

The Senate tax credit bill is fiscally responsible, it is paid for, and it costs \$10 billion compared to the \$82 billion in the House bill. The Senate bill is supported by Democrats and rank-and-file Republicans in the House, and it would immediately provide the tax credit to millions of working and military families let out of the final tax cut bill approved last month. We can pass the bipartisan legislation and send it to the President today.

It is interesting that after the vote on the tax credit last week, where the Republicans' reckless and callous policy prevailed, that on the motion to instruct which followed, 12 Republicans joined the Democrats in a motion to instruct the conferees to take up the Senate bill. We did that because we know we can invest in our children or we can indebt them. That is the choice that the Republicans have put before us.

Mr. Speaker, President Kennedy said, "Children are our greatest resource and our best hope for the future." I urge my Republican colleagues to do the right thing and accept the Senate bill and, in doing so, support the value we place on our children. We cannot say that some children are our greatest resource and our best hope for the future, but not if your parents make the minimum wage or if they are risking their lives on active duty in the military. We recognize our children as our messengers to a future many of us, most of us, will never see. We want them to take forward a message of respect for children, all children in our country. We want to show them that they really are our greatest resource and our best hope for the future.

There is no excuse, Mr. Speaker, for the Republican majority not to go immediately to conference and send this bill back to the House for approval and to the President's desk before the end of the month so that every child in America can take advantage of the tax credit whose parents qualify.

THE STRAIGHT STORY ON THE HIGH COST OF PHARMACEUTICALS

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, for some time now, a number of us have been coming to the floor of the House to talk about the high cost of prescription drugs here in the United States. We pay more for prescription drugs than any country on the face of the Earth, and many of our senior citizens and others have been going right across the border into Canada and buying pharmaceutical products for half or one-tenth the cost that they are here in the United States.

Now, the Food and Drug Administration and the pharmaceutical companies are doing everything they can to stop Americans from buying pharma-

ceutical products from Canada by saying that there is a safety issue. The fact of the matter is, we checked, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) and myself and others; and we have found no cases, none, where Canadian pharmaceutical products that were made here in the United States and reimported back into this country have caused anybody any harm. Absolutely zero.

Now, in my congressional district, the PhRMA companies have been mailing literature to senior citizens saying that there is a safety issue if you buy pharmaceutical products from Canada because they may be contaminated or counterfeit or something else. We have found no cases like that. But they are mailing them into my district trying to scare people trying to influence them to influence me to change my position. Americans should pay no more for pharmaceutical products than they do in other parts of the world; and yet we pay more, by far, than any country: France, Germany, Spain, Canada, anyplace.

Now, today I was watching television and there is a man I respect a great deal, Neal Cavuto; he has a great television show, and he is a very fair newsman. He had a gentleman on his program that said that there was a real problem with safety of these pharmaceutical products coming in from Canada, and the gentleman who was on was so vociferous and so adamant about this that I feel that he must have been paid by the pharmaceutical companies; and if he is not, he should be. Because he is trying to scare Americans into believing they should not buy these pharmaceutical products from Canada.

We have over a million people a year that buy their products from there because they cost so much less, and the attempt is being made to stop that by the Food and Drug Administration saying they are not safe when there is no evidence of that, and by the pharmaceutical companies who are saying they are following the edicts of the Food and Drug Administration.

Now, we are coming up with a prescription drug benefit before too long, and unless we get a handle on these prices and make sure that the American people are paying prices similar to the rest of the world, the taxpayer is going to be picking up the difference between what they pay in Canada and what they pay here in the United States. The senior citizens want the prescription drug benefit, and we want to give it to them; but we do not want the taxpayers of this country saddled with extremely high prices for the products they can buy right across the border for less money.

So it is extremely important, in my opinion, that we get this message out to the American people. And the pharmaceutical companies have \$150 million they are dumping into an ad campaign to try to convince people that these products are not safe when that is just not the case.

So I would just like to say if Mr. Cavuto happens to be watching tonight or any other television commentator, please be fair. Be sure to have the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) or myself or somebody else who has been studying this issue for some time on the program as well to rebut those who are paid for by the pharmaceutical companies to make sure the American people are getting the story straight; not biased, but straight.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all Members to address their remarks to the Chair.

A HATE-HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH MEDICARE

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans have just never really liked Medicare. Medicare was enacted in 1965, despite the overwhelming opposition of Republicans in Congress. Only 13, fewer than 10 percent, only 13 of the 140 Republicans in the House in those days backed Medicare. Bob Dole voted "no." Gerald Ford voted "no." The soon-to-be minority leader, John Rhodes, voted "no"; Strom Thurmond voted "no," Donald Rumsfeld, a Member of Congress then, all leaders in their party, in the Republican Party, voted against the creation of Medicare. They were unapologetic at the time. Most of them are unapologetic about their opposition and their willingness to undercut Medicare today.

Senator Bob Dole, 20 years later as a candidate for President representing the Republican Party, told a conservative group called the American Conservative Union, he said, "I was there, fighting the fight, one of only 12 voting against Medicare." Actually, I do not know where he came up with 12, there were many more than that, but one of a few, he said, voting against Medicare. The Reagan administration some years later led the first substantive swings at Medicare. With the help of congressional allies, he succeeded in cutting Medicare payments to doctors and raising seniors' Medicare out-of-pocket expenses. But it was not until Republicans took over the House in 1994 the Republican leadership had a realistic chance at obtaining their long-held goal of killing Medicare. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, almost immediately after being sworn in in January, led a failed bid to cut Medicare by \$270 billion to pay for a tax cut for the wealthiest people in the country. Sound familiar? Cut Medicare, free up the dollars, so you can give a tax cut to the richest 5 percent, richest 6 percent of people in this country.

Among the Gingrich Medicare plans, a key supporter was then Governor of

Texas, George W. Bush. That same year, Gingrich offered a candid overview of the Republicans' Medicare strategy and said this: "Now, we didn't get rid of it in round one because we just don't think that is politically smart. We don't think that is the right way to go through a transition. But because of what we are doing," he said, "we believe it is going to wither on the vine."

The privatization extremists' next gambit was launched toward the end of the Gingrich era, hidden within the innocent-sounding Medicare+Choice program. The Medicare privatizers told us that HMOs were so efficient compared to government-run Medicare they could provide both basic and enhanced benefits like prescription drugs for less than traditional Medicare spent on basic benefits alone. HMOs initially received a windfall on the taxpayers' dime, because they only wanted to insure the healthiest people, that did not cost much; and that is how they selectively enrolled those healthiest seniors. When that windfall was erased by providing the cost of extra benefits, HMOs came back to Congress asking for more money and abandoned their original efficiency rhetoric and brazenly charged that Medicare had "shortchanged" them.

Did we cut our losses? Did Congress cut our losses and end the Medicare+Choice program? No. For the Medicare privatization crowd in Congress, a private failure was still better than a public success, so Congress again diverted scarce taxpayer dollars from the traditional Medicare program, taking money from the 85 percent of the people who are in traditional fee-for-service, old-time, regular, it-works Medicare and shored up the failed insurance scheme HMO+Choice system.

Now, with the same George W. Bush in the White House who championed the Gingrich Medicare cuts in the mid-1990s to pay for tax cuts for the rich when he was Governor, the time is right, President Bush seems to think, for Republicans to now launch a full-scale attack to privatize Medicare. The Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Ways and Means are considering radical bills this week, voucher bills, Medicare privatization bills that will end Medicare as we know it, end the Medicare that has been with us for almost 40 years, almost 4 decades, and will end it by the year 2010.

The fact of the matter is the Republican bill will replace Medicare's dependable, affordable and universal coverage with a voucher program. Millions of seniors, already burned by Medicare+Choice abandonments, so many seniors have seen their Medicare HMOs go out of business, leave the State, leave the counties as they have in Lorain and Summit and Medina counties in my district, those same seniors are going to be asked to one more time put their faith in Medicare+Choice, in Medicare HMOs.

Benefits and premiums would vary from county to county, ending the equity embodied by Medicare for a generation, and the Republican bill would cover only a small fraction of the Medicare costs.

The only question is whether the majority of Americans who recognize a success when they see one will let Republicans get away with putting the final stake in Medicare's heart.

AMERICANS PAY TOO MUCH FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS UNDER UNFAIR SYSTEM

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

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, let me first of all say that the gentleman from Ohio who just spoke, he and I strongly disagree. I happen to believe that it is time to modernize Medicare, it is time to give seniors more choices, and we will come to different conclusions on that particular issue. But there is an issue that we do agree on, and that is that Americans pay far too much for the same pharmaceuticals.

Last week, on Thursday, I was privileged to welcome to the Capitol and to one of my news conferences a true American hero. Her name is Kate Stahl. Kate Stahl wears a little pin that says "Kate Stahl: Old woman." She is 84 years old and she is proud of the fact; in fact, she describes herself as a drug runner. I would encourage Members to get a copy of the June 9 edition of the U.S. News and World Report, and they will see a picture of Kate Stahl in that edition. And in there it says, and she is quoted as saying, "I hope they put me in jail." Because what she does every day, working with the senior Federation in the State of Minnesota, is she helps seniors get access to world-class drugs at world-market prices. As a result, our own Federal Government treats her as if she is a common criminal. But she is prepared to go to jail to make a point, and that is that Americans should not have to pay the world's highest prices for prescription drugs.

We also welcomed to Washington last Thursday Dr. Wenner from Vermont. She is working with pharmacists in Canada so that her patients from her clinics can save, and these are her numbers, have been saving 62 percent on the same prescription drugs by working with pharmacies in Canada.

Now, the FDA acknowledged at a hearing that we had last week that any of the evidence about safety is only anecdotal. As a matter of fact, by their own numbers, they cannot come up with a single case where an American patient has suffered serious injury as a result of taking a legal prescription drug from a pharmacy from a different country. We also know that more people have become seriously ill and some have actually died from eating imported fruits and vegetables. We know

that, for example, in one year, just a few years ago, over 1,100 Americans became seriously ill by eating raspberries that had been imported from Guatemala.

Now, when we talk about safety, I think the real question is, who are we protecting from whom? Who is really being protected by our FDA? More and more of us are coming to the conclusion that the only people really being protected are the big executives of the large pharmaceutical companies. We ask ourselves, why are Americans, the world's best customers, paying the world's highest prices? And the answer is, because we are a captive market and because our own FDA literally puts a border around our country and will not allow Americans to have access to those drugs.

□ 1745

As I mentioned, we import thousands of tons of food every day from all over the world. Last year, for example, we imported 318,000 tons of plantains. People say, well, somebody might get into these Fed Ex packages and get inside the tamper proof packages and somehow substitute counterfeit drugs, but again, the evidence of that is anecdotal at best, and if we stop and think just for a moment that if terrorists really wanted to get at the broad base of the American consumers, would they really resort to trying to break into UPS offices, Fed Ex offices to get into those packages and somehow tamper with those pharmaceuticals? I think common sense tells us that that simply is not going to happen.

We as Americans should be willing to pay our fair share for all of the costs of the research and development for the miracle drugs that are coming out of the pharmaceutical companies that help save lives. We ought to be willing to pay our fair share, but we have to be willing to say that it is time for us to say, yes, we will subsidize sub-Saharan Africa, but we are going to stop subsidizing the starving Swiss.

I am a Republican. I believe that the word "profit" is actually a good word. There is nothing wrong with the word "profit," but there is something wrong with the word "profiteer," and I am delighted that we have people like Kate Stahl who will stand on the shoulders of the sons of liberty who threw tea in Boston Harbor because they saw something clearly was unfair, and they were not going to take it anymore. She represents literally millions of seniors and consumers here in the U.S. who are saying enough is enough, we are not going to take it anymore.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FRANKS of Arizona). 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.)