

But they also plan to cut taxes on the wealthiest people in America by \$70 billion.

Anyway you cut it, this Republican majority intends to increase the deficit, not reduce it.

Even Alan Greenspan, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, is sounding the alarm. Recently, he said: "You should not be cutting taxes by borrowing."

Fortunately, not all Republicans are willing to participate in this irresponsible fraud.

Last Thursday, for example, Senator VOINOVICH told the Washington Post: "I do not know how anyone can say with a straight face that when we voted to cut spending last week to help achieve deficit reductions, we can now then turn around two weeks later to provide tax cuts that exceed the reduction in spending. That is beyond me, and I am sure the American people."

So I implore my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Demonstrate the courage of your convictions.

Put the interests of the American people ahead of the interests of your political party.

Oppose these irresponsible reconciliation bills.

Join Democrats in fighting to restore fiscal discipline to our budget.

RECOGNIZING THE LEADERSHIP OF COACH BILL SNYDER OF KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I am here this evening to honor a legend at Kansas State University, its football program coach Bill Snyder. At a press conference earlier today, Coach Snyder announced his retirement as the head coach of the Kansas State Wildcats after 17 seasons. Coach Snyder leaves behind a legacy of success for a football program, a school, and a community that is stronger and better because of his tremendous leadership.

Football is a great American tradition, and this tradition is alive and well in Manhattan, Kansas. This is Wildcat country, where during football season Powercat flags are proudly flown and where Saturdays are spent at Wagner Field cheering K-State to victories.

But times were different when Coach Snyder took over the Kansas State football program in 1988. Sports Illustrated had identified K-State as the worst college football program in the Nation. Undeterred, Coach Snyder took on the challenge, and through hard work and determination performed what has been labeled as the "Miracle in Manhattan."

By 1993, K-State had achieved a victory in the Copper Bowl. During the next 10 seasons, they would advance to bowl games, including the Cotton Bowl, Fiesta Bowl, and a memorable defeat over first-ranked Oklahoma in 2003 to seize the Big 12 Championship.

With 135 victories, Coach Snyder is K-State's all-time winningest football coach. He is credited with orchestrating what many regard to be the

biggest turnaround in college football history. As former Oklahoma and Dallas Cowboy coach Barry Switzer once said, "Bill Snyder isn't the coach of the year, and he isn't the coach of decade. He's the coach of the century."

Coach Snyder's successes on the field are matched by his achievements off the field. He has taught his players the value of a sound work ethic, attention to detail and respect that has helped them succeed during the game as well as in the classroom and in their lives.

Coach Snyder has used his prominence in the hearts of K-State fans to promote causes that have strengthened the Manhattan community and our entire State of Kansas. No one could deny the pride that has risen following K-State University President John Wefald's decision to hire Coach Snyder. The school's growing athletic program, flourishing and succeeding student body, visionary administration and supportive alumni have all contributed to Kansas State University being one of our country's premier institutions of higher education.

On behalf of many grateful Kansans, I thank Coach Snyder for his contributions. It will be hard to imagine K-State football without this legendary coach, but I wish him and his family the very best.

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

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

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM AND PLAN FINDER COMPLICATED FOR SENIORS

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) since I am next on the list.

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

There was no objection.

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

TRIBUTE TO ED ROYBAL

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, first, I missed the earlier discussion of Chairman Ed Roybal, but I had the privilege of serving with him for a number of years on the Transportation Committee, and he was a wonderful inspiration to a young Member of Congress. I was much younger then, and I learned a good deal during his leadership and would say that he provided a tremendous leadership and a legacy for Californians and all Americans in terms of his investment in transportation infrastructure for America. So my condolences to the family.

I rise tonight to discuss the Medicare prescription drug benefit. I went online today to see what seniors would experience. It is fairly extraordinary, mind-boggling, particularly given the fact that a large number of seniors have never experienced the Internet.

Seventy-six percent of seniors have never been online. I have. It was still not easy. Twenty-six percent of people on Medicare have cognitive impairments. Some of my detractors on the other side of the aisle might say I have that, but I do not. Three million have visual impairments. I wear corrective lenses. And 2.3 million reside in nursing homes.

These are all extraordinary complications for an unbelievably, unnecessarily complicated program. Why was it constructed this way? For two reasons: the pharmaceutical industry and the insurance industry, not the 40 million seniors and others who are eligible for Medicare in this country. The bill was designed by the Republicans to reward their very, very generous contributors in the pharmaceutical and insurance industry.

The insurance industry is an industry, of course, which is exempt from antitrust law. It can and does collude to set prices, exclude people and is quite profitable. Then, of course, the pharmaceutical industry is the most consistently profitable industry in the world.

They are both given subsidies through this legislation. We could have done something much simpler, much less expensive. This plan will cost \$1 trillion over 10 years for the American taxpayers in addition to incredible sums for seniors, particularly those who make wrong choices.

In my little survey, 41 plans came up; and in comparing three, it is going to take me all night if I wanted to compare all 41. I keep going back to the screen that only allows three at a time. My annual costs would vary between \$2,457 and \$5,243; and, of course, the pharmaceutical companies can change the drug benefit weekly. Seniors can change the plan once a year, and you know what will happen if they have large claims during the year and they actually get a benefit? They will be disallowed. They will not be allowed to reenroll in that plan by the private insurance sector next year. There is nothing that requires that they be reenrolled if they are willing to pay the premiums to get the benefits.

We could have had the government, like we do with the VA, go out and negotiate the lowest price for prescription drugs for the Nation's 40 million Medicare eligible citizens. That would have saved billions of dollars; but the Republicans said, well, that is unfair, that is anticompetitive. Well, no, actually we are forming a buying group. We are using market power to negotiate lower prices. They say, no, we should give subsidies to the pharmaceutical industry and subsidies to the non-competitive insurance industry. That

is their version of a free market. Of course, again, they are generous campaign contributors so we can understand some of this rhetoric on their side of the aisle.

Nonetheless, an incredibly expensive, confusing plan which gives all of the benefit to the pharmaceutical and insurance industry, puts seniors at risk, puts taxpayers at risk, and we could have done so much better for so much less. It would cost nothing to negotiate those lower prices. The VA gets prices at a 70, 75 percent reduction from list price; but, no, the Republicans had a special provision in this bill.

Medicare, the default provider for anybody who cannot buy into an insurance plan that is red-lined by the insurance industry, and they can do that legally under this bill, they say, oh, we are not selling you a premium; you have got too many drug claims; we are not going to take you. But they can go to Medicare as a default provider, and guess what? Medicare is the only entity in the world, other than uninsured individuals, who will have to pay list price for drugs. Nobody can afford list price for drugs except the superwealthy and, according to Republicans, Medicare. This will bankrupt the program, but that is where the highest risk seniors, the ones that are not desirable to the industry, will get pushed after maybe 1 year of enrollment, if they are lucky enough to get enrolled in the first year.

So huge costs to taxpayers, confusion and risks for seniors, the end of Medicare in the not-too-distant future by bankruptcy, by design, by the Republicans, all to profit the private insurance industry and the pharmaceutical industry.

You should be really, really ashamed of this horrible product.

NATURAL GAS CRISIS

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

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about an issue I have spoken about many times: the natural gas crisis that faces this country.

Yes, we just passed an energy bill, but it did little to help our homeowners heat their homes. We have had a 500 percent increase in natural gas prices in the last 5 years. A month ago, when we were still facing the impact of Katrina, we had a 700 percent gas increase when it reached \$14.50 when it had been \$2 just 5 years ago.

These natural gas prices, in my view, threaten homeownership, church ownership, schools, YMCAs, YWCAs, and small businesses.

In my districts, those kinds of organizations are renewing their gas contracts, and they are paying 100 percent more than they paid last year and many times more than they paid a couple of years ago.

□ 2000

Industries like the fertilizer industry are being crushed by these natural gas prices because 70 percent of the cost of producing fertilizer is natural gas. Forty-four percent of our fertilizer companies are now offshore, and our farmers are paying two and three and four times as much for fertilizer as they did just several years ago.

The huge petrochemical industry that is dominated by America will not be for long because there are 20 chemical plants being built in the world and 19 are offshore. Why? Natural gas prices. Petrochemicals use gas not only as a fuel, but they use it as an ingredient for all the chemicals we buy every day. Polymers and plastics involved in everything we market today use natural gas as an ingredient and natural gas as a fuel. Forty to fifty percent of their costs are natural gas.

We have huge reserves in this country of natural gas. We are not poor on natural gas. Congress and Presidents have chosen to lock it up. Our Outer Continental Shelf, that is the first 200 miles offshore, is rich in natural gas.

We have a bill that we introduced today that will open up the Outer Continental Shelf. We increase States' rights from three miles to 20 miles so it will be all out of sight. There has never been a gas production well that has ever in any way soiled a beach. We need to unlock our natural gas supplies.

Canada, Belgium, Great Britain, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, New Zealand, and Australia produce most of their natural gas offshore, right off of their coastlines. They have beautiful beaches. They are not a threat. There has never been a gas production well that has ever in any way caused beach problems.

I urge Members of this body to deal with this natural gas crisis. We have to open up some supply or we are going to lose major industries. A million or more jobs will be gone in the next 2 or 3 years, some of the best blue collar jobs we have left in this country.

We cannot just subsidize people with natural gas prices. We need to bring prices down by increasing supply because we have lots of it. We have lots of it in the Midwest. But on the Outer Continental Shelf on our coastlines, it is right close to our population centers, it is right close to our plants and our manufacturers.

We will not make steel in this country in the years ahead if we continue. We will not make aluminum in this country. We will not produce anything that uses natural gas to melt it, to bend it, to twist it, to treat it because we cannot afford it. Europe pays half as much for natural gas as we do. China, Taiwan, and Japan are big competitors economically and pay a third of what we pay for natural gas. The rest of the world pays less than \$2.

It is time to get our heads out of the sand. It is time to open up our natural gas reserves in this country and pass

House bill 4318, which would open up huge reserves on our shorelines to produce natural gas in this country so we can compete and have jobs for our working people.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO ED ROYBAL

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to join my colleagues in paying tribute to our former colleague and friend, Congressman Ed Roybal.

Many people who are in Congress now did not have the privilege of serving with him. They serve with his very distinguished daughter, Congresswoman LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, but the legacy lives on. I wish everyone in this Congress could have seen the outpouring of love and support and devotion to Ed Roybal at his magnificent funeral at the Catholic Cathedral in Los Angeles. We know how respected Ed Roybal is in this body. It was wonderful to see the love of the people he was closest to in California. Many of us went there, and we told his many friends and his family and those close to him of the respect in which he was held here.

Mr. Speaker, I knew Ed Roybal very well for many years. I was a big fan of his when he was doing work with the farm workers organizing in California. He was a legend in our State. And then he continued his leadership for our country in the Congress of the United States.

When I was first named to the Appropriations Committee, Ed Roybal was my chairman. We were in the majority at the time. He was my chairman on the Treasury Postal Subcommittee. So, on a daily basis, I saw firsthand his command of the policy, of the issues, the power of his advocacy and his determination to help all Americans.

Ed Roybal had no time for government of the few. He was about the many. When others in Washington turned their backs on seniors, the disadvantaged, and the poor, Ed Roybal was there. He was the first Member of Congress to appropriate funds for HIV/AIDS, and that sounds very remarkable and commendable now. It was very courageous at the time. He then was a leader. He fought the good fight with courage. He had a special grace about him and a dignity and a twinkle in his eye.

In recognition of his leadership on public health, the Campus of the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta was named in his honor. Ed Roybal probably has more buildings in California named for him than any other politician ever in California. But at the CDC,