

DEMOCRAT PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN TAKES CARE OF SENIORS' NEEDS, UNLIKE REPUBLICAN PLAN

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the committee has completed their markup on the prescription drug benefit last night, and what we are now confronted with is having to pass legislation that may or may not provide prescription drug benefits to the elderly in this country. It may or may not provide the insurance that they need to purchase those drugs. Those drugs may or may not be available, based upon whether the insurance companies think those drugs are too expensive.

We just went through this with our senior population, with the HMOs. People who thought they had health insurance now find out they do not have health insurance because the HMOs have left the field. People who thought they were covered in rural America now find they are not covered in rural America. Why? Because the insurance companies decided the population was too expensive, and they were not going to cover them and gave them back to the government.

That is why the Democrats put forth a program where the prescription drugs were guaranteed, the drugs Members need or their families need to take care of their illnesses in the twilight years of their lives will be there, will be guaranteed, and will be paid for. That is far different from the Republican plan that is made out of Swiss cheese and does not serve the interests of the elderly of this country.

DEMOCRAT PARTY IS PARTY OF "WE NEED"

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

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the Democrat Party has been the party these days of "we need." They continually come before the microphones and bash Republicans for supposedly spending the Social Security surplus; yet every time a Democrat walks to a microphone, they say "we need" a new program.

All they are doing is taking and putting their hands in the pockets of working people, pulling out money, and spending it. It reminds me of a child who goes into a supermarket with a handful of change to spend. They are so happy and anxious to buy something. The problem is, they took the money from people who did not want to give it to them; and they should put the money back in the pockets of working people.

Men and women in this country sacrifice time away from their children,

they put their efforts and talents, and in many cases invest their own hard-earned money to benefit their family, to have a better life for their children; and all we do in this House is confiscate the hard-earned money that they earn to give it to people that we think deserve it better than they do.

So let us stop calling them the Democratic Party and let us start calling them the "we need" party, because "we need money for this program" and "we need money for that program." We need to be accountable to the American people and let them spend their money where they think it should best be spent.

□ 0945

WE NEED TO REMEMBER OUR SENIORS

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

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, my comments are very brief, and it is about we need. We need to remember our seniors. We need to remember who they are, where they came from. We need to remember the kinds of work they have done in order to attain the age that they have.

My mother needs prescription drugs, and I think that what we have to look at, we need to look at everybody's prescription capsule, the container, and on the container is a label that says expiration date. We need to have a good prescription drug to address all the seniors of this country so that we do not need to worry about them, that they do not need to worry about whether prescription drugs are going to be too expensive or not. We need to take care of business, and we need to do it soon.

OIL IS CRITICAL ENERGY SOURCE

(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, oil is a critical energy source for both the United States and the world, and for us it is a very uncertain energy future because there are only about 1,000 gigabarrels of known reserves of oil in the world. Certainly we will find more oil, and maybe the additional oil we find will be enough to take care of the additional demands for oil.

If we take this 1,000 gigabarrels of oil and divide it by the 80 million barrels of oil that the world burns, uses each day, this comes out to roughly 40 years. This is certainly not forever. Of this 80 million barrels that are used each day, the United States uses 20. That is about 25 percent of the total oil used in the world is used in the United States.

We have some reserves. They are off the Florida coast. They are under Lake

Michigan, and they are in ANWR. Should we drill those? There are two arguments. One is that we need it. The other is we may need it more in the future. We have to determine when it would serve our interests best, to use it now or to wait for a rainier day, which will surely come.

WE NEED A PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Energy and Commerce was in session all night debating a prescription drug benefit for seniors. I am on that committee, and the biggest frustration we had was that all night we heard was that the Democratic plan for prescription drugs under Medicare or that 80 percent/20 percent, like doctors and hospitals, we do not have the money, we cannot afford it.

Well, it is a matter of priorities. In 2001, we passed a huge tax cut, and it will be paid out over the next 10 years. So will a prescription drug benefit. It is a matter of priorities. The House Republicans set their priorities for tax cuts. That is fine. I like tax cuts, but I also know that we owe a debt to our seniors to make sure that they do not have to miss their prescriptions because they cannot afford it; they do not have to give up turning on their air conditioner in Houston, Texas, during the summer because they cannot afford their prescriptions.

We need to take care of America's generation. We need to make sure we have our prescription drug benefit that will take care of the seniors who built this country.

MODERNIZE MEDICARE

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, we need to modernize Medicare with a prescription drug benefit, and both parties agree. The difference is this: Our plan fits within the budget. It covers needy seniors and prevents a senior from losing their home due to high drug costs. Most importantly, it provides an immediate discount now on drug prices, not 2 years from now, as the minority plan offers.

The minority plan spends \$1 trillion. In the middle of a war and an economic downturn, can seniors depend on that \$1 trillion check from bouncing? Seniors count on the promises we make. They cannot count on a \$1 trillion check to actually be cashed.

Our plan is affordable. It is a promise we can keep. It is a promise that seniors can count on.