

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:

You know, we tell Boris Yeltsin, get rid of centralized command bureaucracies, go to the marketplace. Okay, what do you think the Health Care Financing Administration is? It is a centralized command bureaucracy. It is everything we are telling Boris Yeltsin to get rid of. No, we don't get rid of it in round one, because we don't think it is politically smart, 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 seniors are voluntarily going to leave it, voluntarily.

Again, the record demonstrates, that refers to the Health Care Financing Administration, not to Medicare withering on the vine. That is the type of partisanship we should avoid in moving to solve this problem.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I would hope that we can discuss issues like that in a spirit of camaraderie, except I will have to note that when people misquote other people's positions, they can expect people to get upset about it. I will say that what I have heard personally over the last year is an attempt that I would believe that many Democrats are making to try to frighten the senior citizens of the United States by using misquotes, by trying to present to them the idea that the Republican Party has some idea of taking away their Social Security and taking away their Medicare. I would say I believe that this is an insult to the senior citizens, in particular, of our country, and I think our senior citizens are much more intelligent and will not fall for that type of tactic.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to speak about tonight with my remaining 3½ minutes is something that is a major threat to the well-being of every American. That is a battle that is going on that nobody even hears about.

What is happening is we are now facing the most severe attack on America's patent system that we have ever had in the history of the United States. Foreigners and multinational corporations have insidiously targeted our patent system and are now, step by step, destroying the patent system of the United States, the patent system which has provided us the greatest source of new wealth creation of any nation in the history of mankind. This has been America's greatest asset, and people are attacking the system. It is being attacked, it is being dismantled, and it is one of the most insidious attacks I have ever seen as a Member of the Congress.

The patent system was first changed in the GATT implementation legislation by a provision that was not required by GATT, but was snuck into the implementing legislation because we in Congress had to vote for the entire legislation or against it, and thus, they were sure they would get the vote for changing the patent system because they knew that we would not just totally abandon the world trading structure.

What happened in that legislation, Mr. Speaker, was that the guaranteed 17 years of patent protection that

Americans have had as a right for the last 130 years was taken away and was replaced by an uncertain time of 20 years. But that 20 years, if it takes you longer, the clock begins ticking when you file for a patent. Seventeen years of guaranteed patent protection meant if you filed for a patent, no matter how long it took after the time it took you to issue your patent, you would have 17 years of protection. Thus, inventors and investors put forth the time and effort needed to keep America ahead of the competition.

If we replace that with a system of 20 years, where the clock starts ticking immediately, what that does is the clock is ticking against the inventor, and if it takes 15 years, 15 years for a patent to be issued, only 5 years of patent protection would remain. Basically our guaranteed patent term, the right to a guaranteed patent term, was eliminated for the American people, something that served us so well.

The second step in this harmonization process, and what is happening is a process to harmonize American law with Japanese law, is actually a destruction of the Patent Office.

H.R. 3460 is a bill that has already passed the subcommittee. This bill, which I call the Steal American Technology Act, would literally destroy the current Patent Office and corporatize it.

Here is a conservative Republican, who usually likes privatization, telling you that this would be horrible. We must protect American patent rights and oppose 3460, which would destroy the Patent Office. We can do this in the time ahead by supporting H.R. 359, which is my substitute, to H.R. 3460.

THE REPORT OF THE MEDICARE TRUSTEES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii [Mrs. MINK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my colleagues on this side of the aisle in discussing the Medicare situation. Today the headlines all across the country will be repeating the report of the trustees that in their estimation and in conservative estimates that by the year 2001 the trust fund, which pays for the hospital costs of the Medicare program, will run out of money. That is that the taxes collected under the health insurance program will be insufficient to meet the needs of the senior citizens who are qualified for this program.

In forecasting this outcome in the year 2001, we have to understand that since this program took effect in 1965, that almost every year, or at least every 2 years since then, the trustees have met and have also recommended each time dire consequences of near bankruptcy, and in some cases, within 1 or 2 years. Congress has, in each instance, looked at the Medicare Program, tried to make modification in

order to avert the crisis, and each time that this report was made by the trustees, the Congress has acted.

We are in no different a circumstance than has been the case over the last 20 or 30 years.

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So in trying to take advantage of the trustees' reports today, I want to join my colleagues in saying that that is really not a reason or justification to run roughshod over a system that has made such dramatic changes for our senior citizens for the better.

When you look at what the situation was prior to 1965, you will find seniors almost virtually without health care protection, and the outcome was that their children practically had to pay for the costs of medical care. That was the condition of our society prior to 1965. Today, senior citizens have the assurance and the protection of a Medicare system.

So what we are talking about today and what this whole debate is all about is not frightening seniors. That is not the issue. The issue is the Republican plan which has been brought forth to the Congress and discussed by the media across the Nation, and it is the Republican proposal to restructure Medicare which has frightened literally the seniors across the land, basically because they are not willing to accept the argument of the Speaker that says, we are not doing any damage to the system; we are simply slowing the growth in order to make sure that the deficits are controllable or that we can yield a zero deficit in 7 years.

Well, the whole problem with this debate which the Speaker has now attempted to refocus about reducing the costs is that what we are faced with today is a system of providing universal care to the seniors. If we are going to go with the drastic cuts that the Republicans are making over this 6- or 7-year period, through restructuring, we are going to end intellectual property with a Medicare system that is vastly different, which is not going to provide the kind of protection that the seniors have enjoyed today.

Under the current Medicare plan, seniors across the country are provided certain fixed benefits that they can be assured of if they should require hospitalization. We are only talking about the part A plan. Part B plan is not involved in this trustees' forecast of running out of money by the year 2001.

So as we look at the 6- and 7-year period, which is what the Committee on the Budget is doing in terms of looking at the 7-year deficit, we have to consider that the forecast by which the Committee on the Budget under the chairmanship of the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. KASICH] is doing, forecasting 7 years, is precisely what we have to do with respect to Medicare.

It is the Congressional Budget Office, their own office which is saying that given the current plan, given the current benefits, given the current way in