

the community as a great team until Jim's death.

Next week, the campus and the community will officially dedicate the new James C. Kirkpatrick Library at Central Missouri State University. Jim Kirkpatrick's legacy of service continues.

ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PUERTO RICAN CITIZENS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Madam Speaker, I rise this morning with a heavy heart. While I congratulate my colleagues for the fine manner in which they debated the deployment of American troops to Kosovo on the floor, I must also point out a great injustice in our American democratic system.

Last Thursday, throughout the discussion on the floor, precisely at this podium where I now stand, what my esteemed colleagues debated was the reaffirmation of the Congress' power as the sovereign representative body of all Americans.

On a bipartisan level, the debate reflected important concerns about the authority that Congress exercises on the issues that affect our Nation and our standing in the world. It is to this House's great credit and a decision that in my estimation marks a significant turning point in Congressional relations that my colleagues overcame party differences and acted in unison to enable our troops to join NATO forces in Kosovo.

The deployment of American troops to any conflict is an issue of critical importance to all Americans. It is critical not only for the soldier who is the individual facing the greatest danger and may be called upon to sacrifice his or her life, but also for every one of the American families, the wives and husbands, parents, and children, or even the friends.

In short, it is critical for all who will sacrifice the companionship of their loved ones, who will be sent to a far-away place to defend liberty and freedom according to the best interests of our Nation.

I have the deepest admiration for our troops who place themselves in harm's way and do so willingly, because they commit their lives to our Nation in defense of democracy. This is what patriotism is all about. From the depths of my heart, I salute our troops for their commitment to their fellow citizens and our Nation and ask God to protect them and bless them wherever they are.

Throughout the debate of the House, I feel deeply troubled by the fact that, in all likelihood, the troops to be deployed to Kosovo will include many American citizens from Puerto Rico and yet I, as their sole representative

in the Congress of the United States, was unable to vote in the decision that could place their lives in peril.

How is it possible that the Nation that acts as the supreme defender of freedom, liberty, and rights everywhere in the world maintains a policy that does not extend those rights to all of its citizens? The ugly reality is that some of the soldiers who defend our American democracy do not possess the right to vote by virtue of living in a territory.

To me, it is tragically clear that what the United States is telling these soldiers is that, yes, you must place your life on the line to defend American values. Yes, you must go to a foreign country as a member of the peace-keeping troops. Yes, you must fight, if called to fight, and you may even die, but, no, your opinion does not count because the Congressman that represents you cannot exert the right to vote that may place your life in harm's way.

Last Thursday, I heard many of my colleagues affirm the Congress' power as the sovereign representative of the body of all Americans and was saddened that this representation is not equal for all Americans.

It is not a proud moment for our country when we muzzle American citizens and hold them in abeyance. After all, is this not the reason our troops are going over there? How come we continue to ask them to defend rights that they themselves do not possess despite a century of partnership and 83 years of American citizenship?

Can we as a democratic nation afford to continue to support discrimination, disenfranchisement against the 3.8 million Americans in Puerto Rico? The American soldiers from Puerto Rico and their loved ones commit their lives to the cause of freedom and democracy as willingly and patriotically as any one of their fellow citizens in the 50 States. Should we not affirm their full rights in Congress?

Madam Speaker, I call on all of my colleagues to join us in our quest to eliminate disenfranchisement and discrimination against the American citizens in Puerto Rico. No less is possible and no less can be expected from our democracy.

NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, I wish that I did not have to rise this morning on this topic, and yesterday I am shocked by the emperor's new clothes mentality that engulfs our Nation's Capitol on issues as vital as our national security.

For, indeed, Madam Speaker, from the same crowd who would have us believe that there is another definition

for the word "alone," from the same bunch who would say, well, that depends on what the meaning of "is" is, today, Madam Speaker, we have a new definition of "swiftly".

For according to the weekend talk shows, to hear Secretary of Energy Richardson and National Security Advisor Berger talk, they claim that this administration acted swiftly to try and counteract the intelligence breaches and espionage at our national laboratory at Los Alamos. Yet, this is the same crowd that, in the previous year, in an afternoon was able to clear out the White House Travel Office on a spurious charge of messing with the petty cash drawer, and yet it took this administration 3 long years to react to the first reports of an intelligence breach, Mr. Berger, notified in 1996 of the problem, apparently failing to take action.

Indeed this morning, Madam Speaker, on the front page of the Washington Times the report is as follows, "Security remains weak at U.S. nuclear labs despite the uncovering in 1995 of Chinese espionage efforts, says a recently retired U.S. counterintelligence official. His detailed firsthand knowledge contradicts President Clinton's claims that security has been tight." Quoting now, "Security at the Department of Energy has not improved." This former official told the Washington Times, indeed.

In yesterday's New York Times, columnist Bill Safire asked this question, "Why, if Secretary Bill Richardson were so 'seized of' this secret issue last August when he was named, did he demote the expert, Trulock, and put in charge a CIA man from his UN embassy staff, Larry Sanchez, who knew nothing about the agency's worst problem?"

Safire also writes, "It would be outrageous indeed to suggest that American officials were consciously betraying our national interest. But the confluence of these facts in election year 1996, combined with the urge to disregard or derogate any intelligence that would stop the political blessings of a 'strategic partnership' with China, led to Clinton's denial of a dangerous penetration."

Madam Speaker, indeed, the distinguished senior Senator from my home State, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, in a major foreign policy speech yesterday spoke more on this topic, this curious timing of illegal campaign contributions to the Clinton-Gore campaign in 1996. My senior Senator said, and I quote, "Sadly that charge grows more credible every day. And if it is proven beyond a reasonable doubt it will bring more of history's shame upon the President than his personal failings will, indeed greater shame than any President has ever suffered."

Madam Speaker, we acknowledge the obvious. We acknowledge that, sadly, in this town at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, there are some people who are beyond shame. Madam Speaker, our Vice President who last week

claimed that he was father of the Internet also gave us a very curious interpretation when he claimed that, because this espionage may have started in the 1980s, someone else was to blame.

Madam Speaker, if we are to use that as our standard, then I suppose we should blame Lyndon Johnson for the Navy spy ring that began its espionage in 1968. No, Madam Speaker, espionage is a serious charge and is a serious problem that we deplore at any time. But the challenge is not when it started but when we chose to do something about it once we had the knowledge.

Again, our President speaks of a strategic partnership with China. We know now in the fullness of time exactly what his strategic partnership meant. Take a look at the record. Take a look at the videotapes. Leaders of the People's Liberation Army and Chinese business interests giving to the Clinton-Gore campaign?

Madam Speaker, even though, in this environment of the emperor's new clothes, let me step forward as did the young girl in that tale by Hans Christian Andersen and say this, it is illegal, it is unpardonable, it is unconscionable for an American administration to take money from foreign governments.

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WE MUST NOT PRIVATIZE MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MORELLA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare is poised today to vote on a proposal that would end Medicare as we know it.

The Commission's charge was to come up with a scheme for putting Medicare on solid financial footing and improving its value to seniors. They definitely came up with a scheme, a scheme to privatize America's best government program.

Under the Commission proposal, known as Premium Support, Medicare would no longer pay directly for health care services. Instead, it would provide each senior with a voucher good for part of the premium for their private health insurance coverage. Medicare beneficiaries could use this voucher to buy into the fee-for-service plan sponsored by the Federal Government or to join a private plan.

To encourage consumer price sensitivity, the voucher would track to the lowest cost private plan. Seniors then would shop for the best plan that best suits their needs, paying the balance of the premium and paying extra if they want higher quality health care. The Commission proposal creates a system of health coverage but it abandons Medicare's bedrock principle of egalitarianism.

Today, Medicare is income blind. All seniors have access to the same level of health care. The Commission proposal, however, is structured to provide comprehensiveness, access and quality only to those who can afford them.

The idea that vouchers will empower seniors to choose a health plan that best suits their needs is quite simply a myth. The reality is that seniors will be forced to accept whatever plan they can afford.

The Medicare Commission is charged with ensuring Medicare's long-term solvency. This proposal will not do that. Proponents of the voucher plan say it would shave off 1 percent of the Medicare budget per year over the next few decades. It will only do that by charging senior citizens more. In fact, Bruce Vladeck, a Commission member and former Medicare administrator, doubts Premium Support will save the government even a dime.

The privatization of Medicare is nothing new. Medicare beneficiaries have been able to enroll in private managed Medicare plans for some time now, and their experience does not bode well for a full-fledged privatization effort. Managed care plans are profit oriented, and the theory that they can sustain significantly lower costs than traditional Medicare simply has not panned out.

Profit-driven managed care plans do not tough it out when those profits are unrealized. Last year, 96 Medicare HMOs deserted 400,000 Medicare beneficiaries because the HMOs' customers did not meet the HMOs' profit objectives.

Before the Medicare program was launched in 1965, more than one-half of America's senior citizens did not have health insurance. Private insurance was the only option then for seniors. Insurers simply did not want seniors to join their plans because they knew the elderly would use much of their coverage. The private insurance market still avoids high-risk enrollees and, whenever possible, dodges the bill for high cost medical services.

What is perhaps most disturbing about the Commission's Premium Support plan is what it does not tell us. It does not tell us how we can make Medicare more efficient while still preserving its egalitarian underpinnings. It does not tell us how much the Nation can or wants to spend on health care for seniors. It does not give us options for reconciling what the Nation wants with how much we have or are willing to spend.

If we privatize Medicare, like the Commission wants, we are telling America that not all seniors deserve the same level of care. The wisest course for the Medicare Commission is to disband without delivering a final product. We should go back to the drawing board and we should construct a plan that builds on Medicare's strengths and ensures its long-term solvency. Selling off Medicare to the managed care industry is the easy way out and it is wrong.

REPUBLICAN AGENDA IS TO STRENGTHEN SCHOOLS, LOWER TAXES AND SAVE SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address the House this morning.

I have the privilege of representing a diverse district. I represent the south side of Chicago and the south suburbs and Cook and Will Counties, bedroom communities like Morris, the town where I live, and a lot of corn fields and farm towns. Representing such a diverse district of city and suburbs and country, I have learned to listen, to try to find the common concerns and ideas and suggestions of the folks back home.

I find one very common message whether I am in the city, the suburbs or the country, and that is that the folks back home want us to work together to find solutions, and they are looking for real accomplishments as we face the issues that are before us here in the Congress.

I am proud to say that over the last 4 years this Congress has met that challenge. I am pretty proud of what we have accomplished over the last 4 years. We did some things that people told us that we could not do. We balanced the budget for the first time in 28 years, we cut taxes for the middle class for the first time in 16 years, we reformed welfare for the first time in a generation, and we tamed the IRS for the first time ever. Those are real accomplishments.

I find as I talk about those accomplishments, folks say, well, that is pretty good, but what will the Congress do next? What are the next challenges? Where will we look to find solutions for in Washington that really matter to the folks back home? And I find as I listen to the concerns of the folks back home, they really offer a simple series of questions and a simple agenda that they want us to be working on here.

My constituents tell me they want good schools, they want low taxes, and they want a secure retirement, and that is our agenda here in this Congress, I am proud to say. Our agenda, particularly on the Republican side, is simple, just like the agenda of the folks back home. We want to strengthen our local schools, making sure that our dollars get into the classroom and that our schools are run by local school boards and local school administrators and local teachers and local parents. We want to lower taxes, recognizing the tax burden has never been higher than it is today. We want to help the middle class by allowing them to keep more of what they earn, because they can spend it better than we can for them here in Washington. We also want to provide for a secure retirement by saving Social Security and rewarding retirement savings.