

yield new findings and beneficial results not only for the environmental health of this country, but for the health of current and future generations.

□ 1245

GOP SLASHES MEDICARE AND MEDICAID WHILE INCREASING DEFICIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELLER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, last week the Republicans passed their budget plan which actually increases the deficit starting next year. Projections show that the 1996 deficit will be approximately \$130 billion, but under the GOP plan it will increase to \$153 billion in 1997. The GOP deficit is also higher in 1998 than this year's deficit.

I ask why. The reason is because the GOP are intent on their large tax breaks for the wealthy, part of which are paid for through excessive Medicare cuts.

In 1992 the deficit was \$290 billion and in 1993 it was \$255 billion. Under Democratic leadership the deficit has actually dropped 4 years in a row to the projected \$130 billion of this year.

What is the reason for the Republican deficit increase? Misplaced priorities, tax breaks for their wealthy friends, and a slush fund for future unnecessary tax breaks. While the Republicans claim to be deficit hawks and the saviors of Medicare, the facts indicate that they are intent on pushing this country further into debt and making large and unnecessary cuts in Medicare.

This Republican deficit-increasing budget also makes extreme cuts of \$72 billion over 6 years to the Medicaid Program and allows States to cut an additional \$178 billion, for a grand total of \$250 billion in Medicaid cuts. We are talking about major cuts in Medicaid as well as Medicare.

Many people look at the Medicaid Program as primarily for the poor, and, of course, it does assist poor people, but it also pays about 50 percent of all nursing home care for senior citizens. Without Medicaid, many middle-class adult children of nursing home parents will have to pay for their parents' expensive care, while at the same time trying to send their own children through college.

Last Thursday, Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Commerce, of which I am a member, voted on the Medicaid Repeal Act, which I vigorously fought. The Medicaid Repeal Act will eliminate all current guarantees of health care coverage and eliminate current guarantees of nursing home benefits to the elderly. This is the Medicaid Repeal Act that the Republican leadership is putting forward.

I offered an amendment to this act that would return these guarantees in this terrible legislation, but it was rejected by every Republican. Other Democrats offered similar amendments to continue health care coverage for the disabled, for children, for pregnant women, but again all those amendments were defeated by the Republicans.

On top of all this, the GOP Medicaid Repeal Act will sharply reduce payments to hospitals for care. Compounded with the extreme Gingrich-Dole Medicare cuts to hospitals, many will be forced to close their doors, especially hospitals that receive a majority of their income from Medicare and Medicaid.

Many hospitals in my home State of New Jersey are in this situation. They are highly Medicare and Medicaid dependent. I am very concerned about their being able to survive these steep cuts that have been proposed by the Republicans in Medicare and Medicaid.

Again, the Republican plans will reduce access to health care services. At a time when Congress should be seeking ways to decrease the number of uninsured and underinsured, the Republican leadership's answers will make these problems worse.

I thought it was interesting to see Speaker GINGRICH take the floor this morning and talk about how he is trying to increase portability and also increase health insurance for those with preexisting health conditions through the Kennedy-Kassebaum legislation. But that reality is that the Speaker and the rest of the Republican leadership have been insisting on including medical savings accounts in this Kennedy-Kassebaum health care reform.

What that will mean is that the healthy and the wealthy will opt out of the traditional health insurance programs and the cost for everyone else for health insurance will go up. So again, even though the Republican leadership talks about how they are trying to expand health care options, in fact what they are doing is making those options fewer because more and more people will not be able to afford health insurance.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say in conclusion that in the past Democrats were able to decrease the deficit and preserve Medicare and Medicaid. The Republicans have misplaced priorities and values. The Democrats have a proven track record of reducing the deficit and ensuring that senior citizens have adequate health care. I remain committed to fighting these Republican efforts that would raise the deficit while at the same time slashing Medicare and Medicaid.

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM HELD HOSTAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. WELLER] is

recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I represent probably the most diverse district in the State of Illinois. I represent part of the city of Chicago, the south suburbs in Cook and Will Counties, industrial communities like Rockdale and Bradley and La Salle/Peru, farm towns and a lot of cornfields.

Because my district is so very diverse, I am always looking for commonality, common concerns that the working people of my diverse district have.

I find that a major concern of working families, of course, is finding ways to make health care work better for working families and reforming health care. Of course my predecessor talked about Medicare.

Frankly I want to make it very clear that we Republicans are committed to saving Medicare from Bankruptcy. The trustees just a few weeks ago say if we do nothing, Medicare goes bankrupt in 5½ years. In fact, the Republican budget increases funding for Medicare by \$724 billion, a 62 percent funding increase for Medicare. We are committed to saving Medicare.

We are also committed to raising take-home pay for working families, increasing the opportunity for working Americans, and also helping small business and their employees. As that common concern which resonates in my district, and, that is, making health care better by improving access and by improving health care, of course, that is a concern I have got.

I know it is a priority in this Congress to reform health care. Over the last 16 months I have held town meetings and talked with a lot of my neighbors about what we can do to make health care better. When you listen and you learn the concerns of the people that I represent, frankly you learn, No. 1, that there are 40 million Americans today that do not have health care insurance. When you listen to those 40 million Americans you learn something that frankly is a surprise for many people, and, that is, that 85 percent of those without health care coverage are self-employed, they are small-business people, they are employees of these small businesses, and they are families.

The chief reason they are unable to obtain health insurance is because they cannot find affordable rates of health insurance. We are committed to making health care more affordable because we recognize that that will improve access for working Americans to our health care system.

This Republican House and the Republican Senate have responded and passed health care reform that makes health care more affordable by making it easier for small employers to band together and pool their employees so they get more affordable group rates on insurance; increasing the self-employed tax deduction, and, thanks to

Bob Dole, we increased it to 80 percent; making health care insurance more portable so you can take it between jobs; and no one can be denied coverage because of preexisting conditions. We also provide for medical savings accounts, an innovation that is working across this country. We want to improve access by making health care more affordable to Americans.

I think it is important today to note that it was 57 days ago that the U.S. Senate passed the health insurance reform legislation by a vote of 100 to 0. Every Member, Democrat and Republican, voted for that health care reform bill.

Both the House and Senate have passed health care reform, so what is the holdup? I think it is important today to point out that today is day 57 of health care reform being held hostage in the United States Senate. Health care reform is being held hostage by a small, narrow, extreme, left-wing minority of one who stands in the way of health care reform. Working families, small businesspeople, entrepreneurs, flower shops, local grocery stores, the people on Main Street—

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman suspend for one moment. It is not in order to cast reflections on the Senate or its Members, individually or collectively. The gentleman may resume.

Mr. WELLER. Working families, the self-employed, flower shops on Main Street, the backbone of our society, the little guys and gals are being punished because one Member is filibustering legislation to provide health care reform and make health care affordable.

This particular Senator is using medical savings accounts as his excuse for blocking affordable health care reform. The reason this Senator is filibustering health care reform is because he wants a Government takeover of our health care system.

Medical savings accounts are an idea which was discussed while I was in the State legislature.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman suspend. It is not in order to cast any reflection on the Senate or its Members and I ask the gentleman to refrain from doing so.

The gentleman may proceed in order.

Mr. WELLER. Medical savings accounts are an issue I dealt with as an Illinois State legislator. While I was in the Illinois General Assembly, we were successful in passing medical savings accounts. Since 1993, Illinois residents in the Land of Lincoln have been able to reap the cost-saving benefits of MSAs.

In fact, there are 18 States today that are leading the effort to provide for medical savings accounts. In fact, there are hundreds of thousands of employees of small businesses and corporations that have the opportunity to have medical savings accounts. Medi-

cal savings accounts work because they provide choice for working Americans, choice amongst their health care providers, choice amongst their physicians. They lower costs by rewarding cost-conscious consumers, and they also provide for portability between jobs.

Unfortunately one legislator stands in the way with his filibuster, and unfortunately that interest is blocking health care reform.

There is strong bipartisan support for health care reform in the House and Senate. It passed the Senate by 100 votes to nothing, it overwhelmingly passed the House, and if it is allowed to be voted on, it will pass.

Ladies and gentlemen, I ask the President to call on this one legislator in the other body to drop his effort to hold health care reform hostage.

Let us bring the bill up for a vote. Let us send it to the President with this bipartisan effort to make health care more affordable and become law.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all Members again to not cast reflections on the Senate or its Members individually or collectively, or to urge particular Senate action.

SENATE WHITEWATER COMMITTEE MINORITY FILES REPORT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I hope what I am going to do today is going to be within the rules of the House, because I rise today to urge the American people to please read the minority report coming out of the Senate today. It is terribly important. It is the minority report being filed by the ranking member, Senator SARBANES, the summary of conclusions from the Whitewater Committee.

I think this is a very, very critical report. It was not leaked to the press, as the majority report was. As a consequence, many people are dealing without this factual base. We are into spin, if you can imagine such a thing in this town. Everybody is into spin control.

Let us talk a little bit about what is going on. First of all, this has been the longest running congressional investigation of any sitting President. If we look at the facts on Watergate, if we look at the facts on Iran Contra, this one has gone much longer than that.

I am very proud that the minority report was not leaked because in this highly charged political atmosphere I was hoping this could be an objective attempt, since it has gone on so long. If we do not count the meetings done by the Senate Banking Committee that

were held in 1994, let us just push those entirely out to the side, this Senate Whitewater Committee in 1995 and 1996 met for more than 300 hours in open sessions, took 10,729 pages of hearing testimony in 51 hearings and 8 public meetings. It also had 159 witnesses and took more than 35,000 pages of deposed testimony from 245 persons. Hundreds of thousands of pages of documents have been provided to the committee by different agencies, departments, and individuals.

If we look at all of this and then we look at the over \$32 million that has been spent on this, I think it is terribly important to say, what did we get out of this? What did we get out of this? We ought to be looking at the facts.

This was a very broad spread committee. It went on longer than anything. The facts ought to be what we are looking at. The bottom line should be, did President Clinton misuse the powers of his presidency? The other question was, did he use his official position in Arkansas to financially enrich himself?

If we read this committee report by the minority, they clearly conclude after sifting through all of this paper and all of this oral testimony that the answer to those questions is "no." And they are really rather surprised by the fact that, I guess the disappointment at finding the answer was "no," they had to go out and look for someone else to drop a net over, and so it really appears that they went after Mrs. Clinton with all the venom they could possibly go after. It is like they have this incredible sinister spotlight that they want to shine on her and make her the most evil soul that ever walked the planet.

□ 1300

Mr. Speaker, this is not the person I know, and I think it is very interesting to look at the perspective that they have put on it. If you cannot recall precisely what you did 10 years ago, then they want to spin it that you are lying, you are disingenuous, you are part of a conspiracy, and so forth and so on. But basically what we should be doing, I believe by our charter under the Constitution, is we should be looking at elected officials and what elected officials did or did not do in the role of their public trusteeship. That is the issue.

Mr. Speaker, I think it has probably been very discouraging to many people who put a lot of time in, because I think, if anybody looks at the President we have, everybody knows he loves politics. And anyone who is in politics knows that politics keeps you busy 24 hours a day. There are never enough hours in the day to do all the things that you should do if you really want to be good at your profession. If anything, this President is probably guilty of ignoring his own personal financial background. He enjoys much too much being with people, talking to people, listening to people, doing