

My colleagues, Mr. Speaker, there is no separate fund. We have used up all of the money. If we were to start today to make Social Security solvent for the next 75 years, we would have to, if we just looked at reducing benefits or increasing taxes, we would have to increase the FICA taxes by 16 percent starting today, or we would have to start reducing benefits by 14 percent, starting today.

Now, that is why some of us have decided to introduce a Social Security reform bill to gradually increase the retirement age, to allow individuals to invest some of that money in their own account.

I know why they are saying there is no big deal. They do not want to disrupt the senior vote for this coming November election. But it is not fair to the future. I think the mistake they are making, Mr. Speaker, is thinking that senior citizens only care about their own economic welfare.

Here is what I think American senior citizens care about, and that is leaving a good world, a good United States, to their kids and their grandkids.

SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND SOLVENCY

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. Mr. Speaker, the congressional Republicans today began once again to distort the issues surrounding the Medicare trustees' report, basically in order to attempt to justify their extreme and damaging cuts in the Medicare program. It is the same thing they did last year. If you think about over the last 18 months, the congressional Republicans have refused to cooperate with President Clinton and congressional Democrats to make responsible adjustments to Medicare and extend the solvency of the trust fund. In fact, if you look at the votes over the last 18 months, congressional Republicans have repeatedly voted for deep cuts in the Medicare program in order to pay for their massive tax cuts for the wealthy and against bipartisan reforms that would extend the solvency of the trust fund.

I just wanted to point out some of the key votes on this issue because once again we heard today that there was no effort by the President or by the Democrats to solve the problem with the trust fund. The President actually stated today, mentioned on several occasions when there were votes in this House to try to deal with the solvency issue, and he actually asked the congressional Republicans, the Republican leadership, to come out and support similar type proposals once again before the end of this Congress.

Back in May of 1995, about a year ago, the House Republicans brought up their budget resolution for the fiscal year, and that vote basically provided \$288 million in Medicare cuts to pay for

\$345 billion in tax cuts targeted to the wealthy. This was the first major time when we saw the Republican leadership move on these massive cuts in Medicare and propose major changes that I think negatively impact the Medicare program.

Now, the Medicare cuts in that first budget resolution, the one that they passed last year, were more than 3 times larger than the \$90 billion in Medicare cuts that the trustees stated were necessary to extend the solvency of the trust fund through 2006; in other words, another 10 years. According to the Treasury Department, 52 percent of the tax cuts in that proposal went to the top 12 percent of American households, those making over \$100,000, and it not only made these cuts that basically was transferring money to wealthy Americans, but it also undermined the current Medicare program. Among other things, the deep GOP cuts would have doubled the monthly Medicare part B premium paid by all Medicare beneficiaries, drastically reduce the reimbursement paid to providers under the Medicare program, which would result in hospitals closing and also, I believe, jeopardize the general quality of health care available to seniors.

Now, some have said, well, what was the Democrats' alternative? Well, in October 1995 the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GIBBONS], a Democrat who is the ranking member of the Committee on Ways and Means, brought up a vote on exactly or proposed an amendment on exactly the \$90 billion in Medicare reforms; in other words, the level of cuts that the Medicare trustees said was necessary to make sure the program remains solvent into the next century.

Well, 233 House Republicans voted against the Gibbons substitute, again a strong indication of the fact that they were not really interested in dealing with the solvency issue but wanted to make the larger cuts that would have primarily been for tax breaks for the wealthy and the substantive changes in the Medicare program.

We had other votes. We had a vote on October 19 also. This was a motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT] to recommit the budget or to recommit the GOP Medicare Revisions Act and basically would have removed the increase in the monthly part B premium paid by all Medicare beneficiaries. So once again Republicans on record, in this case 233 Republicans who said that it was okay to significantly increase part B premiums for every Medicare beneficiary who opted for the part B program, which pays for doctor bills.

Now, this year we see the same thing happening again. On May 18, just really a few weeks ago, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. SABO], who is the ranking Democrat on the Committee on the Budget, he brought up the Clinton budget, the President's budget that essentially contained \$116 billion in Med-

icare reforms and would have again solved the solvency problem and extended the Medicare program and kept it solvent into the next century. This was again something that was 225 House Republicans voted against.

So when someone says to me, what are the Democrats doing, what is the President doing to try to deal with the solvency problems, those votes have come up, the President's budget came to the floor, and once again the Republicans voted it down.

Instead what we got on May 18 was the new Republican budget resolution for the next fiscal year. Again the same thing again. It called for \$168 billion in cuts in the Medicare program, too much unless you want to use it for tax breaks for the wealthy.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. HAYWORTH. In view of the preceding remarks, do the rules of the House require that speakers tell the truth during the course of their remarks?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That is not a valid parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. HAYWORTH. I thank the Chair. However, I find it a valid point.

MEDICARE TRUST FUND

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

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, you know the one thing, or one of the things, that a representative democracy cannot tolerate is the poison of disinformation and deceit and demagoguery. And it is a solitary, singular and extraordinarily disturbing time when it is necessary to, or one is certainly moved to feel the necessity to correct the record at every single turn just so that the poison of disinformation, the poison of deceit, the poison of hypocrisy and the poison of lies will not completely undermine the very fabric of our ability to represent ourselves in a representative democracy.

So what I would like to talk about this evening is the Medicare trust fund and particularly this chart because what this is this is the Federal hospital insurance trust fund report, for it represents the report for 1995 and then for 1996.

In 1995 the trustees, the President's trustees; these are not, they are not supposed to be, partisan trustees, they are nonpartisan, or they really should not have a partisan impact. But if they were going to be considered partisan, I suppose you would have to consider them to be Democratic representatives because they were all appointed by the President. But I do not consider them to be partisan; I do not think that is correct. I think that in fact they were

appointed by the President, they are members of his Cabinet, and they are there trying to do the very best that they can for the American people.

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What they do is, they are required by law to come up with an analysis of the trust funds. What they said in 1995 is they believed that we would have a balance of zero, that is what this line represents, Mr. Speaker, a balance of zero in the Medicare Trust Fund in about the year 2002. Do Members see how that matches up there? What this shows is the trust fund balance at the end of each fiscal year.

But the new report that was just published, and by the way, I do not know why it was only published yesterday, that we are just seeing it the first week of June. It is supposed to be published in April. But in any event, it finally came out in June. What it shows is that it goes to zero, the trust fund balance at the end of the fiscal year goes to zero in about the year 2000. So the President's trustees here, they are not saying, oh, it is not as bad as we thought, they are saying it is worse, it is worse. It is a lot worse. We are spending a lot more money than we thought we were spending.

What exactly was it that the President wished for in his reforms? His reforms would have increased Medicare spending at about 7.2 percent per year, and our reforms, that is, the House's reforms, the Senate's reforms, the congressional reforms, would have increased them at about 7.0 percent per year.

How either one of those could possibly be described as a deep cut I do not understand. I do not understand. When are we increasing at 7.0 percent or 7.2 percent, how on earth can that be described as a deep cut? I do not know. I do not know.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I do know is that if we do not fix the problem, if we as representatives of the people of the United States, who are supposed to be acting responsibly, not with partisan purposes to be acting responsibly, not with partisan purposes first, not because we are trying to get elected or reelected, not because we are trying to retain power or because we are trying to retake power but because we are trying to do what is right by the American people, if we do not fix this problem it will not go broke in 2002, as the President's trustees suggested or stated in their report of 1995, it will go broke in the year 2000. And if we do not do anything, I suppose if Members believe in trend lines, then it would be reasonable to assume that next year's report will show that it is going to be broke in 1998, which will be 12 months from then.

Rome is burning here, Mr. Speaker. We need to fix this.

MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina). Under a

previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, today the Medicare Board of Trustees released their annual report on Medicare. Not surprisingly, the trustees' report says that if nothing is done, the Medicare Trust Fund will run out of money by the year 2001. We have expected this news. In fact, it is why last October the Democrats offered an amendment that contained \$90 billion in Medicare reforms over a 7-year period. The amendment would have extended the life of the Medicare Trust Fund through the year 2006 and would have remedied the problem.

Mr. Speaker, although the contents of the report were not surprising, the response of the Republican Party and its leadership to the report has been incredible. If it was not so ridiculous, it would be downright funny. The Republicans have spent a lot of time this week running around Washington and playing the blame game. They are blaming the media, they are blaming the Democrats, and they are blaming the people who are on Medicare.

The House majority leader, the gentleman from Texas, DICK ARMEY, has said, and I quote:

Hundreds of thousands of seniors rely on Medicare. I'm sorry they do, but they do.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is no laughing matter. Last October, House Republicans had a chance to vote, to vote to fix the Medicare problem. Over 233 of them, let me say it again, over 233 of House Republicans voted no. Soon there will be a list of those 233 so that the public can see who they are. Now they are acting like they just found out that there is a problem; but the fact is last October they resoundingly rejected an opportunity to reach an agreement with congressional Democrats on \$90 billion in Medicare savings that would have extended the solvency of the program through 2006.

But why should that surprise us? In the same month that he voted against fixing Medicare, House Speaker NEWT GINGRICH has said, "No, we do not want to get rid of it in round one because we don't think that is the right way to go through a transition, but we believe it is going to wither on the vine because we think people are voluntarily going to leave it."

In order to encourage them the Republicans have proposed cutting \$168 billion from the Medicare Program over the next 6 years. In fact, as early as February of 1995, the gentleman from Ohio, JOHN KASICH, the chairman of the Committee on the Budget, and his staff knew that their budget, again, "would require Medicare cuts unlike any this town has ever seen before."

Why such a large cut? These cuts are not going to be used to extend the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund. In fact, the original Republican Medicare cuts were about three times any estimate of what was needed to keep the program solvent. The truth is that the

Republicans need to cut Medicare in order to pay for a tax break for the wealthiest Americans, \$180 billion in a tax break.

Last September the McNeil/Lehrer News Hour reported a private meeting between the gentleman from Georgia, NEWT GINGRICH, and the chairman of the Committee on the Budget, the gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. KASICH]. Mr. GINGRICH told the gentleman from Ohio that the only way to balance the budget in 7 years and to give a tax break was to cut Medicare.

The cuts advocated by the Republican leadership could result in a second-rate health care system for our Nation's seniors, a system where the elderly will be asked to pay more and to get less. The plan would allow the health care plans to overcharge seniors, to charge them more, reduce choice, increase costs, close rural hospitals, or drastically reduce the services that hospitals offer.

Where are our priorities, Mr. Speaker? The Republicans want to cut Medicare to pay for tax breaks for the wealthy, when we should be honoring a lifetime of hard work with a secure and a dignified retirement. In the end, the Republicans keep laughing, and the joke is on the American people and on seniors across this great country of ours who depend on Medicare for their livelihood and for their future.

We can fix Medicare. We can do that, and we need to do that. That is not the issue. But the fact of the matter is that the Republicans would like to see Medicare fundamentally changed. Who do you trust to fix the Medicare Program, the people who have said that they want to see it wither on the vine, that they would be proud to have voted against it; the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY], who says he does not want to see a bipartisan commission to fix the Medicare Program? The American public needs to understand what is at stake once again.

URGING MEMBERS TO SUPPORT H.R. 3460, TO PROTECT AMERICAN PATENT RIGHTS

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

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. HAYWORTH].

CORRECTING AN INACCURATE QUOTE ATTRIBUTED TO MR. GINGRICH

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentleman from California, for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman from Connecticut and all those who heard her remarks would be interested in hearing the accurate quote she attributed to the Speaker of the House, not talking about the Medicare Program, but the Health Care Financing Administration. Here is the complete quote: