

I was also concerned, Mr. Speaker, because of the cuts that are proposed in Medicare and Medicaid. I have great problems in the Republican budget with the assumption of balanced billing. In other words, a senior citizen may now be charged more by the provider and the senior will be billed directly for that, as opposed to the senior paying out of pocket being limited, as is presently the law.

I am concerned about the cuts in Medicaid, because I think what that is going to mean is that it will go to the States in a block grant, but not satisfactorily enough to meet the needs. At the same time the needs will expand, the funds will decrease.

Those are a lot of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, that I voted against the Republican budget but for the coalition and President's budget. I have heard a lot of talk, Mr. Speaker, about the need to, and certainly we all agree that there is a need to make sure that our young people are not burdened by debt. At the same time, there is also a compelling need to make sure they are not burdened by ignorance through lack of educational opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, there is a compelling need to make sure that our young people are not burdened by lack of opportunity because we are not investing in our economy. There is a compelling need to make sure that our young people are not burdened by the problems of crime because we are not investing adequately enough in crime control and putting police officers on the street. There is a compelling need to make sure that our young people have a future, and you have to invest in order to make that future.

So I have thought that the two budgets that I did vote for balanced the budget over 6 years, what they did was to seek to keep those domestic investments up and growing, and at the same time, to reach that goal of a balanced budget within a 6-year period.

One concern I have, Mr. Speaker, is that none of these budgets adequately addresses the need of domestic infrastructure investment, that none of these budgets addresses the need to increase the growth rate in this country. The problem is that, if you accept the growth rate in any of the budgets, Republican or Democrat, and say that that is all we are going to grow, that is a ticket to economic stagnation over a period of time.

However, having said that, certainly the coalition budget and the President's budget, I felt, certainly offered much more satisfactory blueprints for the future than the Republican leadership budget. So I offer that as my explanation of why I voted the way I did, and why I am going to keep pressing for domestic investment so that our economy can grow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. DICKEY]. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

ALLOCATION OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I take the gentleman's place.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

LET'S SAVE MEDICARE

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

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss one of the most important issues facing my constituents in east-central Florida.

It is an undisputed fact that Medicare is running out of money and will be bankrupt in just 5 years.

For me, this is not a partisan issue. This is a personal issue. I am a doctor and my patients depend on Medicare. I have a father who is dependent on Medicare.

I know the value of this program for my patients and my family, and I am 100 percent committed to finding a solution to protect Medicare for current and future beneficiaries.

As a medical doctor I've been disappointed that some have sought to use Medicare to gain political advantage. This is not a political issue.

The Medicare trust fund began going broke last year, it is already \$5 billion in debt this year, and will be completely broke in 5 years. We don't have time for politics as usual.

I hear some talk about cuts in Medicare. There are no cuts in our plan.

The plan I voted for increases Medicare spending from \$5,200 per person in 1996 to \$7,000 per person in 2002. That's an \$1,800 increase in Medicare spending.

We do want to spend smarter. We do want to attack waste, fraud, and abuse. We want to give seniors choices in health care.

I urge those who have made this a partisan issue, to look beyond partisan politics and come to the table to work with us to do what is right for our seniors and future Medicare beneficiaries.

Mr. Speaker, I call for bipartisan efforts to restore and preserve our Medicare beneficiaries.

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

[Ms. DELAURO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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

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

THE MINIMUM WAGE

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

Mr. DICKEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to agree with the comments of the gentleman from Florida about the Medicare cuts being not cuts but just slowing of the growth. This is something that we are finding in our State of Arkansas, people are being deceived by ads being paid for by special interests, and I am glad that that is brought up.

Mainly what I want to talk about today is the minimum wage. I am an employer, a restaurant owner, as well as a Member of Congress from Arkansas. All of those things are important in this discussion. But before I get into more of the specifics, I would like for us to direct our attention to something that we have not seemed to bring to center stage as much as we should. In the business world, in the marketplace, it is the consumer, the person who is buying the goods, who is the boss. We lose sight of that fact.

Mr. Speaker, if the boss finds that he or she cannot afford the price of the goods, then the boss will go to somewhere else where they can find a better price. If in fact the boss cannot go where he or she can get good service, they will go somewhere else. So all the time that we are talking about raising the minimum wage, we are not considering the fact who is paying it.

The consumer, the people who buy the goods are paying it. In my particular instance, it is the person who comes into restaurants, and no question I am biased in that viewpoint, but I want to share with this body some of the bases for my being opposed to the raise, to the rise in the minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, some people think that the cost that we have in restaurants, the only increase that we will have in the minimum wage debate is what we will pay in addition to the present wage that we give now or whatever the increase might be, but that is not true. Everything that we buy, the meat, the lettuce, the tomatoes, even the transportation, the paper goods, all of these things will have increased prices or at least the push up from increased prices.

So, if I am going to sell a taco for 89 cents and I want to keep the same margins that I have had before, which I am

entitled to, I have to look at the boss and say, OK, can you afford two more pennies or 91 cents? When that boss says no, I am going to pay that, then what we have to do is reduce the number of employees, which then cuts down on the service. It either cuts down on the service or makes it more difficult for the other employees who are having to work without adequate coworkers.

So the effect is that it pushes at the seams of those people who are in the penny business, like we are in the restaurant business. There are 16.7 percent of our employees in Arkansas who are on the minimum wage right now. Those are people who are getting their first-time jobs. Any employer will tell you that the first-time employees are good in one respect in that they have not been taught the wrong thing. The other respect is that they have to be taught.

So there is a learning period that goes and we pay the minimum wage. During some period of time, depending on how alert the employees are or how determined they are, they really are not worth the \$4.25 because you have to put so much into them. Then you get the \$4.25 employee if they think that that is the ceiling, that is all they are going to get, the employer finds that as he, the employer, sends the employees out to greet the customers and care for them. If an employee stays on minimum wage too long, there is a staleness that occurs.

I do not believe an employee should manage to stay more than 2 years on average on minimum wage. We hope that they will either grow through achievement and improvement in our own operation or they will go get another job and take a good recommendation with them. So the minimum wage is a limiting factor in some sense.

If you go into a business or restaurant where their minimum wage employees have been there for 4 or 5 or 6 or 7, 10 years, you are going to find a place where the service is not as good as it should be. So there is a misconception that we employers want to pay the minimum wage and get a profit from it. That is not the case. We want people to be worth more and we want to gauge that by productivity, not by the decision of liberal politicians who come in and for their own benefits give a minimum wage which in effect is an unfunded mandate.

Mr. Speaker, I want to mention one other thing, and that is that the people who are hurt the most by this inflationary push of expenses and cost were the people who are on minimum wage. For example, if my tacos have to go from 89 cents to 91 cents, those two extra pennies are going to have an inflationary effect. Those pennies will affect the minimum wage people to a greater extent. It is regressive to a greater extent than they would be for somebody else who is not on minimum wage. So the inflationary effect, not only will they lose some jobs because we will have to reduce the work force

in order to meet the minimum wages, but there is also this factor that they are going to have to meet inflation at the most serious level.

So what I have said I am going to do is file an amendment to say let the States decide. Eleven States now pay more than minimum wage, and I am going to prepare and file an amendment to ask that the States be allowed to decide what minimum wage they want.

REPORT FROM INDIANA

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

Mr. MCINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give my weekly report from Indiana. Every weekend, Ruthy and I travel around the Second District from Richmond to Muncie, to Anderson, to Greenfield, and Greensburg. So often people share with me amazing stories about their friends and neighbors and the things that they are doing in their communities. These individuals are good people who make our communities a better place to live. They give us hope for the future and our best days are yet to come.

In my book, these individuals are Hoosier heroes, Hoosier heroes because they set examples for all of us to live by. But more importantly, they make us proud.

Today I would like to share a special story about a 10-year-old boy name Dustin Sagester. Now, Dustin comes from Greensburg, IN. Our parents' generation probably would think that Dustin's story is, well, frankly, a little bit normal. But today, in today's world, it is far from normal. Dustin Sagester found a wallet down on North St. in Greensburg. Inside that wallet was \$500 cash.

Mr. Speaker, the owner of the wallet, who lives in a neighboring town of Columbus had lost his wallet 4 days earlier. The owner had given up on the wallet. He had given up on all hope of ever collecting that \$500. The owner was Jason Humphress. He frankly said that he had written it off. But you know what? Little Dustin Sagester never looked inside that wallet.

He walked right into a local store, billing store, and he turned it in. He turned it in so that the rightful owner could have his wallet back. His parents, Don and Tressy, taught him that when you find something that does not belong to you, you do not keep it and say, hey, it is my lucky day. You recognize that it belongs to someone else. Your new-found luck is somebody else's misfortune.

They taught Dustin that you do your best to find the rightful owner, and that is exactly what Dustin did. He did not know that there was so much money inside. He just knew that the wallet and whatever was inside was not his.

Mr. Speaker, I share this special report from Indiana because the people of Greensburg have recognized Dustin as one of their heroes, and I want my colleagues and all of the American people to know that Dustin is a Hoosier hero. I share this story because I think it is time that we all learn that we have to follow those basic moral values that our parents taught us so long ago, and that Dustin sets an example for the young people of this country.

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That is my report from Indiana for this week, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

PROGRAMS THAT HELP PEOPLE MOST GET BIGGEST BUDGET CUTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, we have just completed phase I of the most important process that takes place here in the Congress, and that is the budget of the United States of America for a 1-year period that deals with the fiscal 1997 budget, which will run from October 1, 1996 to September 30, 1997.

It is important that the public understand that the budget that we have discussed today in the budget process is only the beginning. It sets the upper limits in terms of expenditures in broad categories, that the real spending process which gets into great detail is the appropriations process.

Now, the Committee on Appropriations oversees the appropriation process, and the way the budget appropriations process was handled in the first half of the 104th Congress, it may be that the Committee on Appropriations could just send the rest of us home and take over and run the rest of the session because the other committees have very little power in the decision making, and this particular Congress, controlled by the Republican majority, we have less power than ever.

You know, if Congress really were to be truthful about the way it is organized, about who has real power, then it is the Committee on Appropriations, it is the Committee on Ways and Means, the two or three committees that the way they have stacked the deck and the way they guarantee control from the top have all the power. The Committee on Appropriations has far too much power.

You could organize Congress another way. Each one of the committees that