

Service involvement at over 30 park units. Secretary Babbitt is studying transferring parks such as Redwoods National Park, Great Basin National Park, and Lake Clark National Park to different Indian tribes. In the mean time, the Resources Committee, on a bipartisan basis, has sought to set up a nonpartisan Commission to study our Park System and make recommendations to help save our Parks.

After Secretary Babbitt's first two choices for Director of the National Park Service—Robert Redford and Tom Brokaw—turned him down, Babbitt has filled more key park service positions with political appointees than the last three administrations combined. These are simply political favors for people who never worked a day in a park. The Resources Committee has moved legislation requiring that the National Park Service Director possess professional qualifications and be subject to Senate approval.

Secretary Babbitt is in charge of the waste, fraud, and abuse that runs rampant in the National Park Service. The Interior inspector general and the General Accounting Office found the Park Service's books unbalanced for 3 years and no method to ensure that the highest priority programs are funded. Instead of taking care of our parks, Secretary Babbitt has spent money on a \$1.6 million personality inventory, a multi-million dollar reorganization with no benefit to the parks, and a \$20,000 redecoration of the Director's hallway. While Secretary Babbitt is spending money on interior decorating—literally—the Resources Committee initiated these reports by the inspector general and the General Accounting Office to improve the operations of the Park Service, improve accountability and to help prioritize funding. Thus far, Secretary Babbitt has ignored those reports and has made few changes in his management of our Nation's parks.

Recently, Secretary Babbitt has been traveling around the country saying we need concessions reform and that we need to return more to the Federal Government. Unfortunately, the legislation Mr. Babbitt supports would exempt 80 percent of the concessionaires from competition and the Congressional Budget Office says will cost the American taxpayer \$79 million over the next 5 years. The Republican proposal would open all 660 National Park Service concessions contracts to competition and will return \$12 million back to the parks while providing \$84 million to deficit reduction over 5 years. If Secretary Babbitt wants real reform then the Republican proposal is the only alternative.

Housing for Park Service employees has been described as third world conditions in many instances. After a photo-op and the construction of three housing units, the Secretary has dropped any further efforts to resolve this problem. Republicans in the mean time have moved legislation that would encourage private sector solutions and investments for park housing. Secretary Babbitt would rather ignore the problems that don't make political hay for him. I guess taking care of his employees is just not a priority for Secretary Babbitt.

Secretary Babbitt alleges that our National Parks are broke, yet while overall visitation has been level for the past 8 years, appropriations have increased by nearly \$300 million over that same period. Where did the money go Mr. Secretary? Where did you spend it? We love our parks and so do the citizens of

this country and we expect Secretary Babbitt to manage these treasures in a responsible and protective fashion. Instead, Secretary Babbitt would rather gallivant across the Nation doing political fund raisers, going fishing, and politicizing our National Parks than stay home and manage our national treasures. Our parks need our help and the goal of this Congress is to identify the problems and find creative solutions to solving those problems. Americans don't want to just throw money at the problem, they want the problems fixed. Mr. President, we need a Secretary of Interior will actually work for our National Parks and not just travel around and fish in them.

#### TRIBUTE TO HECTOR PEREZ GARCIA

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

Mr. BROWN of California. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to the life of Hector Perez Garcia. Dr. Garcia, a Texas physician who led the fight for equal treatment of Hispanics and who founded one of the Nation's most influential civil rights organizations, the American GI Forum in 1948, passed away on Friday, July 26 at the age of 82 in Corpus Christi, TX.

Dr. Garcia was born in the Mexican village of Llera, Tamaulipas, on Jan. 17, 1914, to a college professor and a school teacher. His family emigrated to Mercedes, in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, in 1918 to escape the Mexican Revolution. He was one of seven children, six of whom became doctors.

He often told interviewers that he had decided to get an education soon after his family moved across the border where a high school teacher told him, "No Mexican will ever make an 'A' in my class." He graduated from the University of Texas and the University of Texas Medical School in Galveston in 1940. In 1942, he volunteered for Army duty and served in Europe as an infantry officer, a combat engineer, and a medical corps officer before being discharged as a major. He was awarded a Bronze Star with six battle stars. He met his wife, Wanda Fuscillo, in Europe during the war.

Dr. Garcia founded the American G.I. Forum in 1948 to help Mexican-American veterans of World War II gain access to services of the Veterans Administration and admission to V.A. hospitals. His organization first gained widespread attention in 1949, when it took up the cause of Army Pvt. Felix Longoria, a native of the small south Texas town of Three Rivers, whose remains were returned from Luzon, in the Philippines, for burial 4 years after World War II ended. Mr. Longoria's widow had been denied use of a hometown funeral chapel because the Longorias were Mexican-American.

After several stories about Dr. Garcia's efforts were published, Lyndon B. Johnson, then a U.S. Senator, arranged for Mr. Longoria to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

President John F. Kennedy asked Dr. Garcia to negotiate a defense treaty between the United States and the Federation of the West Indies. In September 1967, Johnson, then President, appointed Dr. Garcia a delegate to the United Nations with the rank of ambassador to focus on promoting better relations with Latin America and Spain. A year later, President Johnson made Dr. Garcia the first Mexican-American to serve on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. In 1984, President Ronald Reagan awarded Dr. Garcia the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 1990, he received the Equestrian Order of Pope Gregory the Great from Pope John Paul II.

Upon hearing about his death, President Clinton released a statement calling Dr. Garcia a national hero who "fought for half a century for civil and educational rights of Mexican-Americans."

I ask my colleagues to join me in extending our condolences to the family of Hector Perez Garcia, his wife Wanda, and his three daughters, Wanda, Cecilia, and Susan. Dr. Garcia was a true American hero whose accomplishments are a testament to his humanitarian spirit.

□ 1730

#### REPUBLICANS INCREASE SPENDING ON MEDICARE AND VETERANS

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, our efforts to balance the budget by the year 2002 have been a long and hard-fought process. As a party, we did not choose this fight, Mr. Speaker. The American people sent a message in the 1994 election. They made it perfectly clear that they wanted to change business here in the House, the business that has been going on for 40 years.

This weekend I held town meetings back in my district, in the State of Florida, central Florida. There were two issues that came up continually. The first, of course, was Medicare. We have a lot of seniors there, and a lot of the seniors were confused. They thought we were cutting Medicare. Of course, that is false. I will tell the Members later on why that is false.

They were also concerned about the veterans budget. Of course, we have increased the veterans benefits and the budget for the RECORD. We are not cutting Medicare, and we are not cutting veterans benefits. In both cases, they are going up over last year. President Clinton finally admitted this in an interview with Wolf Blitzer on CNN that Republicans are not cutting Medicare. He is right about that, because spending on this program will increase at twice the rate of inflation, which means that spending will rise from

\$5,100 this year to \$7,000 in the year 2002. So how could spending, which increases from \$5,200 a year in 1996 to \$7,200 a year in 2002, be a cut? Nowhere also but in Washington.

Perhaps more than any other issue, President Clinton has hammered away at the GOP's reform proposal by falsely accusing us of cutting Medicare.

It is interesting to think about it that the President, when he was talking about his health care bill back in 1993, this is what he said: "Today, Medicare and Medicaid are going up at three times the rate of inflation. We propose to let it go up at two times the rate of inflation. This 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."

On April 3, 1995, the Medicare Board of Trustees, which includes three of President Clinton's Cabinet Secretaries, concluded that the Medicare hospital insurance fund will be running out of money in 1996 and will be bankrupt in the year 2002.

In its 1996 report released on June 5, it showed a \$4.2 billion shortfall in this trust fund. This means that the program will be bankrupt in the year 2001 instead of 2002, so that should be a concern for all Americans.

Congress and the President are very close now on the level of increased spending on Medicare. In fact, the Republican proposal and the Democrat proposal are practically the same. So for the President to talk about cuts is incorrect, when he and I and the Republican Party have proposed practically the same thing in the amount it increases.

Not only have our efforts to preserve, protect, and strengthen Medicare been totally misrepresented, but the Speaker has been vilified for a statement which was falsely attributed to him. We hear this repeated on the House floor over and over again. They said he said, "Now we don't get rid of it round one because we don't think that's politically smart. We don't think that's the way to do it through a transition, but we believe it's going to wither on the vine."

He was not talking about Medicare, he was talking about the Health Care Financing Administration. This is more precisely what he said: "Okay, what do you think the Health Care Financing Administration is? It's a centralized government bureaucracy. It's everything we're telling Boris Yeltsin to get rid of. Now, we don't get rid of it in round one."

"We don't think that's politically smart. We don't think that's the way to do it through a transition, but we believe it's going to wither on the vine."

So you see, they took the statement of the Speaker out of context. He was not referring, of course, to the Medicare Program. He was talking to Big Government, a Big Government bureaucratic machine that processes the laws around here that deals ultimately

with health care in America but not the Medicare Program.

In fact, this is so true that 19 television stations have pulled or refused to air the AFL-CIO ads that deal with this quote. So I think we should realize that now the media, both the television and radio media, has decided to pull these ads because they are false and totally misleading.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at what the Clinton administration said back when they were running for the Presidency, let us look at their book, "Putting People First." Remember that book? In that book, President Clinton and Vice President GORE said in 1992, "We will scrap the Health Care Financing Administration and replace it with a health standards board made up of consumers, providers, business, labor, and government." That is interesting.

Somehow the press seemed to neglect to report that fact in the book, "Putting People First." The Clinton and GORE team said the same thing which the Speaker said about the Health Care Financing Administration, that ultimately we would like to scrap it. So I do not see how they can actually criticize the Speaker when they said the same thing in their book, "Putting People First."

There is another program in the budget which they have attempted to politicize and misrepresent. I might add, some of the colleagues on this side of the aisle have indicated that we are cutting veterans benefits. This is also false. We have increased veterans benefits. I am a former veteran, my father was a veteran, and I believe that it is important to represent veterans. That is why I am on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

There is some talk about cutting veterans back in the district, but I have pointed out to them that we have actually increased the funding for the veterans, and in fact, the VA budget that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs submitted was higher than the administration's budget. That was brought out in a hearing, during the hearing in which I talked to Secretary Brown about the veterans budget. I said to him, "What do you think about your VA budget compared to our VA budget?" And he said, "I just want to be put on the record, Mr. Chairman, that this committee," the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, "is proposing more than the VA is offering." I think the Committee on Veterans' Affairs has shown its integrity even beyond what the Secretary has proposed.

I think it is admirable that he would go on record pointing out that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs has proposed and ultimately passed more money than the administration proposed.

I think that is a credit to the Secretary for being so honest. I thought it was important, Mr. Speaker, to bring these words to the House floor and to present the truth to clear up the misrepresentation on this side of the aisle

with talking about reducing Medicare and veterans benefits when actually, in fact, the Republican majority has increased in both cases the amount of money spent on these two programs.

#### THE OLYMPIC CHALLENGE FOR AMERICA: TO DRAW TOGETHER AGAINST HATRED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I think that it is time, as we near the end of the 100-year anniversary of the modern Olympic games, that we rise to the floor of the House to provide perspective. This weekend should have brought Americans together. Many in different cities around the Nation may have initially thought of the Olympic games as Atlanta's games. But I think as we have watched the indomitable spirit of all of those who have participated, we must first acknowledge that these are world games, and that this is an honor bestowed upon America, our Nation, to be able to host this year's event.

The first recorded Olympics were held every 4 years at the ancient sanctuary in Greece from 1776 B.C. until they were abolished in 394 A.D. They were revived in the late 19th century by French baron Pierre de Coubertin with the first modern games held in Athens in 1896. This year, of course, marks the 100th anniversary.

As we have watched the games proceed, and the challenge to America and to the athletes, it stands in sharp contrast to the tragedy of this past weekend. It saddened me that the games were marred by one tragic incident of a sick and criminal act. It sickens me and saddens me that we lost a very lovely lady who had a 14-year-old daughter who loved her, and a family. Now she is gone from them and from the contributions that she has made and would have made; and then to have lost the life of a Turkish photographer because of this tragedy, and the 111 who were victims of this tragedy.

But most of all, I think we should be challenged by this Olympic challenge, if you will, to recognize that we as Americans must draw together against hatred, hateful talk, and those who would claim that they stand for what America believes in, but yet want to undermine and bring down the government of this country.

Over the last 2 years we have heard too much about what this government has not done. We have heard too much about those who want to carry guns on street corners, who want to hole up in places like Montana or bomb buildings in places like Oklahoma. I think the Olympic challenge for America is to develop the Olympic spirit. That spirit is one of a Carl Lewis, a native Houstonian from the community which I represent; someone who said, as he reflected that many said to him, having