

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the gentleman, they deserve better. I agree with the gentleman, it is not perfect. But I would simply say to the gentleman that it will help an awful lot of seniors in the meantime. In the meantime, it will help a lot of seniors. The alternative is zero.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, we believe the alternative is a real Medicare prescription drug plan which we Democrats have offered and voted for.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES).

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I too have a lot of respect for the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), and he has been very helpful in letting the issue of uterine fibroid research be heard, and I thank him for that.

But I have to differ with him on a few things, and one of those would be we are discussing this prescription drug benefit like it is going to happen tomorrow. I want seniors, if the bill passes, to understand it will not happen until 2006, so we are clear on that.

Mr. Speaker, I had a town hall meeting for my seniors and what they said to me is, they wanted a prescription drug benefit that would be fair, that would be guaranteed, and that would be affordable. I have been talking and talking about how I want it to be fair, guaranteed, and affordable and, as I review this bill, it is not that.

I am here talking on a motion to instruct because as a new member of the Committee on Ways and Means, I thought that my ranking member would have a chance to be in the meeting. Now, the reality is, the Democratic House Members were not included. We went to a meeting with the chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), and he said, only those who are Members of the willing, or however the heck he described it, get to come to the private meetings of the conference committee. Our conference folks would get invited to the official meetings of the conference, but they would not be invited to the meetings where things that were accomplished in this bill were included.

History taught me that there is a Senate and then there is a House of Representatives and, true, those two Senators sat down with the Republicans, and they call it bipartisan, but they are not my Senators. We stand up as Members of the House, and we are entitled to participate in the process.

Mr. Speaker, I had Tom Scully in my district because I am truly concerned about what is happening in health care, and he came in and talked to my hospitals, and my colleagues heard what the hospitals said, and they got more money. And the doctors sat with Tom Scully, and my colleagues heard what they said, and they got more money.

My son Mervin is 20 years old and he uses the term, "I ain't mad." And I "ain't mad" at the hospitals that they got money to be able to provide services. And I "ain't mad" at the doctors

because I thought they should be paid more. But I am mad because my seniors are not getting what I thought they were entitled to, which is a guaranteed, affordable benefit. There is a gap in coverage, there are all kinds of things. I am running out of time, but I am here to speak on behalf of the 11th Congressional District. I ain't voting for this bill, and I ain't mad.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman has the right to close, as I understand it. I have no further speakers, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remaining time.

I want to express my respect for the leadership of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) on organ donation issues, which is an important matter as well. We appreciate his leadership of trying to improve the access of organs in organ transplant procedures. So we agree on quite a number of issues.

But I think we agree on a goal perhaps and not a direction in that he has indicated that he believes seniors do deserve better. And we believe seniors, in the bottom line of this debate, deserve better than this proposal for a couple of fundamental reasons. Reason number 1: this short-term, extremely modest potential benefit that may potentially help a few seniors includes the seeds of destruction potentially of the very foundation of their health care that this Nation has come to embrace since the early 1960s, and that is Medicare. In the premium support provision, which sounds like innocuous language that is in the bill, it is in the bill, and we all agree on that; it will be in bill. We do not know what page, because nobody has read this. It is going to be hundreds of pages and nobody will have read this probably until we are forced to vote on it less than 24 hours after the bill is passed; but nonetheless, that little innocuous provision carries the potential of the seeds of destruction of the guarantee of the Medicare program.

The reason I say that is it will, ultimately, foist on every senior, whether they want it or not, if it is implemented, under this bill, to face a situation where they will have to pay more and have less coverage than those in the private plans. And since the private insurance companies are extremely adept at marketing, they can have all kinds of bells and whistles to lure the healthiest people into their population, leaving the sickest in Medicare, those most in need of security and peace of mind, leaving their premiums to skyrocket and Medicare to go into a death spiral, as the analysts have predicted.

I am getting to a certain age; I am not as old as my dad and mom who I love dearly, but I think aging is tough enough. American seniors should not have to worry about the loss of the guarantee of Medicare. We should pass a Medicare prescription drug program that we have suggested on this side of the aisle, and work with my Repub-

lican colleagues to pass a true bipartisan bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Alabama). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE).

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 2989, TRANSPORTATION, TREASURY, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendments to the bill H.R. 2989 be instructed to recede from disagreement with Senate Amendment 1928 (relating to the provision of \$1,500,000,000 for grants to assist State and local efforts to improve election technology and the administration of Federal elections, as authorized by the Help America Vote Act of 2002).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) and a Member of the majority each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this motion to instruct conferees.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Before I begin, Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the great work of so many Members to make election reform a reality in the 107th and 108th Congresses. First, the American people owe a large debt of gratitude to the Democratic whip, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), and the chairman of the Committee on House Administration, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY). Without them, the Help America Vote Act never would have passed and the possibility

of \$1.5 billion in 2004 would never be possible.

I also want to acknowledge the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISTOOK) and the ranking members, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER) for their commitment to funding the Help America Vote Act. I would like also to thank the Black Caucus and the Hispanic Caucus and specifically, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT), the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. JIM DAVIS), the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) and his mother, former Representative Carrie Meek, and many more, such as the gentlewoman who just spoke, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES), and countless Members here in the House who were instrumental in getting us where we are today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer this motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 2989, the Transportation, Treasury and Independent Agencies Appropriations bill. This motion instructs House conferees to accept the provision from the Senate-passed bill providing a total of \$1.5 billion in election reform assistance to States and local communities.

When the House considered this legislation last month, it appropriated only \$500 million. Since Congress passed the Help America Vote Act, States, including my own, have struggled in implementing the requirements of the new election laws, largely because Congress has not fulfilled its financial commitment.

□ 2015

In 2003, the Congress provided only \$1.5 billion of the \$2.16 billion that was authorized for that year. \$830 million of that amount has yet to reach the States. And while the Help America Vote Act authorized \$1 billion for fiscal year 2004, the House only appropriated half of that amount. In contrast, the Senate-passed bill appropriates \$1.5 billion, covering the full fiscal year 2004 authorization as well as making up for a significant portion of last year's funding shortfall.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that the current draft of the Transportation-Treasury Appropriations conference report includes \$500 million for election reform. That is for the whole United States. I am also aware that a possible agreement exists to provide additional election reform funding in the omnibus, perhaps as much as \$1 billion. One of the reasons I highlighted the \$500 million for the whole United States, the State of Florida has funded \$200 million. And that is substantially 40 percent of the total amount that we did for the whole United States. How-

ever, what I am not aware of in this measure is why the majority is unwilling to fund all \$1.5 billion in the proper spending measure. The majority has stated that the budget does not allow for an additional \$1 billion. And the President will veto anything over the already agreed amount.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, the majority is going to violate the budget agreement when it passes an omnibus in 3 days or whatever day it is that we leave here with the \$1 billion in the bill. Every penny appropriated in the next 4 days or the final days of this portion of the session is going to be spent in fiscal year 2004 regardless of what bill we included it in. The budget is going to go bust. So if we are going to bust it, at least fund something which will benefit all Americans.

Next week I am scheduled to travel to Maastricht, Holland, and on to Moscow in my capacity as vice president of the organization for security and cooperation in Europe's parliamentary assembly. I will represent the United States as an observer to the upcoming Russian elections.

While I am certainly honored by the task, the irony of the situation is striking. Imagine an elected official from the United States, Florida, advising another country on how to run its elections. Perhaps the OSCE ought to be sending election monitors to the United States. In fact, I plan to invite them to do just that next year.

Realize, when I attend the international meetings of the OSCE, America's ability to conduct fair and reliable elections is often mocked. Parliamentarians from around the world question our election results while Americans are faced to deal with the harsh and unfortunate reality that the Supreme Court may be the only place in the Nation where votes actually matter.

We are spending billions of dollars to bring democracy to Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet we are hesitant about spending \$1 billion to protect our own. Congress must continue to strive to identify methods and practices to encourage and increase participation in America's electoral process. As a country, we must work toward a day where fairness and transparency are manifest in our elections process and cut-throat politics are forever overwhelmed.

Fully funding the Help America Vote Act is the next step that Congress must take to ensure that we never again find ourselves questioning the methods by which we choose our leaders.

In approving my motion to instruct, the House will send a clear message that it supports funding a fair and reliable election system in America, no matter what it costs. I ask for my colleagues' support.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gen-

tleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), distinguished whip and my good friend, who I earlier noticed in my remarks. But for him and the gentleman from Ohio (Chairman NEY), this measure would not have passed.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) for yielding me the time.

I rise in strong support of this motion to instruct. I would add, Mr. Speaker, however, that I appreciate his giving me and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY), the chairman of the Committee on House Administration, credit. We worked hard on this.

Mr. Speaker, this was the most bipartisan bill in the last Congress. But substantial credit is also due the Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), as well as Republicans in the Senate, Senator MCCONNELL, Senator BOND, and Senator DODD. It was, in my opinion, an example of how the Congress ought to work. We sat down together, we talked about the problem, and we tried to solve it.

In 347 days, on November 2, 2004, the American people will again go to the polling places. And every State in this Nation will exercise the most fundamental right in any democracy, which is, of course, the right to vote. And when they do, they will be reminded of one of the most painful episodes in American history, the disenfranchisement of an estimated 6 million Americans in the election of November 2000.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, we have a moral obligation to ensure that the election problems that plagued us 3 years ago and which undermined this great democracy in the eyes of the world, and indeed in the eyes of many of our citizens, will not be repeated. That is precisely the point of this important motion made by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS). It instructs the House to recede to the \$1.5 billion in spending for election reform in fiscal year 2004 called for by the other body.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT). I also want to mention the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations. Without the gentleman from Florida, we would not have received the funding of approximately \$1.5 billion that we included in last year's bill. But in the HAVA, the Help America Vote Act, we promised the States that they would receive assistance from the Federal Government to achieve the reforms we felt essential.

That bill, proclaimed as the most important election reform legislation since the adoption of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, established minimum Federal standards for Federal elections. Properly funded HAVA will improve the security and accuracy of this Nation's election and registration system and prevent a repeat of the 2000 debacle.

Despite HAVA's enormous promise, however, States have had considerable

difficulty implementing the law's requirements because Congress provided only \$1.5 billion of the \$2.16 billion authorized in fiscal year 2003. In other words, Mr. Speaker, we are over \$600 million behind as of this date.

HAVA also authorized \$1 billion for this year. However, the House only appropriated \$500 million in the Transportation-Treasury bill. Recently, the other body, in a bipartisan way, added a billion dollars to the transportation bill which already included \$500 million. This amount not only fully funds HAVA at the fiscal year 2004 authorized level, but it also covers the shortfall from fiscal year 2003.

This motion should attract the support of every Member of this body. It is consistent with the numerous pledges made by the Speaker, the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG), the White House, and this Congress in a bipartisan way.

Through HAVA, Mr. Speaker, we can make sure that the States have resources to make election reform a reality. And we can restore the public's confidence in our election system. We must do so. And this motion calls upon us to effect that end.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me say that I talked to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, and I have talked to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY). It is my understanding the administration has pledged to include in the 2005 budget the \$800-plus million left on this Congress's pledge to the States to ensure that every American not only has the right to vote but every American is encouraged to vote, every American is facilitated in casting their vote, every American will have an opportunity to check that they voted correctly and that every American's vote will be counted accurately.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), my good friend from Houston.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished proponent of this motion, and I recognize the journey that we have traveled in getting to this point. Let me acknowledge both the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) on working with so many of us in the Congressional Black Caucus, Hispanic Caucus, members of the Democratic Caucus, and members of the Republican conference on a concept that every single vote of every single American must count.

I believe that this is a very important motion because I think it has potential. It is a motion that would give the broadest of consensus by both Republicans and Democrats, that it is important to fully fund the legislation that allows and provides an opportunity for local communities and State communities to be able to ensure that

every vote is counted. Election reform was long overdue.

And certainly the crisis of 2000, where millions of voters were denied both access to the voting polls, some who were racially profiled and kept away from voting, students who were intimidated and told that they could not vote, and individuals who were charged with being convicted felons when they were not and therefore denied to vote. That was a scenario in the State of Florida, but Florida is not the only example.

Time after time when there is an election, we find that there are individuals who have been denied the right to vote. This past election in Houston, Texas, I traveled to many polls, local municipal elections, to come upon instances where many of our voting officials did not have all of the knowledge of the law, turned people away, did not understand the process of an affidavit where you would allow people to sign an affidavit, thereby being allowed to vote. So we know that voting resources or election resources are extremely important.

And one factor that has never been fully addressed, the question of whether or not there is a paper trail for the new electronic voting, is a question that is raised in many local municipalities, and I believe that we should address it. This full funding of about \$1.5 billion, I believe, will help, I do not want to say complete the story, but it will put us on the right journey to make the journey that we started an effective one by ensuring that our State and local governments in particular will have the resources as we approach the 2004 very important Presidential elections.

□ 2030

So I rise today to support this motion to instruct because we are on the eve of those Presidential elections, now four years later. Most would wonder how time has flown, but it would be, I guess, an undermining of the commitment we all made after 2000, Republicans and Democrats alike, if we could not see, by 2004, a full funding of this legislative initiative so that as we approach the Presidential elections, the primaries, in fact, every single State in this union and every local municipality would not have as an excuse for denying an American their right to vote, the lack of resources, the lack of trained voting officials, the lack of equipment, the lack of the knowledge of the law, and certainly no matter what color you were, how your history started in this Nation, whether or not your voting rights were enhanced only in 1965 with the Voting Rights Act of 1965, whether or not you have just become a citizen, every single American would know in their hearts and know by the laws that guided them that we had the resources to ensure that their votes were counted.

I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) for his leadership on

this matter for bringing this very instructive, very vital and very important motion to instruct to our colleagues. And I ask my colleagues in unanimity to vote for this motion, so that we would have a successful instruction to be able to provide for those who want to vote.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) and to make the further comment that he has been extremely instrumental in causing us to get this far.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) in support of this motion to instruct conferees. He has been an outspoken advocate for improving our Nation's election systems and voting administration, and I thank him for his leadership. I also thank my good friends, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for their consistent support and unwavering dedication to the issue of election reform.

Mr. Speaker, just over a year ago, I joined a group of my colleagues as the President signed into law the Help America Vote Act. The result of more than a year of hard work and bipartisan cooperation, the legislation was called the first civil rights legislation of the 21st century because it ensured that all Americans could participate fully in our democracy by being guaranteed the fundamental right to vote. I am particularly pleased that the legislation contained groundbreaking provisions to make our Nation's polling places and voting equipment accessible to people with disabilities. This change will enable millions of Americans to cast a ballot independently for the very first time in their lives.

At the signing ceremony, President Bush said that thanks to the reforms contained in HAVA, "the Federal Government will help State and local officials to conduct elections that have the confidence of all Americans."

Well, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, we have yet to reach that level of confidence because we have not provided sufficient resources to implement the law. States are eager to enact HAVA's reforms but they lack the funds promised to them. Congress provided only \$1.5 billion of the \$2.16 billion authorized in fiscal year 2003, and the House included only \$500 million of the \$1 billion authorized for fiscal year 2004. The Senate approved \$1.5 billion in its version of the Transportation-Treasury bill, which will meet this year's shortfall. I joined the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) in organizing a letter to conferees to endorse the Senate funding levels, an effort that garnered the support of 60 Members, and I am

pleased to continue that more here today.

In the 1990s, as Secretary of State of Rhode Island, I led the effort to upgrade our State's voting equipment, and I know firsthand the benefits that modernized election systems can have on voter turnout and civic participation. I encourage my colleagues to support this motion to instruct so that we can realize the vision of the Help America Vote Act and restore confidence in our Nation's elections.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my good friend, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) for his comments and my thanks for his extraordinary work on behalf of America and all of us. And I apologize for the faux pas. I guess I had the primary on the brain and did not recognize the great State of Rhode Island but no offense was meant.

Mr. Speaker, I did not offer this motion to instruct to rehash the 2000 election debacle. We have plenty of opportunity to do that in 2004. But I did offer the motion to highlight and remind Members of the commitment that this body made last year to reform our country's election system. I offered this motion so that the thousands of my constituents and others around the U.S. who were demonized, demoralized and disenfranchised after the 2000 election can go to bed tonight knowing that Congress is serious about ensuring their votes are not only counted but actually count.

I have already introduced the next generations of election reform in the form of the Voter Outreach and Turnout Expansion Act. The VOTE Act allows no excuse absentee voting, requires early voting opportunities, not less than 3 weeks prior to the general election day, requires adequate notification to voters who submit incomplete voter registration forms by mail, treat election day as a Federal holiday, and provides leave time for private employees to vote on Election Day.

These are the ideas of the present, and we task ourselves in making them the realities of the future.

Mr. Speaker, States are eager to implement the improvements required by the law, but they have insufficient resources to meet these goals. Today, we will reaffirm our commitment and appropriate the necessary funding to the Help America Vote Act that Congress guaranteed to States last year.

A dependable and reliable election system remains the linchpin in the integrity of our democracy, and we have no choice but to protect it. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on this motion to instruct.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Alabama). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS).

The motion to instruct was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SENIORS DESERVE BETTER PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, last night I took a special order, and I talked about what seniors are going to pay under the new Medicare prescription drug program if it is passed in its present form; and I understand it is coming out of committee just a little bit different than that we said last night, but the end result is the same. They are changing the annual deductible from \$275 to \$250, but the seniors will be paying 25 percent of the next \$2,250 minus the annual deductible. So the seniors for \$1,500 in coverage will be paying \$1,170, and that is not well known by most of the seniors with whom I have talked. And then there is a doughnut hole which goes up to \$5,100, and seniors will pay an additional \$2,850 with no coverage for that.

That means seniors up to \$5,100 under the new prescription drug benefit will pay \$4,020 and the government will pay \$1,500.

Now, that is not what I think seniors are expecting. I think they are expecting coverage that is much broader than that; and I think they are going to be very unpleasantly surprised when they realize that they will be paying a tremendous amount of money for very small amount of coverage.

Now, above the \$5,000 level, the catastrophic health care benefit kicks in, and that is 95 percent of that. But the average senior pays about \$1,800 year in prescription drug costs, and they will

not reach that level. There will be very few that reach that level. So most seniors, if they pay \$5,000 for their prescription drugs in a given year, the average senior, they will pay \$4,020 and the Federal Government will pay \$1,500. I think they will be very angry when they find out that is the case.

I believe we should pass a bill that takes care of those who are uninsured, who do not have prescription drug coverage. Right now, 76 percent of American seniors have some form of prescription drug coverage. And the program that we are talking about in most cases is going to give them less coverage than what they already have. Now, the 24 percent of the seniors that do not have coverage, we should deal with them. We should help them. Those who are indigent, those who have health problems where they cannot get coverage, we need to take care of those. But those who are already covered, I do not believe our government should start taking care of.

The cost of this program is estimated to be somewhere around \$400 billion over 10 years. I have another chart which I am not bring forward right now, but it shows what happened with Medicare. Medicare when it was passed in 1965 cost \$3 billion. Two years ago in the year 2001, Medicare cost \$241 billion. That is an 80 times increase.

□ 2045

It went up 80 times since 1964. The Medicaid program which we passed in Indiana under duress started out, we thought, costing a few million. We estimated a top figure of \$20 million. It has cost well over \$1 billion just for Indiana's share, and it has gone up about 70 times since 1969.

Anybody who thinks that this donut hole is not going to be a big issue to seniors is sorely mistaken, in my opinion; and I believe that they will demand that this donut hole, this \$2,850 that is not covered, will shrink. When that happens, there is going to be a tremendous increase in the cost of this program. I believe the \$400 billion price tag for 10 years is very low. I believe it will be more than double that, maybe up to \$1 trillion over 10 years, but only time will tell.

The other thing that really concerns me is we are paying \$70 billion to American industry so that they will not dump their retired employees on the Federal Government program. The fact of the matter is I believe long term the businessmen and industrialists in this country are going to say we do not know what Congress is going to do tomorrow, and they are going to start dumping their employees on the Federal program anyhow; and when that happens, the retirees are going to see the program that they are under with their previous employer go out the window, and they are going to be put on the government program.

Their coverage right now under their retired benefits with their previous employer is probably much, much better.