

offered a guaranteed level of coverage, the Republican leadership proposal would essentially take that all away.

In addition, and this goes back to what I was saying before, the Republicans are proposing to incorporate the medical savings accounts, what we discussed before in the context of health care reform, they want to incorporate the MSA's also into the Medicare overhaul.

Last year the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office stated that these tax breaks, the MSA tax breaks, would actually cost Medicare several billion dollars. Again an effort to restructure Medicare and, I would maintain, overhaul it in a way that has a very negative impact on America's senior citizens.

I would urge really that senior citizens again take notice of what is happening here and what is being proposed by the Republicans and call on Congress to protect Medicare from any further raids by Speaker GINGRICH and the Republican leadership.

Lastly this afternoon I want to talk a little bit about Medicaid. Medicaid many people think of as the program for poor people. But it also pays about 50 percent of all nursing home care for senior citizens. The Republican budget makes extreme cuts, \$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. These Medicaid cuts are over and above the Medicare cuts I discussed before.

Without Medicaid, many middle-class adult children of nursing home parents will have to pay for their parents' expensive care while trying to send their own children through college. So keep in mind, and I say that to those Americans who would have parents or grandparents that are in nursing homes, if you have to end up paying for a lot of their care, that means less money out of your pocket that you might not have available to pay for your own children, your own children's education or other programs.

Recently the Commerce Committee voted on the Medicaid Repeal Act, the Republican Medicaid proposal. I am a member of the Committee on Commerce and I fought very hard against this bill when it came to our committee. The Republican Medicaid Repeal Act will eliminate all current guarantees of health care coverage and eliminate current guarantees of nursing home benefits to the elderly.

I offered an amendment during the markup in the Committee on Commerce that would return these guarantees in this terrible legislation, but it was rejected by every Republican on the committee. Other Democrats offered similar amendments to continue health care coverage for the disabled, for children, for pregnant women. Again, all of these were defeated by the Republican members of the committee. On top of all this, the GOP Medical Repeal Act will sharply reduce payments to hospitals for care.

I said before, I do not think a lot of people realize how dependent many of America's hospitals and health care institutions are on Medicare and Medicaid. In New Jersey, my State, a lot of hospitals have the majority of their income from those two Federal and State programs. What I am concerned about is with these steep cuts that are being proposed in both programs, a lot of hospitals in New Jersey and throughout the country will simply have to close their doors. I think 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. What we are talking about here is an effort to try to provide quality health care for seniors and for all Americans.

The bottom line is that more and more Americans today, and you can make a comparison with last year, 2 years ago, 5 years, 10 years ago, every year more and more Americans and the percentage of Americans are uninsured and have no health insurance. If we make these drastic changes in Medicare and Medicaid, if we do not do what is necessary to reform health care insurance along the lines of what Senators KASSEBAUM and KENNEDY have proposed, then we are going to see more and more Americans be uninsured and not have health care. The consequences to our society are severe not only today but certainly tomorrow.

The irony really, too, of the Republican budget which was passed in this House not too long ago is that in addition to making these cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, it also increases the deficit. In the past Democrats were able to decrease the deficit and still preserve Medicare and Medicaid. I think that this is just a strong indication of the misplaced priorities and values of the Republican leadership, if they find it necessary to cut Medicare and Medicaid and in the same context are actually increasing the deficit.

I remain committed to fighting these Republican efforts that would raise the deficit while slashing Medicare and Medicaid, and I know that myself and many of my Democratic colleagues will continue to speak out over the next few weeks and the next few months until this session ends to remind American seniors that we cannot make these drastic changes in the Medicare and the Medicaid program and that we need to pass health insurance reform now and certainly before the end of this session of Congress.

CLINTON ATTACKS ON REPUBLICAN BUDGET NOT BASED ON TRUTH OR REALITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. STEARNS] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I came to the well of the floor to talk a little

bit about Medicare because I have had town meetings back in my district, and time and time again I hear from both my colleagues who have talked to the Democrats, perhaps in Florida, about the cuts in Medicare. I want to again present some information about this erroneous claim.

I know the President is continuing to run advertising claiming Republicans are cutting Medicare, which is not true. So I thought I would again just take a moment and talk about President Clinton, the budget cuts, and sort of defend what we are doing and put it in perspective.

The President has claimed that with his rhetoric about Medicare, he is saying, "When I talk about Medicare, there's no difference about what I say about Medicare than when the Republicans talk about defense." The reality, however, is that since 1987 there has been a steady decline in defense spending. In fact, it is at the lowest percent of our gross national product ever. This parallel between defense spending and Medicare is not quite there. I will go into that a little further along.

Recently, in response to a question from CNN's Wolf Blitzer, President Clinton admitted in fact that Republicans are not cutting Medicare. He is right about that because spending on this program will increase at almost 7 percent a year. So the spending not only is going up, but it is going up above inflation at roughly 7 percent a year.

How could spending which increases from \$5,200 a year in 1996 to \$7,200 a year for each beneficiary in the Medicare program in 2002 ever be called a cut? We always hear the expression, only in Washington is that considered a cut.

I think what has to be said to the people of this country who are in the Medicare program, We have increased it 7 percent a year to 2002. We think this is enough. We think if you allow us to continue this increased spending at 7 percent and allow some choices, we can prevent this program from going bankrupt.

Perhaps more than any other issue, President Clinton has hammered away at this Medicare issue by falsely accusing the GOP of, quote, cutting Medicare, when again it is going up at 7 percent a year to 2002.

When the President was trying to sell his health care package to the American people, his message was quite different. I would like to read exactly what he said when he was proposing in 1993 a new health care plan. He said:

Today, Medicaid and Medicare are going up at 3 times the rate of inflation. We propose to let it go up at 2 times the rate of inflation. That is not a Medicare or Medicaid cut. We are going to have increases in Medicare and Medicaid, but a reduction in the rate of growth.

So, frankly, there is the President of the United States saying exactly what we have heard Republicans say, yet the President is participating in this distortion of what is happening to Medicare.

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Those who are quick to criticize or condemn what we are trying to do to save Medicare and Medicaid should exercise a little caution. It is wrong to scare our senior citizens this way. No one has proposed cutting any benefits. This will not happen. In fact, as the budget goes along, we are increasing it 7 percent a year.

Now, let us talk about the First Lady. During the debate on the ill-fated Clinton health care bill, this is what she said. "We feel, confident that we can reduce the rate of increase in Medicare without undermining quality for Medicare recipients."

For the past year, the administration officials have been singing a different tune, it appears. So both the President in 1993, and the First Lady in 1993, when they talked about their health care bill, they talked about we feel confident, "That we can reduce the rate of increase in Medicare without undermining quality by slowing the growth."

In fact, let us even look at one of their Cabinet officials, Secretary Shalala. What did she say about this? She said, "Our argument is that if you are slowing down growth here and that is below what is happening in terms of cost out there, it is a real cut." So when the President proposed slowing down the rate of growth in Medicare and Medicaid, it was not a cut, but now that our budget contains something similar, very similar, they say it is a cut. As I stated earlier, only in Washington could an increase of 7 percent a year be called a cut, a cut be called an increase.

Defense spending is misconstrued by the President. I heard the President say, well, you know the Republicans are slowing the growth of spending on defense and that argument is applicable to Medicare. But we really have reduced spending in defense. President Clinton describes defense spending as a slowdown in spending growth cuts. The reality is that since 1987, defense spending has not kept pace even with inflation, whereas the program that we have here with Medicare, what the Republicans proposed and passed on the House floor, is 7 percent, twice inflation.

I want to be sure that we all understand the President's position on Medicare and defense spending. Medicare will grow again at twice the rate of inflation, yet the President says that is a cut. Defense spending was 2 percent of the budget in 1987. Mr. Clinton has put it at 15 percent in his 1997 budget. Even though defense spending has sustained sharp decreases in spending since 1987, this is categorized as an increase by the administration; that is, the Republicans are increasing spending in defense when, in fact, if you look at 1987 compared to 1997, there have been sharp decreases.

How can anyone possibly who knows these facts want to believe what the President says? This is one time that

old saying "actions speak louder than words" could be applied.

On another issue, let us take a look at what President Clinton said during the 1992 Presidential campaign about welfare. One of his major campaign themes was, I want to change welfare as we know it today. Most recently in a radio address, he has said, quote, Wisconsin has submitted to me for approval the outlines of a sweeping welfare reform plan, one of the boldest yet attempted in America. All in all, Wisconsin has the makings of a solid, bold welfare plan. We should get it done. Those are his exact words. Well, what did President Clinton do? Well, he did veto two of the welfare bills that we submitted to him.

Why do we not take a look at the President's position on the need for a balanced budget? In his State of the Union Message in 1993, he made the following statement:

My budget plan will use independent budget office numbers, CBO. I did this so that no one could say I was estimating my way out of this difficulty. I did this so the American people will think we are shooting straight with them.

Well, what did he do? Well, after many other broken promises and with no proposal of his own, he vetoed the balanced budget that we presented to him in 1992. The President, while on the "Larry King Show," stated emphatically, I will balance the budget in 5 years. As we remember all too well, he could not decide whether to balance the budget in 5 years, 7 years, 10 years or somewhere in between. He also refused to negotiate with us for a 7-year balanced budget using real numbers scored by CBO. He finally agreed after many, many months of negotiations.

Previously during his State of the Union, he said that this budget that we offered was acceptable. Well, what did he do during the budget negotiations in the latter part of 1995? He said CBO numbers are unacceptable to us because it commits us to accepting Republican cuts. Let me read that again: CBO numbers are unacceptable to us because it commits us to accepting Republican cuts. First of all, the President said he wanted to abide by CBO numbers and, second, they are not Republican cuts that he talked about. It is increasing at 7 percent a year.

Now, when President Reagan took command of the White House, he kept his word and delivered on his promise to cut taxes. He believed, just as President Kennedy did, that tax cuts would stimulate the economy. It worked in the early 1960's, and he believed it was just what the economy needed. President Kennedy felt that way. In the 1980's, the American economy boomed. While President Reagan kept his side of the agreement, the Democrat Congress doubled spending during the same period. Ironically, President Reagan was constantly being accused by his critics of cutting the budget.

The President campaigned, President Clinton campaigned, for the Presidency

saying that he would give the middle class some much needed relief by lowering their taxes. Well, what did he do? He gave Americans the largest tax increase in the country's history, \$245 billion to be exact. Some of my colleagues and the people who are watching perhaps can remember that quiz show from the early 1960's which was hosted by Johnny Carson. The show was called "Who Do You Trust?" My colleagues, I bring this to your attention because we have heard during the early start of this campaign the cry that Republicans are cutting Medicare. This is far from the truth. We have heard the President say that we have defense spending going up when, in fact, it is decreasing as a percent of the gross national product.

We have heard the President say he wanted to balance the budget in 5, 7, and 10, and then finally came reluctantly to agree with our 7-year balanced budget. He talked about welfare, making it workfare, but he vetoed two welfare bills. He talks about a middle-class tax cut during his campaign, yet he has not provided the same. In fact, after he was elected, he gave us the largest tax increase in American history.

So Mr. Speaker, the 1996 Presidential race might be based on the same question that Johnny Carson issued when he hosted his show, a quiz show in the early 1960's. The show of course was called "Who Do You Trust?" Whom do you trust to lead this country for the next 4 years? I think it is clear that our candidate, Senator Dole, could be trusted and, based upon the information I have given to you today, I ask all the Members, who do you trust?

AMERICANS SUPPORT TERM LIMITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, during the last campaign, many of us campaigned on the whole issue of term limits, and it is something that a lot of the American people have asked for. In fact, all the polling information demonstrates that between three-fourths and 85 percent of the American people support some form of term limits.

Earlier in this Congress, we had a vote for the first time in the history of this Congress, I think, we had a vote on term limits. Unfortunately, we were unable to get the two-thirds majority necessary to pass that by.

We went back to some of our offices, I went back to my office and talked to some of the people on my staff and said: What could we do in terms of if we can't get a term limits bill passed this year, what possibly can we do to take some of the fun out of it?

We also had heard a lot in our campaigns and we hear at our town meetings. I, for example, have had 75 town