

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, small business continues to get the cold shoulder from the Clinton administration.

Recently, I introduced the Small Business OSHA Relief Act. Seventy-five of my colleagues have cosponsored the bill. The bill is entirely made up of provisions that the Clinton administration at one point or another claimed to support. And it would give some needed relief to small business from an agency which is too often unnecessarily adversarial and lacking in common sense.

I wrote the Secretary of Labor on April 15 asking for his comments on the bill. I hoped that he would support it, since it is entirely taken from his and the President's statements of relief they claimed to support for small business.

Well, here we are on June 5 and we still have not even received a response from the Secretary of Labor. I realize that relief for small business from OSHA's excesses does not rank very high on the priority list of the Secretary of Labor. In fact, I don't think that small business concerns are on his priority list at all.

But I guess I shouldn't be surprised that the Secretary of Labor shows no interest and support for legislation to help small business. After all, this administration talks a good line, but does not back up its words with action.

INCREASED OUT-OF-POCKET LIABILITY FOR SENIORS

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to point out that the Republican Medicare plan would drastically increase out of pocket costs for seniors citizens. Basically, it is the same thing we had last year. Last year the Medicare bill the Republicans passed doubled the Medicare part B premium from \$46.10 in 1995 to about \$89 in 2002. It would have increased the Medicare premium by \$440 per couple per year. Well, that did not work so now the Republican leadership comes up with another proposal.

This year the new Republican proposal would allow doctors to overcharge seniors for standard medical procedures. According to the Physician Payment Review Commission, a non-partisan panel of experts that advises Congress, this could leave beneficiaries exposed to substantial out-of-pocket liability in the range of 40 percent of their Medicare bill.

Under the Republican plan, a senior needing major surgery, for example, could end up facing thousands of dollars in medical bills which neither Medicare nor Medigap policies would cover. So once again the Republicans are substantially increasing out-of-pocket expenses for seniors. That is what their Medicare plan is.

SAVE MEDICARE

(Mr. DELAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, Medicare needs to be rescued, yet the President and the Democrats prefer to save their own political futures. Millions of seniors will lose their health care benefits if the Medicare system goes bankrupt, yet Bill Clinton and the Democrats would rather scare seniors about plans to protect it.

The Medicare trustees have concluded that Medicare is going broke faster than previously thought, yet Bill Clinton has done nothing to save it. Medicare would not be around for the next generation, yet Bill Clinton runs millions of dollars of ads attacking the Republicans for trying to find ways to preserve it.

Mr. Speaker, who is being responsible when it comes to Medicare, and who is being irresponsible? The answer, to me, is obvious. The White House has taken demagoguery to a new level. They have scared seniors to secure their own political futures.

Mr. Speaker, that is wrong. I urge the White House to change their tactics and join with the Republicans in saving Medicare.

SAVE MEDICARE ONCE AGAIN

(Mr. VOLKMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, in answer to the gentleman from Texas, I would like to know why the radical Republicans under the Speakership of NEWT GINGRICH still are proposing to cut Medicare in order to give big tax breaks to the wealthy? Yes, they lost last year. The President vetoed the bill. Now they are trying again.

Look at their budget. We can see what NEWT GINGRICH says right here. He said it publicly, we are going to let it wither on the vine. We will not cut it this year, but in 7 years it is going to be gone.

Not only NEWT GINGRICH, but what about the Presidential nominee, BOB DOLE? BOB DOLE is very proud of the fact: I was there fighting the fight, voting against Medicare 1 out of 12 because we knew it would not work in 1965.

Yes, they want to get rid of Medicare. That is their whole proposal, and it is not just to get rid of it, it is to give tax breaks for the wealthy. That is where they will get their money.

I say to the American public and I say to the Members of this House, we are not going to do it this year either.

IT IS TIME FOR ACTION TO SAVE MEDICARE

(Mr. DOOLITTLE asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Medicare Board of Trustees, made up entirely of Clinton administration appointees, reported that Medicare is going bankrupt sooner than expected, now projected to be by early in the year 2001.

Last year the Republicans led the fight to save this system with a Medicare Preservation Act. This act increased benefits, attacked waste and preserved Medicare for future generations, and it put the program in sound financial condition.

In that plan we proposed increasing per-person spending by over \$2,000 per year over the course of the next 7 years. But the President vetoed the plan.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the trustees showed yet again it is time for action to save Medicare. Let us hope that the Congress and the President will act cooperatively to save Medicare while there is still time. As the trustees write in their own report, "prompt, effective and decisive action is necessary."

IMPACT OF MEDICARE AND MEDICAID CUTS ON HOSPITALS

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to send a warning to my colleagues who believe that Medicare and Medicaid reductions will not reduce the availability of affordable quality health care for millions of low-income children, senior citizens and the disabled.

I would direct all of my colleagues to an article in the June 4 New York Times which illustrates the impact on private hospitals of Medicaid reductions and the explosion of managed care. The result is that many hospitals are in serious financial danger and will ultimately close.

My warning to other Members is to think about their own districts and States. If hospitals in New York can close even before the full implementation of a \$158 billion reduction in Medicare and a \$72 billion reduction in Medicaid, what are the implications for the other States? New York has always taken pride in the level of investment in health care. Can other States make the same claim?

I recognize the need to control Medicare and Medicaid spending, but the Republican budget proposal goes well beyond fiscal responsibility and will result in a reduction in health care services. We can help encourage greater efficiency in hospital operations, we can help encourage the lack of overutilization in hospitals and we can encourage savings, but New York hospitals closing should sound a warning bell to all Members of Congress.

TOP 10

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, we have been desperately trying to find out what the Democrat plan to save Medicare was. I have it in my hands here. I have discovered it, the 10 top ways the Democrats plan to save Medicare.

First of all, No. 10: Blame it on the Republicans. No. 9: If at first you don't succeed, raise taxes. No. 8: Mediscare and don't worry about the truth while you are doing it. No. 7: Don't ask, don't tell. No. 6: Blame Ken Starr. No. 5: Deny, deny, deny. No. 4: Check the fingerprints on the trustees' report. No. 3: Blame the rich. No. 2: Charge it. And the No. 1 solution of the Democrats to saving Medicare is: Let it go broke, no one will notice.

CUTS IN MEDICARE FOR TAX
BREAK FOR THE WEALTHY

(Mr. MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, we have seen the Republicans do everything they can to divert the public's attention for what their plan would do to Medicare. In order to save Medicare, the Republicans tell us they have to take away senior citizens' choice of doctors; they have to force them into managed care, where they do not want to go, where they lose control of their health care for themselves and for their spouse. They want them to pay the overcharges for doctors who charge them too much for medical procedures. They want to take away their right to have a Medigap insurance policy so they will not have to pay out-of-pocket charges to those same doctors and hospitals, maybe now forcing them to pay as much as 40 percent in out-of-pocket charges.

And they want to do all that for simply one reason, and that is to gather up the resources of Medicare and give a tax break to the wealthy, not gathering up the resources of Medicare to shore up the system, to bolster the system, to make it solvent, but to take away these resources, to take away the money of the senior citizens, to charge them more, to simply transfer that to a tax cut.

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There is another way. The other way is the way President Clinton proposed, which is to shore this system up for 10 years.

MEDICARE TRUSTEES REPORT

(Mr. GOSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, the Medicare trustees, including three Clinton Cab-

net officials, have released their annual report. It is 3 months late and the diagnosis is not good. The part A trust fund is going to be bankrupt in 2001, a full year earlier than was reported last year. Those are the facts. Interestingly enough, this report came just days after the Senate minority leader and a top Clinton Cabinet official accused Republicans of playing politics with Medicare.

It is serious, folks. We have a problem. Mr. Speaker, during my work on the Kerry commission I saw firsthand the consequences of failing to reform Medicare. I was also pleased to work in a bipartisan fashion with colleagues on both sides of the aisle trying to find a long-term solution for this problem. Responsible people did.

Last year Congress sent that responsible solution of real Medicare reform to the President, and the President vetoed it. I say that it is time for the President to stop the mediscare, stop the medigoguery, encourage the people in his party on that side of the aisle to stop doing it and get to responsible solutions. We have one. We need to identify it and we need it now.

DEGRADING ACCUSATION

(Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, we should be discussing Medicare, but sometimes decency requires us to deal with unpleasantness. The unpleasantness in this case is an outrageous, inaccurate, degrading accusation by Speaker GINGRICH about the late Ron Brown. Speaker GINGRICH, in what is apparently an organized Republican effort to divert this campaign from discussing the real issues into the kind of negative attacks that maybe they think is the only way they can win, outrageously suggested to a Republican campaign gathering that the President and others delayed the announcement of Secretary Brown's death so that they could engage in some manipulations at his office. It is a lie. The Speaker, when asked, could provide no justification for it.

In fact, we are told in today's paper by the Speaker's press secretary that the justification is that there might be subsequent facts. That is a fairly outrageous standard. Make a terrible accusation and then look and hope for subsequent facts.

Mr. Speaker, I know it is a tough year for the Republican Party. But nothing justifies libeling the dead. Please apologize to the Ron Brown family.

MEDICARE TRUSTEES REPORT

(Mr. BAKER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BAKER of California. Mr. Speaker, in this fantasy land known as Washington, the truth is rarely heard. As

the little rabbit said in "Alice in Wonderland," things are not as they appear. So when the Medicare trustees, these well-known conservatives such as Labor Secretary Reich, Health Secretary Shalala and Treasury Secretary Rubin got up and said Medicare is going broke, an advanced copy went to the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT]. He stood up and said, it is all the Republicans' fault. How could that be? How could that possibly be when we have not passed it?

One of the speakers earlier said today hospitals in my area are closing, in anticipation of our plan which has not even gotten out of the House and has not been signed by the President.

What does Medicare really need? This is the Medicare report from the trustees. One year ago they said it was going to go broke in 2002. The top line. Now they are saying it is going to go broke in 2000. Folks, by the year 2001, it will be \$85 billion under water. That is not because somebody has given somebody a tax break.

What does the Republican plan do? It allows doctors and hospitals to directly provide services. It allows HMO's to provide services, allows people to have a medical savings account. It eliminates waste, fraud, and abuse through tort reform and allows seniors to stay where it is. Let us pass reform. Let us stop blaming each other. Let us save Medicare.

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE LATE
RON BROWN

(Mr. BONIOR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, it was 2 months ago this week that Ron Brown and 34 others were killed in a tragic plane crash in Bosnia. For 2 awful days the world waited to hear the word of their fate. Most of us spent that time praying for a miracle. When word of the tragedy came, the outpouring of love and affection across this country was absolutely breathtaking.

But now the Speaker of the House has weighed in with words of venom. Where most people see tragedy, the Speaker sees only coverup. His press secretary backed his words up by calling for an investigation. During times of tragedy, we should respect each other, not tear each other apart. Only someone who loses the public debate would stoop to desperation tactics like this. This is beneath the dignity of the House and the dignity of this great country.

If NEWT GINGRICH has even a shred of decency left, he should apologize not only to the friends and family of those who were killed but to the American people.

MEDICARE IS GOING BROKE

(Mr. SCARBOROUGH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)