

Mr. Speaker, the American people are not asking for medical savings accounts. Medical savings accounts sound good, but actually they only work for the wealthy and the healthy. Those people who are poor, those people who are middle class, those people who are sick will face rising premiums as the healthy and the wealthy get out of the health insurance pool.

That is why medical savings accounts are not a good idea. Let us put that idea on hold. Let us pass what the American people want, which is health care reform. That is why Republicans are bad managers, because they cannot see the forest for the trees.

THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF LAWRENCE WESTERMAN

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

Mr. FLANAGAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 100th birthday of Mr. Lawrence Westerman, a former resident of Chicago. It is appropriate that we celebrate Mr. Westerman's 100 years of life and recognize his years of service to our great Nation as we prepare to celebrate Independence Day.

Mr. Westerman was born on January 14, 1896, in Chicago, IL, of German immigrant parents. A World War I veteran who enlisted in the Illinois National Guard on June 16, 1916, Mr. Westerman was commissioned as a second lieutenant and, 2 years later, was promoted to first lieutenant and sent to France to serve in the 33d Division. In August of 1918, Mr. Westerman was severely wounded while defending our Nation and, accordingly, was awarded the Purple Heart. Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Westerman may be the oldest recipient of this heroic award.

We should take this time to personally wish Mr. Westerman a belated happy birthday and also to thank him for his superior dedication and unwavering commitment to our great country. Mr. Westerman, thank you and we wish you all the best.

□ 1030

MEDICARE VERSUS PERSONNEL FILES

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this is the month of June, but I do not know, some of us may be thinking it is Halloween. The reason is because it seems that the Republicans want to play around with the ghost of the personnel files in the White House. Already the White House has indicated that there was no wrong intended. They have got a new director. The special prosecutor Kenneth Starr says there is nothing to investigate or pros-

ecute. But all we can hear is about the ghost of the personnel files. The reason is because they do not want to talk to us about the Medicare cuts. There is a \$1,000 increase with the Republican plan on seniors by the year 2002.

Listen, America, forcing hospitals to close, already hospitals have closed in neighborhoods in New York and they are closing in rural communities across the Nation because of the cuts in Medicare. What Americans need most is good health care. For our seniors in particular, we need hospitals open and with lower cost. Yes; rather than trying to fix the Medicare trust fund with reasonable responses and cuts in abuse and fraud, the Republicans want to get a large cut so that they can give tax cuts to the wealthy.

Stop with the ghost of Halloween and let us put a good Medicare plan on the table and provide health care for seniors and Americans across the Nation.

MEDICAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

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

Mr. CHRYSLER. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Marketing Research Institute released a poll of 1,000 workers across the Nation on their opinions on health care issues.

This poll found that 87 percent of the respondents wanted Congress to enact medical savings accounts.

But now, all of a sudden, MSA's have become a partisan issue with liberal Democrats. They have effectively shut down health care reform over this and other issues where there is widespread bipartisan support.

At the State level, MSA's have been passed by legislatures and signed by Governors of both parties. In every State where MSA's have been passed, they passed with overwhelming bipartisan majorities. In five States, MSA's were passed by both Chambers unanimously. We have pilot programs.

Mr. Speaker, it is a shame the liberal Democrats here in Washington have resorted to obstructionism. They have no new ideas, they have no positive agenda, and all they can do is stand in the way and throw up road blocks to serious health care reforms that are popular with the American people.

DOING BETTER ON HEALTH CARE

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

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, we should indeed ask ourselves what are the implications of this Medicare discussion. Are they the realities my colleagues on the other side say? Well, the realities of cutting \$168 million from rural America in the State I come from will mean that many of my senior citizens will have to pay more for their premium. The reality will mean that they will be forced into health care plans where they have no option.

The reality will mean in many instances the hospitals that depend heavily on Medicare and Medicaid may have to close. So the reality of cutting so severely does not protect for the future. It denies opportunity. Also, what should be the expectation for us as we look for Medicare and the security in the future? It means we need to come together as bipartisan and to understand there are ways to protect but not necessarily cut and be extreme.

Mr. Speaker, there are ways in which we can help the citizens who need help now and to protect in the future. It requires us not to be extreme. It requires us to think about the poor as we think about the rich. Mr. Speaker, we can do better than this.

THE ENERGY STANDARD

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

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, today the House will debate the interior appropriations bill. While I support many of the provisions of this bill, I do have serious concerns in at least one area. Nearly 20 years ago, Congress asked the Energy Department to set energy efficiency standards for home appliances. This was an effort to stem the unnecessarily rapid rate of energy consumption in this country. By establishing national standards for everyone to use, a valuable measuring stick was created to permit manufacturers to commit time, investment and engineering resources. However, this was all placed on hold in our spending bill in 1996 which put a moratorium on rulemaking.

While I have never been one to support increased regulation, this issue should have been handled better. Congress ought not be in the business of artificially manipulating a steady market once it is established. Yet this is exactly what the appropriations bill report language purports to do.

Second, the issue of energy standard should be dealt with through the Committee on Commerce, the committee of jurisdiction. What the committee is attempting to do is to interfere in the economic marketplace.

THE INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS BILL

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

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the so-called Riggs amendment. In the full committee, on the Appropriations Committee, we took up the Interior appropriations bill. After last year, I think all of us learned that we should be very careful about extraneous riders to that bill. But the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] decided to offer an amendment that would knock out a crucial,

critical habitat designation under the Endangered Species Act for some important marbled murrelet habitat in northern California.

I urge the House today to support my amendment, which will be offered as an amendment to strike this provision, section 116, when the bill is considered later today. There is a way to deal with this problem for the company in California that I know Congressman RIGGS is concerned about, and that is to get that company to do a multispecies habitat conservation plan under the Endangered Species Act. That is the proper way to proceed, not with this rider.

JUNETEENTH DAY

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

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend those in my district who today are celebrating Juneteenth Day, marking the freedom of the last known slaves on June 19, 1865, almost 2½ years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation and 65 days after Lincoln had been assassinated. Gen. Gordon Granger entered Galveston, TX, with 1,800 troops, proclaimed Texas under U.S. Federal authority and declared the 250,000 slaves in Texas free.

His remarks to the slaves and slave owners concluded with his reading of the Emancipation Proclamation. Upon hearing the final line of General Granger's reading, the slaves in Galveston immediately began the first Juneteenth celebration in response to their freedom.

A story that has been passed down through the generations says that President Lincoln sent a messenger on a slow-stepping mule from Washington with the news which did not reach these States, deep southern States, until 2½ years later. This shows that some things never change. Historians have attributed the delay to the slow-moving Washington bureaucracy.

Today this holiday is celebrated throughout America, not just in the South. I know that in my district, in addition to celebrations like picnics, parades, and pageants, very much like those going throughout the country, there are 150 community leaders meeting and how their groups work to better people's lives. I rise to congratulate them. We all must work together.

THE BUDGET

(Ms. MCKINNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, proudly beating their chests in 1994, the Republicans signed a contract with America which promised to balance the budget. Last week, however, almost every Republican voted for a budget resolution that would increase the deficit by \$40 billion over the next 2 years.

It was only after 3 years of hard work by President Clinton and the Democrats that we succeeded in reducing the Reagan and Bush deficits from \$290 billion a year to \$130 billion. And now, Mr. Speaker, Republican leaders want to take us back to the borrow-and-spend policies which put us in this deficit hole in the first place.

By now it should be crystal clear that the only things the Republican Party cares about are giving tax breaks to the wealthy and more money to the Pentagon.

Mr. Speaker, let's face it. The Contract on America was nothing more than the vehicle by which the Republican Party delivered Government handouts to defense contractors and junk bond dealers, period.

REPUBLICAN HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, both Democrats and Republicans support a health care reform bill that would essentially make it easier for people to get health insurance if they lose their jobs or change jobs, or also if they have a preexisting medical condition. The problem, though, is that the Republican leadership continues its effort to add on what I call the poison pill to this health care reform bill, and that is the medical savings accounts. Essentially what they want to do is encourage healthy and wealthier people to opt out of the traditional insurance pool that we have for most health insurance and leave in the insurance pool the people who are sicker, who have less money and, therefore, drive up insurance costs, premium costs.

Last night I heard some of my colleagues on the Republican side talk about how they wanted an MSA demonstration project, but that it is not enough to just have it for employers of 15 employees or less, they want it for 100 employees or less.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is, if you include these MSA's in this health insurance reform, you will destroy health insurance reform. The President will not sign it. The Democrats will not support it. The end result is to increase premiums for the average American.

REAL HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that we on the Republican side are committed to making health care more affordable. There is 40 million Americans in this country without health care insurance today. Why? If you listen to them and ask them why, they tell you it is because they cannot afford it.

Now, those on the other side said, well, let us have the Government take over and run our health care system. Let the bureaucrats do it, they can do a better job. Well, the people spoke loud and clear 2 years ago and said they do not want the Government running health care. They want more choice, more freedom, more affordable health care.

Well, we have an agreement between the House and Senate to make health care more affordable, making it easier for small businesses to ban together, pool their employees, get better, more affordable rates. Medical savings accounts provide choice, allowing consumers to be rewarded for making better choices, being able to work with their own physician and save money, which is the bottom line.

Mr. Speaker, we want to bring about real health care reform. We need bipartisan support. We need those who want government-run health care to just say okay, let us let a proposal to make health care reform affordable pass.

PERMISSION FOR SUNDRY COMMITTEES AND THEIR SUBCOMMITTEES TO SIT TODAY DURING THE 5-MINUTE RULE

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the following committees and their subcommittees be permitted to sit today while the House is meeting in the Committee of the Whole under the 5-minute rule: Committee on Agriculture; Committee on Banking and Financial Services; Committee on Commerce; Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities; Committee on Government Reform and Oversight; Committee on International Relations; Committee on the Judiciary; Committee on National Security; Committee on Resources; Committee on Science; Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; Committee on Veterans' Affairs; and Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the minority has been consulted and that there is no objection to these requests.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3662, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

Ms. PRYCE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 455 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 455

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the