



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 149

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2003

No. 94

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 24, 2003.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN BOOZMAN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

FINISHING THE JOB FOR AMERICAN SENIORS

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the 6 month mark for the 108th Congress, we can look back on our work with a great sense of accomplishment. Just in the last 3 weeks, the House has moved major legislation benefiting consumers, children, small businesses and working class parents. As important as these accomplishments have been, they are only part of a broader three-part agenda.

The Republican leadership of this Congress set three major objectives when we were sworn in.

We committed ourselves to do our part to support the war on terror, and through our work on the budget and the Operation Iraqi Freedom war supplemental, we have.

We committed ourselves to help get the economy started moving again, and since the House passed the President's Jobs and Growth Package, wealth has been created, losses recovered, consumer confidence has risen and jobless claims have fallen.

Finally, the Republican majority committed itself to work with the President to finally create a prescription drug benefit with Medicare.

American seniors have been waiting for Congress to act for years to finally make the Medicare program reflect 21st Century medical realities. We cannot wait on the sidelines while they are hurting financially and physically.

We must act, and this week we will. The House has twice before passed a prescription drug benefit, only to have it stalled along its way. But this time we are going to get it right and get a bill to the President's desk.

When we got here, our Nation faced three big problems: Terrorism, a sagging economy, and seniors being bankrupted by their prescription drug bills.

In response, we had three big ideas: Continuing our relentless war on terror, creating jobs and growing the economy, and adding a long overdue prescription drug benefit to Medicare.

This Republican Congress will not lose sight of the big picture, Mr. Speaker. For everything else we accomplish at the end of the day, we will be judged on how we meet these three challenges.

In the last 6 months, we have met the first two head on. It is time to do the same with the third. We have done a great deal so far, but it is time to finish the job.

MAKING AMERICA FISCALLY SECURE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about how much debt and how much of an increased tax there is going to be placed on my 10 grandchildren and everybody else's grandchildren and children. Let me just review what we have been doing on increased spending.

Discretionary increases have averaged 6.3 percent each year since 1996 and 7.7 percent each year since budget balance was reached in 1998. By this chart, you can see the red line where we have taken off on increased spending, not just keeping up with inflation, but 6.3 percent every year, which is two and three times the rate of inflation, and, in one year, four times the rate of inflation. How big can government get? How big do we want government to be?

This week we are considering a prescription drug program. The next chart, Mr. Speaker, shows what is going to happen to the total debt of this country. The blue line is the gross Federal debt. The debt held by the public is the green line.

Actually, we have two debts in this country. First, is the amount we borrow from Social Security. In 1983, we expanded the Social Security tax, increased the FICA tax, your payroll tax for Social Security, more than ever before in the history of the country and it is still going wrong. In fact, when we started Social Security, it was 1.5 percent of payroll, and now it is 12.4 percent of payroll. Seventy percent of American workers today pay more in their payroll tax than they do in the income tax. So we have been borrowing from Social Security right along, and

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H5717

this is the purple line coming up at the bottom and increasing to \$10 trillion.

Already today we have a \$9 trillion unfunded liability in Social Security. That means if we invested \$9 trillion today, with interest it could keep Social Security solvent for 75 years. The alternative is we continue to increase taxes on somebody, someplace, to pay promised Social Security benefits, or we cut those benefits.

Now I want to talk about what we are about to approach this week, and that is having the largest increase in entitlement programs that has been passed by this Congress in 39 years.

What happened 39 years ago? We amended the Social Security bill in 1965 to include Medicare. The original estimates of the cost of Medicare as a percent of GDP is now just a small fraction of the actual costs of Medicare. In fact, Medicare is going bankrupt. It is going broke. There is going to be less money coming into Medicare and to Social Security than what is required to pay promised benefits. So we have been doing fiscal creative accounting, using general fund money trying to keep up. But now we are adding to the costs to Medicare by adding prescription drugs.

Dr. Thomas Sowell is a senior fellow at Hoover Institute. He says, "Why should seniors be singled out to be subsidized by taxpayers, except that their votes are being sought after by both parties?"

That was true in 1965. Both sides of the aisle decided they wanted to get more votes from seniors, so they amended Social Security to add the Medicare program. Now both sides of the aisle and the President are trying to get more votes from seniors, so we are adding a prescription drug program.

I have 10 grandchildren, Mr. Speaker. They are going to be saddled with the largest debt in history. I see our Pages in this Chamber. They are the generation at risk. Why should they be asked to pay for a senior drug program? The retiring seniors today are probably the wealthiest seniors we are going to ever see in history.

We are losing our manufacturing base. We are spreading ourselves so thin with more government spending that we are mounting a massive debt for our kids and our economy.

Grandparents; as you look at prescription drugs, I think you have got to start thinking about what we are saddling our kids with.

I would like to pose a question: Why should my kids, who are trying to save enough money for their kids to go to college, pay for prescription drugs for seniors?

Let me ask another question, and that is about my 10 grandkids. Why should we pass this large increase in entitlement programs, which is going to mean a huge debt for all grandkids to deal with?

What we are doing is increasing the debt of this country more rapidly than

ever before in history. It took the first 200 years of this Congress, of this Nation, to amass a \$450 billion debt, the first 200 years. And now we are having a debt increase that we are passing on to our kids that amounts to about \$450 billion per year.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning hour debates, pursuant to clause 12(a), rule I, the House will stand in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 11 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Remember Your covenant with Your people, Lord; make us truly Your own. Instill in this Nation the promise once heard from Joshua: "Tomorrow, the Lord will perform wonders among you."

Strengthen the Members of the House of Representatives today as they address the problems, needs, and opportunities of tomorrow. With faith in You and in this Nation with its freedom, spontaneity, and resources, call us to move into the future.

Free us from the scenario of yesterday's fears and uncertainty. Fill us with vision and hope. Help us to build upon the solid rock of today's reality. With candor, civility, and creativity, guide the discussions that will reveal a plan for tomorrow.

By disposing ourselves, our energies, and our commitments to Your determinations, prepare us to be startled by wonders You alone can produce. From our feeble attempts, You piece together solutions to tomorrow's problems.

For in You, we place our trust, now and forever.

Amen.

THE 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, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KUCINICH 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 239. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to add requirements regarding trauma care, and for other purposes.

S. 1157. An act to establish the Smithsonian Institution the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and for other purposes.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND MODERNIZATION REFORM ACT

(Ms. DUNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, later this week, we will pass a prescription drug benefit for all seniors in Medicare that is affordable and voluntary. We will protect the poorest seniors by helping pay for their drug costs immediately. By using the same principles already used by private companies, we will lower drug costs for seniors by passing along to them bigger discounts from manufacturers.

We will also strengthen Medicare for future generations by providing preventive care such as cholesterol screening and initial physical exams, and chronic care management for seniors with serious and complicated illnesses.

We can only strengthen Medicare's future if we are able to ensure access to the services that seniors need today. In this Medicare bill, we increase payments to doctors and hospitals, especially in the rural communities, so that seniors can get better health services when they are needed.

For much too long, our parents and our grandparents have paid too much for their drugs. We have an opportunity now to change this, by passing a prescription drug bill for all seniors.

WAR IN IRAQ: MANUFACTURED CATASTROPHE

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, this administration deliberately took this Nation into a war against Iraq based on false premises. Iraq had nothing to do with 9-11, with al Qaeda's role in 9-11, with the anthrax attack on this Nation; did not represent an imminent threat to the United States, had no usable weapons of mass destruction. That is why the weapons of mass destruction cannot be found.

This deception made America less secure. It cut the United States off from