlighting the fact that under the Republican leadership's proposals and the vast cutbacks that they have made in appropriations or spending for the Environmental Protection Agency, a number of Superfund sites in the State of New Jersey will not be cleaned up this year. In fact, the many shutdowns of the Federal Government which affected the EPA at many Superfund sites, the cleanup has either not occurred or was slowed down completely, in many cases at a considerable cost to the Federal Government. And what he was saying is that this cannot be allowed to continue, that we cannot allow this Republican leadership to turn back the clock on the Superfund Program to make it so that our environmental laws are not even enforced for lack of money to hire people to do the enforcement, which is essentially what is happening.

Now today, our environmental task force on the Democratic side, we have a task force that is trying to address environmental concerns and point out how the Republican leadership is cutting back and turning the clock back on the environment. Well, our Democratic task force issued a report based on a hearing we had a few weeks ago. The report, which I have here, shows dramatically the impact of the budget cuts that the Republicans have put forward on the environment.

What it shows, essentially, is that the Republicans are trying to hide a very dismal record. Anti-environmental legislative riders have been attached to appropriation bills, disproportionate budget cuts have targeted environmental programs, and curbs on enforcement activities have been widespread, which let polluters off the hook and sends the cleanup bill to the taxpayers.

We talk about, in the report, how the Republicans have specifically targeted environmental programs for particularly deep budget cuts. In other words, we know that we have to spend less and we have to downsize the Federal Government, but the Environmental Protection Agency has received a disproportionate share of these overall cuts. Overall funding for the EPA was cut by 21 percent. Pollution enforcement, the cops on the beat, the environmental cops on the beat, have been

cut by 25 percent. What that means is that you have these environmental laws on the books but you do not have any way of enforcing them. The polluters know if no one is out there watching them and they continue to pollute, discharging materials, violating their water discharge permits, discharging into waters and harbors, they do what they think they can get away with.

I would venture one other thing we found in our report and found in the forum, the cuts in environmental enforcement do not save money. In other words, the Republican leadership argues if we cut back on this environmental enforcement, somehow we are going to save money.

Nothing could be further from the truth. I mean, essentially what happens is that the environmental cop on the beat, if you will, those who go out there to find the polluters, they do not find them, they do not issue them summonses and, as a result, no fine is incurred and the Treasury actually loses money because they are not penalizing the polluters.

In addition, a lot of times, when pollution takes effect, it costs even more money in the long run to clean it up, whether it is the water, whether hazardous waste, whatever it happens to be, so the bottom line is it costs the Federal Government more money in the long run.

Some of the previous speakers on the Republican side also made the argument we do not need the Federal Government involved in all of this enforcement activity because the States can do it. I think the gentleman from Florida mentioned that almost every State or every State now has an environmental protection agency or something like it. But the reality is that the Federal Government sets preliminary standards, whether it is clean water, clean air, hazardous waste cleanup, whatever it happens to be. Without those Federal standards in place, many States simply have not historically established standards similar to the Federal ones. So I just wanted to point out we could talk all night. Of course, my time is up now. I just wanted to point out this fact. This Republican leadership is turning the clock back on the environment. I am glad the President came to New Jersey to point that out today.

PREVENTING TEENAGE PREGNANCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. CLAYTON. I have several of my colleagues who will participate with me on this special order as we are talking about the special order on preventing teenage pregnancy.

Mr. Speaker, 30 percent of all out-of-wedlock births are to teenagers below

the age of 20. That astonishing reality should be alarming to all Members of Congress and to all citizens of our country. More importantly, the current debate on welfare reform is accelerating the need to address the issue of out-of-wedlock teen births. We want to end welfare as we know it, all of us say, but we do not want to replace it with welfare as we do not want to know it. We do not want to enact legislation that leaves a policy of national abandonment.

As we consider solutions to this issue, we must keep in mind no other industrialized nations with the standard of living comparable to the United States has a problem of this dimension. On the problem of teenage pregnancy, we have the dubious distinction of leading the world.

In January, the national campaign to prevent teen pregnancy began. This campaign is a privately funded non-partisan effort. The goal of the campaign is to reduce teenage pregnancy rate by one-third by the year 2005. The mission of the campaign is to reduce teenage pregnancy by supporting values and stimulating actions that are consistent with a pregnancy-free adolescence. In order to accomplish this mission and reach the goal, the campaign will first work to raise the awareness level concerning this crisis. The campaign will reach out to national media to help raise awareness and to attract the interest of national leaders and organizations. It is critical that our Nation take a clear stand against teenage pregnancy and that the position be widely publicized.

Enlisting the support of the State and local media will be a vital part of this outreach to strengthen the knowledge base and to educate the public on this issue. These actions will force a national discussion about how religious, cultural and public values influence both teenage pregnancy and the way our society responds to the dilemma.

The campaign's second focus is to encourage and to stimulate innovative solutions through local schools, churches, civic groups, as well as local and State officials. The campaign does not advocate any plan other than community involvement. Each community would determine what would be appropriate and acceptable based on a community's standards and values. Let me again emphasize the national campaign encourages community involvement, but it does not recommend any plan of action. Again, each community would determine the action appropriate for their community plan. The parents, families, churches, teachers, Scout leaders, community members who know these teenagers best would determine what kind of program their communities could use to help their young people avoid teenage pregnancy and becoming teenage parents too early.

I think you will agree these decisions should be made by the community and at the community level by individuals

and families who care the most about the greatest need to influence these young people.

I am delighted to have several people to join me today, and Congresswoman MEEK of Florida is going to share some of her remarks with us.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to bring the subject of teenage pregnancy to the consciousness of everyone in this Nation, and I think this special order you have tonight will take us a long way to doing that and having people aware of what is going on to some of our best and most valuable resources, and that is our teenagers.

We all know that statistics show us that the baby boomers now have produced a new crop of teenagers, much larger than the baby boomers' population itself, so we are beginning to have more and more of the problems which you have described here.

Tonight I am going to take a few minutes and just talk about what is happening in the State of Florida. Most people know about Florida as a beautiful tourist State. They know about it as the State where the Sun shines all the time. They know about it as being a very warm climate.

The one thing people do not talk about a lot in the State of Florida is that our rate of teenage pregnancy is growing. Our rate of AIDS is growing. As a matter of fact, we are in the top five in this country as far as AIDS and teenage pregnancies. It is something that many of us as policymakers have been afraid or maybe a little reluctant to address as being a problem. But until we change some of the policies, and I think that is where you are on your way to changing some of the policies which underwrite what we do with our wonderful teenage children, certainly we will keep going the helter-skelter way as we are doing now; that is, one State may have a very strong policy, another one may have very little, and another one may have sort of a lukeworm policy.

I guess what we would like to see is that this country would face this as a problem, not to sweep it under the rug. Policymakers would no longer be afraid or a little concerned about the political incorrectness of addressing this problem.

□ 2115

Just to look at the social significance of teenage pregnancies in Florida, and I am talking about births by teenagers who are 18 years or younger in the State of Florida, if you will notice, this particular, I call it an epidemic, is almost a pandemic. But it is an epidemic in that some groups of teenagers, who once did not even have this problem, are now beginning to show an advancement in their teens whether they are white or black or any other ethnic group.

However, because of the policy related circumstances with minorities, teenage pregnancy incidence is much