

Mexican Government is so corrupt that Mexican drug agents regularly escort massive drug shipments to America's borders. He further said Mexican drug agents are nothing more than bodyguards for drug traffickers to America.

Mr. Speaker, are you surprised? I am not. Everybody knows Mexico's war on drugs is a joke and America's war on drugs is a comedy of errors.

Think about it. When an 8-year-old can find brown Mexican heroin, Mexican cocaine, and Mexican marijuana on any street corner of America, something is not only wrong, somebody in high places, both in Mexico and in Washington, is getting awfully rich.

Mr. Speaker, I say it is time to deploy troops to the border and cut off aid to Mexico until they stop flooding our shores with dope. Think about it, Congress.

THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, FOR SUPPORTING WELFARE REFORM

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, it's been a 2-year struggle, but I welcome President Clinton's support for the bipartisan effort by the 104th Congress to save generations of Americans from the poverty trap of the failed welfare system.

These commonsense welfare reforms will end welfare as a way of life.

These commonsense welfare reforms will ensure that able-bodied citizens between the ages of 18 and 50 without children must work in order to get welfare benefits.

These commonsense welfare reforms will help preserve families and give them a helping hand to self-sufficiency instead of discouraging marriage and encouraging illegitimacy.

These commonsense welfare reforms will end the tyranny of Washington bureaucrats preventing our State Governors from instituting innovative programs to help their neediest citizens become self-sufficient.

Most important, these commonsense welfare reforms will help save children, communities, and cities from the horrific cycle of poverty and violence which has destroyed so many lives.

Welfare reform is a victory for all Americans.

MUCH-NEEDED HEALTH CARE REFORM IS FINALLY HERE

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, finally, almost a year to the day that it was introduced, we are prepared to pass the Kennedy health care reform bill. This much-needed legislation will provide millions of Americans with health insurance through greater portability and other needed reforms.

And to think that this day almost never was. In spite of the vote of 100 to 0 in the Senate, it took Democrats, constantly pressuring the Republicans, to get to where we are today.

The Republicans were prepared to let this bill languish in the Senate, but we applied the pressure here, and more important the American people applied the pressure all across this country, and the Republicans were forced to act.

Imagine, forced to enact legislation that would help working families be able to maintain their insurance, to prevent insurance companies from discriminating based on preexisting conditions.

Mr. Speaker, we are sent here to do the people's business and to work on behalf of families in this country. The bottom line is that although some may have gotten here kicking and screaming, they are here. We will pass health care legislation today.

PASSAGE OF WELFARE REFORM MARKS HISTORIC DAY FOR CONGRESS

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

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a historic day for the U.S. Congress. The passage of the Gingrich-Dole Welfare Reform Act provides a dramatic shifting of the direction of the ship-of-state, a shift away from welfare, from a growing Federal bureaucracy and ever expanding Federal welfare spending.

And as the ship turns, it will move toward less dependency upon Government, toward private opportunity and independence.

The welfare reform effort passed yesterday was initiated by Speaker NEWT GINGRICH and majority leader BOB DOLE. Speaker GINGRICH and his committees crafted the bill and worked tirelessly for its passage. And only yesterday, Speaker GINGRICH successfully got a commitment from President Clinton to sign it.

So while Speaker GINGRICH will share a piece of the credit for the Gingrich-Dole reform package with the President, yesterday will go down as a historic success for the new Republican majority in Congress.

RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE NOW A POSSIBILITY

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

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, this morning I rise to give credit to a small brave group of House Republicans that will join House Democrats and make it possible to at least raise the minimum wage. We in the House minority think that \$4.25 an hour is not enough to live on. We know that with the minimum wage at its lowest purchasing point in 40 years, the time to act is now.

Unfortunately, the rigid, extreme opposition of the House majority, most of the Members and their leadership, have made it impossible to act before this point. In fact, the House majority leadership has said that they ought to eliminate the minimum wage, not raise it.

Well, a few Republicans working with us in the House minority are going to create a bipartisan majority to raise the minimum wage. I admire those House Republicans that took on their leadership on this one. They have made it possible to do something very important for working Americans.

ELECTION YEAR POLITICS

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, aren't election year politics fun? Here yesterday President Clinton, following Bob Dole's lead, agreed to sign the Republican welfare bill. And then following Clinton, who was following Dole, 68 Democrats changed their vote from less than a month ago to pass this bill on an overwhelming bipartisan basis.

Then, in the paper today Clinton is going to support the Hastert-Kassebaum Republican health care bill. Right under that, President Clinton is going to support the Republican clean drinking water bill. Add these to the fact that this party and this Congress has passed the line-item veto, securities reform litigation, a telecommunications bill, Social Security earnings limitation increase, lobbyist reform, a gift ban and the dissolving of 28 different committees and subcommittees. This Republican Party has made in this Congress a significant change in moving the country in the direction of less government. Thank goodness for election year politics.

GOOD HEALTH CARE IMPORTANT, BUT ALSO A SECURE NATION

(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, I am so grateful that I am able to tell one of my constituents who called in yesterday to talk of a sick wife who lost her job that the Democrats have prevailed and we do have a good health care bill that will allow portability and not take into consideration preexisting condition.

But I am saddened about my Republican colleagues, so dominated by the National Rifle Association, that after the TWA tragedy and the Atlanta tragedy we will not give law enforcement officers the right tools, such as tagants, to determine who planted the bomb? Why? Why? Because the NRA dominates this Republican Congress, because they believe in following their

leaders at the National Rifle Association.

I am grateful that we may get good health care, but I am saddened that we will not have a secure Nation for all of our citizens. Why have we not had hearings on terrorism, domestic and international? Why? Because the Republicans have not set it on the agenda.

I hope America will rise up and determine that we must have, yes, good health care for all of our citizens, but we must also have a safe, secure Nation. We must give law enforcement the tools to fight terrorism and hold hearings on terrorism in America.

PEOPLE NEED HEALTH CARE SECURITY

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

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce to the American people and to this body that the score is not exactly an Olympic score, but it is big Government, big obtrusive Government, 0, the American people, 2.

That is a good trend, and we hope to raise and make that score even spread, but with the passage of welfare reform and, today, health care reform, we have given the American people something on a bipartisan basis, mainly because some people in this Congress have stood up and said there is a principle, there are some things we could do.

People need to have health care security. We need to make health care portable so a mother who loses her job, with an asthmatic child, can go and get health care at the next stop, at the next job she picks up; that a father who is locked into a job that he has and a wife with a heart condition will move on to a better job because there is portability.

And, yes, we do give American families choice, choice through the medical savings account to choose the doctor they want, to choose the health care they want, and if they do not spend that money they get to keep it.

MEDICARE

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

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, gripped by the fear of losing control over the first Republican Congress in 40 years, NEWT GINGRICH and his legions are trying to convince the public that they did not cut Medicare to pay for tax breaks to the wealthy.

On October 26, however, Speaker GINGRICH boasted about Republican efforts to weaken fee-for-service Medicare to the point where it would, quote, "Wither on the vine."

And in an attempt to back away from that statement, Speaker GINGRICH said that he meant the health care financing administration would wither on the

vine. The Los Angeles Times, however, reported that Speaker GINGRICH's spokesman, Tony Blankley, said that, quote, "GINGRICH's comments were consistent with the Republican belief that most seniors would voluntarily choose to leave the traditional Medicare fee-for-service system in favor of HMO's."

Now that's the real scoop on NEWT GINGRICH and Medicare.

Think about it, when have you known the Speaker to not say what he means and mean what he says.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. CHRYSLER. Mr. Speaker, when Republicans took over the Congress, we proved to the Washington liberal establishment that politicians can come here and keep their word. We proved that we could make a difference in the lives of the American people.

The events of this week are proof that this Congress has been one of the most productive in a generation.

Yesterday, Bill Clinton said that he would sign our commonsense welfare reform bill that we will send him later this week. It is a good bill. It is genuine reform of the broken welfare system.

Today, the House will consider the conference report on health care reform. This bill will give health care security to working Americans. It establishes medical savings accounts, which I have had for 3 years, fights fraud and abuse, and ends job lock.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress is making a difference. We are providing the commonsense changes that the American people have demanded for years.

DEMOCRATIC AGENDA ALIVE AND WELL

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

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, good morning. Despite my GOP friends' spin, I have to tell you the Democratic agenda is alive and well in America and American citizens are better for it, because it is the Democrats who have pushed for health care reform and for the minimum wage.

On health care reform, the Kennedy-Kassebaum health insurance reform bill will be on the floor today, and we will be able to provide Americans with health insurance when they change jobs. We will be able to ensure that Americans will not be prohibited from getting health insurance because of preexisting conditions, such as the fact that your child may have asthma or someone has a longstanding hip injury who is an older member of your family.

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That is important and that was a Democratic initiative. We are also

going to take up tomorrow the minimum wage. Republicans have said they would fight it with every fiber of their being. The fact is the Democrats stood for decent wages and decent working conditions. Forty percent of the people who earn the minimum wage are bread winners for their family. Fifty-eight percent of the people who earn the minimum wage are women. We need decent wages in America.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic agenda is alive and well.

CHECKING ON NAFTA

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

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the debate over the success of NAFTA continues. Two years after this legislation became law, we look back and see whether or not it has been successful, and there is still disagreement.

Tomorrow I will introduce bipartisan legislation, Mr. Speaker, however, that all of us can join together on. My legislation, the NAFTA check bill, will require the President of the United States to certify each year to the Congress whether or not those side agreements that he told us would raise up the workers standards in Mexico and would enforce tough environmental laws in Mexico are actually working.

Mr. Speaker, I ask our colleagues to join with us to allow this President each year to certify to us as to whether or not what he told us to get our votes for NAFTA has in fact been occurring for the past 2 years. That is an annual certification as to environmental protection and as to worker standards in the state of Mexico as parties to the NAFTA agreement.

I urge our colleagues to sign as cosponsors when this bill is dropped tomorrow. We can move it quickly in September to get passage in this body and the other body.

TESTING SINCERITY ON WELFARE REFORM

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a historic day. The passage of welfare reform is long overdue. If we listen to the speeches on this floor, we heard Member after Member stand up and say we need to put people to work. The first test of sincerity on those speeches will come today or tomorrow on the question of whether we raise the minimum wage in America.

Think about how many millions of Americans are struggling today at a minimum wage job trying to stay off welfare. The Republican leadership, Mr. GINGRICH and Mr. Dole, have both resisted our efforts to raise the minimum wage so people who are doing the personally responsible thing for their