

country. I vowed then that I would work to end the use of these terrible weapons.

The United Nations and others are engaged in a painstakingly slow and dangerous process of removing landmines in places like Bosnia, Cambodia, and El Salvador, and while it takes as little as \$3 to \$15 to make a landmine, it costs as much as \$300 or \$1,000 to remove every landmine planted. Currently, 100,000 landmines are removed each year, and at that rate it will take us over 1,000 years to rid the world of all of the landmines that are buried in the ground right now.

That is why we must act now to stop the laying of any more landmines. That is why we must act now to stop the production, the stockpiling, the export, and the use of landmines.

Last Thursday 57 Members of the other body, Democrats and Republicans, introduced legislation that would ban future American use of anti-personnel landmines. Also, last week I was one of 164 Members of this House, Republicans and Democrats alike, who joined in sending a letter to President Clinton urging him to join the conference meeting this December in Ottawa, Canada, where over 75 nations will gather to sign an international treaty to ban landmines. Representatives from over 100 nations will begin meeting in Brussels on June 24 to review the work on a draft version of a treaty.

Mr. Speaker, I report to you and my colleagues that a powerful movement is growing worldwide to put an end to landmines.

I am very pleased that people like Princess Diana, General Norman Schwarzkopf and Elizabeth Dole have chosen to speak out on this issue. They help to give visibility to the humble heroes and heroines of this extraordinary movement who are urging governments across the world to ban the production and use of these terrible and indiscriminate weapons.

This movement was inspired by civilian survivors of landmine explosions and the veterans of recent wars, such as the members of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, one of the founders of the international campaign. The campaign is made up of doctors and nurses, human rights activists, humanitarian aid workers, and ordinary men, women, and children who heard about this issue through their churches, synagogues, mosques, labor unions, neighborhood groups, and civic organizations and who decided to take action. Over 225 organizations are part of the U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines, and this same type of citizens' movement is duplicated in scores of countries worldwide.

In January, I nominated the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, one of the broadest grassroots movements of this century, for the Nobel Peace Prize. Because of all of the work and effort of these groups and individuals across the globe, over 75 govern-

ments are now planning to come to Ottawa in December to sign an international treaty to ban anti-personnel landmines.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Princess Diana and the millions of individuals around the world who are calling for an end to landmines. I urge the President to join the Ottawa process, and I call on our Government, the United States of America, to become a leader in the international movement to ban landmines today.

REPUBLICANS IGNORE BUDGET AGREEMENT AND FAVOR THE WEALTHY OVER LOW-INCOME SENIORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, last week the Committee on Commerce voted on Medicare and Medicaid legislation that included the controversial medical savings accounts, or MSA's, which, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, will cost the Medicare program over \$2 billion over 5 years.

At the same time, Republicans did not include the \$1.5 billion for specified low-income beneficiaries, also known as SLMB's, which basically is a fund that assists low-income Medicare beneficiaries in paying their part B premiums.

□ 1245

The Republicans have again, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, shown their true colors by helping the wealthy at the expense of low-income seniors.

As a result of maintaining the part B premium for senior citizens at 25 percent of program costs and shifting home health to part B, Medicare premiums will rise by as much as \$23 per month from 1997 to 2002 over the life of the budget agreement. The budget agreement reached by the President and Republican leaders included monies to help low-income seniors who would likely see their monthly premiums rise from \$43.80 to \$66.67 per month. Unfortunately, the Republicans on the Committee on Commerce did not honor that agreement. Instead, the Republicans opted to spend an additional \$2.2 million on MSA's which would benefit only wealthy and healthy seniors.

When the Democrats learned of the Republican legislation, Mr. Speaker, we offered an amendment, it was actually offered by the gentleman from California [Mr. WAXMAN] in the subcommittee, and again in the full committee, that would have eliminated the costly MSA provision and used those moneys for SLMB's. But both times, Republicans voted along party lines against low-income seniors.

It is not enough that the Republicans have broken the budget agreement

with this and voted against low-income seniors, but that they would try to include the costly MSA's in Medicare reform, again.

I just wanted to point out, Mr. Speaker, why I think Medicare MSA's make no sense. They would only appeal to healthier and wealthier seniors while further eroding the financial integrity of the Medicare Program, to the detriment of older and sicker seniors. Even worse, the Republican proposal would allow senior citizens to spend Medicare dollars, that is, tax dollars intended for health care purposes, for other purposes, basically having it become income to them that they could use to buy a boat or go on a vacation instead of for health care.

Last year, as a result of the passage of the Kennedy-Kassebaum legislation, a pilot program was created to examine the effect of MSA's on the general population. We are not going to know the results of this demonstration program for another 4 years, but it seems to me it would make sense to wait for these results before experimenting with MSA's on the senior citizen population.

Many do not understand that most Medicare beneficiaries only cost the program about \$1,400 per year, but that the sickest Medicare beneficiaries cost Medicare over \$36,000 per year. If the healthier seniors leave the traditional Medicare program for MSA's, then the Medicare program will increasingly become a health care program for just the older and sicker seniors, which will only exacerbate its solvency problems.

Every senior will eventually get older and sicker, and they thus will have to rely on the Medicare program that will no longer be able to pull money from the healthier seniors. What I think we are going to see with the MSAs ultimately, Mr. Speaker, is a death spiral for Medicare.

In the last Congress, when the Republicans advocated inclusion of MSA's in the Medicare Program, they received strong support from insurance companies, particularly the Golden Rule Insurance Co. It is a well known fact that Golden Rule would receive a financial windfall with the expansion of MSA's into Medicare.

It is also well known that Republicans have been reaping financial benefits from Golden Rule. After all, Golden Rule has contributed as much as \$1.6 million to Republicans in the 1992 and 1994 election cycles, and contributed nearly \$400,000 to Republicans during 1996.

Many Republicans have been staunch advocates of MSA's and have suggested that MSA's will provide seniors with another health care option. I would argue that MSA's only create options for healthier and wealthier seniors.

Just to give an example, Mr. Speaker, in a letter to an MSA applicant dated the 29th of May this year from Golden Rule, this was the response to this individual named Alan from Virginia. It says, "Thank you for your interest in our company. We do currently

market health insurance, including the Medical Savings Account, in your State. However, your medical condition of", and then you could fill in the blank, in this case they said diabetes, "would not be one that falls within our underwriting guidelines. Therefore, we would be unable to consider you for coverage."

What this means, Mr. Speaker, is that Golden Rule's rule is only interested in the bottom line, while this individual, Alan, will remain in the traditional health insurance that will see increasing health care costs because of the further division in the health care pool. MSA's are not going to provide choice, they are just going to break the insurance pool.

The average elderly woman has an income of less than \$12,000 a year. MSA's will not benefit her, but part B premium increases will make it more difficult for her to balance her health care needs.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. GIBBONS] at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend LeeAnn Schray, Georgetown Lutheran Church, Washington, DC, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious God, we give You thanks for this day and for the opportunities and challenges that it holds for us. We thank You for the Members of Congress and their staff. Every one is unique with their own talents and abilities, strengths, and weaknesses, but together they make this body strong. Show each of us, O God, the way we may best serve You this day. Give us wisdom in making decisions, honesty in speech and in action, compassion for those we serve, and courage to do what is right, that we may seek the good of all people and work for justice and peace in our Nation and in our world. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule 1, I de-

mand a vote on agreeing to the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5, rule I, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PALLONE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

DISPENSING WITH CALL OF THE PRIVATE CALENDAR ON TODAY

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the call of the Private Calendar today.

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

There was no objection.

WELCOME TO THE REVEREND LEEANN SCHRAY

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

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, we are privileged to have the Rev. LeeAnn Schray of Washington, DC as our guest chaplain today. Pastor Schray is the minister of the church my family and I attend during the weekends we are in the District of Columbia: the Georgetown Lutheran Church. This past year we have enjoyed getting to know LeeAnn and her husband, Bob Tuttle.

Pastor Schray was born in Bethlehem, PA. She received her bachelor of arts degree from St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN, and her master of divinity from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. She moved to Washington, DC in 1991 to take her first call at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, where she served as the assistant pastor. For the past year, she has been serving as the pastor for Georgetown Lutheran Church, and the Lutheran campus pastor for Georgetown and American Universities.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure and privilege for me to welcome the Reverend LeeAnn Schray to the House

lectern and to offer her our heartfelt thanks for serving as our guest chaplain.

GOP FAVOR WEALTHY OVER AVERAGE AMERICANS IN BUDGET AGREEMENT

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, last month I voted in favor of the balanced budget resolution, but as the details of this budget become known, I am more reluctant to support the final budget product.

The Democratic tax cut plan targets the bulk of the tax cuts to working families and to those who need assistance. The Republican plan does not. Their proposal would actually increase taxes for those with incomes below \$15,900, while those making nearly \$250,000 and beyond would receive over half of the tax cuts. Not only is this unfair to low-income families, but it also leaves very little tax relief for the average working family.

In addition to the skewed Republican tax scheme, Republicans have also abandoned their agreement to help low-income seniors pay for rising Medicare premiums.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans are putting the balanced budget agreement at risk by insisting on only helping their wealthy friends.

TAX CUTS FOR WORKING AMERICANS

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

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, what do we call a tax cut for people who do not pay taxes? I call it welfare. And once again, the Democrats want more welfare spending instead of tax cuts for working Americans.

It has been 16 years since working Americans got their taxes cut. We tried in the last Congress to pass tax cuts, but the President vetoed our efforts. This year, with the budget agreement, we seem to have paved our way to lower taxes. But now some folks want to give people who do not pay taxes a tax cut.

It is this kind of logic that drives working Americans crazy about Washington. It is like giving a car to someone who cannot drive or a drowning man a drink of water.

Mr. Speaker, let us give tax cuts to people who pay taxes. America deserves a tax cut now.

THE CASE FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

(Mr. SCOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1