

children. But I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that our current welfare system is in fact destroying the lives of millions and millions of children. Welfare which in fact was designed to create a safety net has in fact trapped millions of children in a pitiful web and their families in a pitiful web.

Let us just look at it for a second. Our current system of welfare has destroyed in fact the traditional family structure, so that children do not even know the meaning of a home and a family. Our current system of welfare has in fact destroyed our children's sense of values. Our current system of welfare has kept our children from understanding the work ethic, the work ethic that in fact has built this Nation.

In fact, our current welfare system has kept our children from seeing a parent work. Our current system of welfare makes a joke of a \$5.15 minimum wage that this Congress passed, when we in fact pay people in my State in Florida the equivalent of \$8.75 an hour for not working.

Our current system of welfare has in fact bred crime, crime that has destroyed our neighborhoods, crime that in fact kills our children in this city, has killed thousands of children over the years, young people also trapped in a welfare web. They force our senior citizens and all Americans to live in fear and behind bars.

Welfare in fact has served and this current system has served as a magnet to attract illegal aliens into the United States. Our current system of welfare pays better benefits to those who really refuse to work, and pays better benefits to illegal aliens than we in fact pay to some of our senior citizens or to our veterans who served this country.

I think that if we really care about the welfare of our children, Mr. Speaker, if we really care about our senior citizens and if we really care about our veterans and we care about the future of this country, we should care about passing meaningful welfare reform.

In fact, we passed a welfare reform that says that welfare should not be a way of life, that in fact it should be limited to 2 years and a 5-year lifetime maximum. It is not severe. We said that they should work for some of their benefits, for example, food stamps, put in at least 20 hours' work.

We are not talking about disabled or elderly or infirm. We are talking about able-bodied Americans. We think we should return power to the States and restore a sense of personal responsibility when in fact the President's proposal has no real time limits, no real work requirements, non-citizens and felons will continue to receive welfare and we will have maximum control here in Washington. This is the system we have created.

I ask, what helps children and what hurts children? We have an opportunity to help children, to change welfare as we know it, and to make a dramatic change in the lives of millions and millions of citizens of our country

and children in our country who deserve much better than the welfare system that they currently have.

Mr. Speaker, I urge that we adopt our plan, that the President in fact not veto this plan for the third time, and that it become in fact the law of our land to help our children, not hurt our children.

TAXES AND THE WEALTHY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. DUNCAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to speak very briefly about two unrelated topics.

First, a few days ago we passed a resolution here in this House designating July 3 as Cost of Government Day. This resolution noted that the average person now spends 50.4 percent of his or her income in taxes of all types, Federal, State and local, 50.4 percent. In other words, the average person now works until July 3 just to pay the cost of government at all levels. That is taking into account the taxes of all types, like income, Social Security, sales, property, excise, gas, all the different types of taxes, and then the taxes that we pay in the form of hidden taxes in the form of higher prices and so forth. Even worse, President Clinton's 1994 budget said the young people born that year would pay average lifetime tax rates of an incredible 82 percent. Paul Tsongas, the former Congressman and Senator from Massachusetts who was a liberal Democrat when he was in Congress wrote a column about that and he said that we were going to turn the young people into indentured servants for the government unless dramatic changes were made. I do not think we should allow that to happen, Mr. Speaker. But the reason I mention this tonight is this: I am not for increasing our tax burden at all. In fact, we need to strive to lower our tax burden. But I can say that what we need to do is lower the tax burden on the average people and on the people of middle and lower incomes and to do that and to balance it out, we need to drastically raise the taxes on those movie stars and athletes and CEOs who are making these multimillion-dollar salaries. I think that would be only fair.

What really stirred me into this is hearing last week that one basketball player had signed a contract for 7 years for \$123 million and then the Washington Post a few days ago printed what they called a Free Agent Tote Board and they have these other contracts for NBA players: 5 years for \$55 million, 1 year for \$30 million, 7 years for \$98 million, 7 years for \$105 million, 6 years for \$24 million, 7 years for \$42 million, 4 years for \$28 million, on and on. They reported about one player for the Washington Bullets who was a substitute who did not even play well last year and he is holding out for \$45 million for 7 years.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that things have gotten totally out of whack. I remember telling my two sons last December when I heard that one baseball player had signed an \$18 million 3-year contract that could they imagine how much was \$6 million a year. In my district, an average person makes between 21 and \$22,000 a year. A person making \$25,000 a year would have to work 40 years to make \$1 million. To make \$6 million in 1 year, you would have to average \$150,000 a year. This is ridiculous. This is sickening how much these athletes are being paid for playing a game 6 or 7 months out of the year. It has gotten totally ridiculous. I say that we should drastically lower the taxes on the lower- and middle-income people and raise them on these people that are getting these totally exorbitant, unjustified salaries. I realize it will not be done, but we should boycott the NBA and these other leagues and organizations that are paying these totally ridiculous salaries and totally undeserved.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The other topic that I wanted to mention tonight, Mr. Speaker, and like I say, it is two totally unrelated things but it does pertain to the spending of government money. We have spent \$4 billion so far in Haiti, and the Washington Post a few months ago reported on the front page that we have got our troops there picking up garbage and settling domestic disputes. We have spent billions more in Rwanda, Somalia, and now Bosnia where there is no vital United States interest and no threat to our national security.

Last week Georgie Anne Geyer, the very respected foreign affairs columnist, wrote this about Bosnia. She said:

For 4 years and 2 Presidents, the top military brass in Washington essentially lied about Serb capacities. They built a bunch of thugs and rustic mountain Serbs, dependent on that pitiful weaponry I saw, into super-Serbs.

She told about seeing this weaponry. She said:

There it stands, all the terror that American and European military men trembled before: old tanks, their sides packed with sand; antique mortars nearly falling off the mountainsides; artillery pieces out in the open, without even trees to hide them. One could be forgiven for thinking oneself back in World War I instead of the nuclear age.

The military exaggerated the capabilities of Saddam Hussein. Now they have exaggerated the capabilities of their opponents in Bosnia, and I think back to the time when President Eisenhower warned about the military-industrial complex and I wonder if these things are being done to somehow justify higher and unjustified appropriations. I think if they are, that is very sad and very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker.

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

[Mr. KINGSTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GEKAS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I am in the well tonight because I feel very strongly that myself, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO], the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. KLINK] and others that are going to be joining us here tonight, Democrats, spent a lot of time last year as well as this year as part of basically an effort to try to make the point, and I believe successfully made the point that the Republican leadership in this Congress was trying to destroy Medicare as we know it.

Democrats basically started Medicare over 30 years ago, Democratic Presidents, Democratic Congresses, because they were concerned that so many senior citizens did not have health care, either were not able to afford health insurance or found themselves unable to obtain health insurance as they became senior citizens. Over the last 30 years, Medicare has been very successful as a program in guaranteeing that almost all, almost 100 percent of the senior citizens in this country get health care and get good health care.

It is not only a question of the fact that they are covered by Medicare but they have a choice of physicians, they have a choice of hospitals and the level of coverage, what is included in their coverage, as well as the quality of care that they receive generally is pretty good. That is a dramatic change from the situation before Medicare existed.

Well, as my colleagues know, we faced a new Congress back in January of 1995 under the Republican leadership. One of the first things, and I have to admit I was very surprised, one of the first things that happened was that a budget was presented which essentially cut Medicare as well as Medicaid drastically, primarily to pay for tax cuts for tax breaks, if you will, mostly for wealthy Americans.

But the proposals that came from the Republican leadership did not just cut Medicare, did not just cut the amount of money that was going into Medicare, they also tried to change the system dramatically so that senior citizens would not have a choice of doctors. Many would be pushed into managed

care. Many would also find that they had to pay higher out-of-pocket costs because their part B premiums would go up or because they would have to pay more as a copayment to their physician.

What we saw is, as I said, a dramatic change in the structure of Medicare as well as drastic cuts in the amount of money that would go into the program. We fought hard against these Republican proposals, and we were successful. The Medicare program is today still the way it was 2 years ago. The dramatic cuts have not been implemented, and I suppose not surprisingly, because the Republican leadership realized at some point over the last 18 months that this was not working and that we were getting the message across, if you will, to the American public that this is what the Republican leadership wanted to do.

All of a sudden, we see where the Republicans do not want to talk about Medicare anymore. They sort of pretend like all these debates and all these votes, these many times when they tried to cut it and change it, never occurred. So I was not surprised that last week 3 House Republican leaders held a press conference, last Wednesday, to basically discuss the new ads that the AFL-CIO has been putting on the air in various parts of the country where they point out that Speaker GINGRICH and other Republican leaders were pushing for these Medicare cuts and basically changing. I would say actually destroying Medicare as we know it.

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The Republican leaders basically got up and said, oh, those things are not true, we never tried to do that. Well, let me tell Members that they did and regardless of their rhetoric, the old statement "Actions speak louder than words," well, the fact is the actions do speak louder than words in this case.

Whatever the Republicans say now, the bottom line is that after taking control of Congress, NEWT GINGRICH and the Republicans set themselves to the task of slashing Medicare by \$270 billion. If this Congress had passed and the President had signed, which we did not, their Medicare bill, seniors would have been forced out of traditional Medicare by making it prohibitively expensive to stay in the program. They would have been forced. Basically, they would have lost the choice, I should say, of their doctors and hospitals because essentially they would have been forced into managed care where they did not have the choice of doctors and hospitals.

I do not think anybody really should be surprised by this because we know well that it took something like 13 years for Democrats to overcome Republican opposition and enact the Medicare Program on July 30, 1965. And in 1965, 93 percent of the House Republicans, including then Representative Bob Dole, now the Republican candidate for President, voted for a sub-

stitute that would have killed Medicare as we know it. Over 60 percent of Republican Senators voted for a similar substitute.

So we know historically the Republicans were opposed to Medicare, they continued that effort when they took back the majority in this Congress, and regardless of what the Speaker or the now Presidential candidate Bob Dole says, the bottom line is that they have over the years consistently tried to either stop Medicare from becoming law or change it dramatically in a most negative way.

I would like to now yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] who really has been outspoken on this issue from the very beginning and really led the whole battle to make sure that we retain Medicare as it is and not make the drastic changes that the Republican leadership proposed.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from New Jersey for taking the special order tonight because in fact the whole issue of Medicare is critically important to this Nation. I think, and I know my colleague from New Jersey feels this way and our other colleagues who are here tonight, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. KLINK] and the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN], also feel the same way, that Medicare represents not a program but in fact what our values are in this country, in that it says to people who have worked hard all of their lives, who have played by the rules, who have raised their families, who have contributed to the successful economy of this Nation, that when you retire and when you are a senior citizen that you will have a safe and a dignified and a decent retirement and that you will be able to have health care.

I thank my colleague from New Jersey for his efforts in talking about Medicare and also about health care for seniors in this country. He has led the fight on that issue and I thank him for laying out the fact that it used to be in 1946, or before Medicare that we did not have the opportunity for seniors to have health care. That meant that families had to take in their mothers or fathers or their loved ones and somehow work out health care and was not clear how that was going to get paid for. With the advent of Medicare and today in 1996, we are looking at 99 percent of seniors who are covered.

Let me just go back for a second because it was not 1946, but before Medicare only 46 percent of seniors had health care coverage. So Medicare has meant a difference in the lives of seniors today, and it is something they come to count on, and not as a handout but something that they have paid for and that is there for them now.

But I think it is very interesting that in this Congress, as has been pointed out, that there is a war that is being waged on Medicare. The Republican leadership, with the House Speaker NEWT GINGRICH at the helm, is truly