

### SUPPORT PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT CARDS

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the bipartisan Medicare Modernization Act, which Congress passed in December of 2003. In particular, I would like to praise the prescription drug benefit that is already providing seniors with more affordable medication under the Medicare-approved prescription discount cards.

Mr. Speaker, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid estimate that our seniors will save up to 60 percent off the current price of their prescription drugs under this new benefit. Sixty percent, that is a huge savings. And our seniors are already reaping the benefits of Medicare prescription drug coverage.

I would like to tell you, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues, the story of one such senior, a constituent of mine from Talbot County named Lizzie Menefee. Ms. Menefee lives in Talbot County, Georgia. She will be 80 this May.

I met her at a town hall meeting I was holding on strengthening Social Security. Her story inspired me, and I wanted to share it with my colleagues here today and with seniors across our Nation.

Ms. Lizzie, as her friends call her, has not lived an easy life, though you would never know it from her spirited attitude. She has a heart condition, she has high blood pressure, arthritis and one functioning kidney.

As you might guess, her medical bills, in particular the cost of her monthly medications, are exorbitant. In fact, the cost of medication nearly bankrupted Ms. Menefee. It is easy to see why. She takes Zocor for her cholesterol, which is high. That medication runs \$155 a month.

Add another \$140 for the purple pill, Nexium, which she takes to control her acid reflux and heartburn, and \$20 a month for medication to lower her blood pressure.

When Ms. Lizzie gets a kidney infection, and this happens often with her condition, she pays an additional \$300 a month for antibiotics.

Before Congress passed the Medicare Modernization Act in 2003, Ms. Menefee regularly spent more than \$500 a month, Mr. Speaker, just on prescription drugs. As a senior with limited income and a widow, these costs were simply prohibitive. But there is good news for her and for all seniors out there. It comes in the form of the Medicare prescription drug benefit, part D, if you will.

Last year, Ms. Lizzie signed up for the new temporary provision under Medicare, the discount card. She is incredibly happy with her coverage, and I can see why. Today this lady spends a mere \$7 a month on prescription medication. Yes, you heard me correctly: \$7 a month.

Mr. Speaker, there are hundreds of Ms. Lizzies out there who have benefited from substantial savings on their prescription drugs, and there are millions more not yet enrolled in the program who would benefit from these savings as well.

When our seniors have to choose between buying food or buying medicine, their health suffers. Seniors on fixed incomes cannot afford \$500 a month in medicine; heck, most of us cannot afford \$500 a month. Congress undoubtedly, undoubtedly, Mr. Speaker, did the right thing when we added prescription drug coverage under Medicare. And there is more we can do.

In January 2006, the permanent Medicare drug benefit goes into effect. If our seniors do not know how to sign up, or if they do not understand the benefits that it offers, the good legislation we have passed will go to waste.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me and educating our seniors about the extensive savings available to them through the Medicare drug benefit and to help seniors sign up for the plan that is right for them. Do not let the other side poison the well and scare our seniors and discourage them from signing up for this great plan.

Nothing would make me happier than to have millions of Lizzie Menefeas across our great Nation staying healthy because we helped lower the prices of the drugs that they need.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Congress on the successful legislation, and I encourage my colleagues to educate their constituents on this valuable benefit.

### COMMEMORATING HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

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

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, let me join other colleagues of mine in standing today in commemoration of Holocaust Remembrance Day. We celebrate this year, 2005, the 60-year anniversary of the end of World War II.

We also look back at the enormous human loss that occurred in concentration camps all over Eastern Europe, all over that continent during World War II, and I think it is enormously important that if we can somehow distill just three lessons from this time frame, that it be the following things: first of all, we instill in our society and contemplate the question of hatred, of intolerance, of racial and religious bigotry, and we still try to put it in perspective, how some human beings can have animus toward other human beings.

The reality is that in 1930 in the depths of Nazi Germany, there were many people who did not take seriously the rhetoric of the Third Reich. There were many who did not take seriously the venom that came from Adolph Hitler. They had this mindset that it was simply a misbegotten ideology.

They had the mindset that it was simply words that were meant to wound or meant to win an election. They did not realize that there was a comprehensive plan to destroy another set of human beings that was at stake.

Similarly today, when we hear lingering anti-Semitism in our society, when we hear lingering bigotry and racism in our society, we have a tendency at first to think that it is mere words. We have a tendency to try to strip those words from any context or any meaning.

The reality is that what the Holocaust teaches us is that words do matter, because they can signal the human soul and just how depraved it can be. That is an important lesson that we take from that time frame.

There is another important lesson that we take. Every now and then, there is this tendency to engage in a hierarchy of suffering, to ask which was worse, slavery or the Holocaust; which is worse, racial bigotry or anti-Semitism or religious bigotry.

The reality is that there is no hierarchy of hatred. All hatred has a tendency to wound and corrupt and to spoil the human soul. All hatred has a tendency to degrade both the person who hates and the target. And what we have seen in our last half century of human conduct, indeed our last century of human conduct, is that neither the left nor the right has given ground to each other on this front.

Both the left and the right have shown enormous capacity to pick up weapons against each other and to degrade each other. And it is a lesson in these contemptuous times in American politics.

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It is a lesson that if we want to build a sense of humanity in this country, that we have to find a way to see past the bitterest and darkest divisions of the left and right.

There is a third lesson, Mr. Speaker. As we look at our place in the world today, this is only several weeks after the world lay to rest Karol Wojtyla, John Paul II, the leader of the Catholic Church, the leader of 1 billion Catholics around the globe. He had a particular insight about humanity.

He understood that poverty and totalitarianism are both threats to the human condition. They are both threats to the human soul. Frankly, neither the left nor the right in our country have done a good job of appreciating the linkage. Neither the left nor the right in our country has done a good job of appreciating that these two sources of darkness, totalitarianism and intense poverty, are just as destructive of what human beings can be. Well, John Paul II understood that.

As we look at the last 50 or 60 years of suffering in this world, I hope we can, as a Congress, challenge the world to a higher standard. One that from a standpoint from the left and the right manages to condemn political and economic threats to the human spirit.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me speak for a moment about these victims. I had an opportunity in August 2003 to visit the state of Israel and I remember going to the museum commemorating the concentration camps in the Holocaust. And I remember going specifically to the children's section of that museum. As some Members of the Chamber recall, when you walk inside the children's section, you are in this very small circular room and in the middle of the room sits a glass case. Inside the glass case are pictures and photos of children who lost their lives in the Holocaust and their voices who read their names over and over again.

I will remember that image, Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, for a very, very long time because it speaks of a Europe and a history that never was. It speaks of a destiny for the world that never was. Somewhere in those pictures is someone who would have been a chief of state, someone who would have been an Olympic athlete, someone who might have discovered a cure for cancer.

As we contemplate this last 60 years may we remember that every time we lay waste to a human being, every time we lay waste to a child, that there is all kinds of promise that is lost and there is another destiny that was there waiting to be born.

So on behalf of these 6 million victims who were murdered by a state, may we think of them today and may we think of them on this Holocaust Remembrance Day. May we remember in conclusion the danger whenever human beings are degraded and belittled by others.

#### CRIMINAL EXTORTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGLES of South Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. DAVIS) for his touching remarks. He is so right.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to pay tribute as my colleague, a former judge, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) has indicated a celebration of Cinco de Mayo. We will be enjoying that this weekend there in Tyler. I appreciate Gus Ramirez and Salvador Sanchez and other friends that are putting that on again this year.

Last week I read an article about the ongoing investigation in Austin by the local Democrat District Attorney, Ronnie Earl, and became concerned. I had previously understood that he had convinced a grand jury to indict a number of corporations regarding contributions they had made from which he was raising the issue of legality. For some reason I had the impression that a few of those corporations had pled either no contest or guilty, and as part of a plea agreement, they had agreed to make contributions to some educational entity.

Now, I realize I cannot always rely on every newspaper to always get the facts right, so I went back and looked at other newspaper articles about other cases after I saw that one, and according to those articles the Austin District Attorney got potentially four corporate defendants to promise to pay financial support to the LBJ School of Public Affairs there in Austin and in return he would dismiss all charges.

Now, as a former District Judge and Chief Justice this caused me a great deal of concern. As a former District Judge who believes strongly in law and order, so much so that I have sent friends or children of friends to prison while my friends were weeping and asking me not to do so, because I knew that is what the law required and that is what I would do in any other case if they were not the children of my friends.

So I believe that there is a crime and there is an appropriate punishment. And I do not know all the facts or evidence in these cases and I am not here to defend anyone involved. But I do know that District Attorneys take an oath as attorneys and they also take oaths as a District Attorney. They are not supposed to prosecute or persecute people or entities unless there is a case.

Now, if there is evidence to support that a crime has been committed, then he should prosecute. When the District Attorney in Austin files a motion to dismiss, it should be because there is no case with which to go forward.

If a district attorney drops charges after soliciting and requiring a defendant to pay money to an entity of the District Attorney's choosing, it has a rather unseemly odor to it. Let me explain one of the reasons that it may.

Under the Texas Penal Code Section 36.02, it indicates in part, and there is a bunch of different wording in parts to it but I will read potentially applicable parts that may have a ring to them.

A, a person commits an offense if he intentionally or knowingly, there are different words, but intentionally or knowingly solicits from another any benefit as consideration for the recipient's decision, vote, recommendation, or other exercise of official discretion in a judicial or administrative proceeding.

An offense under the section is a felony under the second degree. It may be the "benefit" under this would have to go to the individual itself but since the law does not say, we will let somebody else determine that. But regardless, if a D.A. can force people or entities to pay in order to avoid being prosecuted, then no one is safe from extortion. Whether or not the entity receiving the benefit is worthy is not the issue.

Whether it is a criminal offense to get someone to agree to pay money to another in order to avoid being prosecuted under the law is raised here. Whether or not such conduct rises to the level of criminal status is for others to decide, but it sure smells like extor-

tion, even if the law allows it. A fine institution like the LBJ School should not have to rely on extortion in order to fund its education.

Right now the legislature is meeting in Texas to try to fund our education. How tragic if it turns out it was legal to fund educational institutions just by threatening to prosecute if somebody does not pay the chosen school of the bullying law enforcement agency.

In Austin, the district attorney is allegedly investigating illegal payments. What irony if he will only drop charges as part of his official duties if you make the very kind of payments he was supposed to be investigating.

Sounds like the wolf is in charge of the hen house in Austin.

#### RECENT BIG EVENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, we have had several important events occur in the last weeks and days, and today of course we passed a very historic piece of legislation in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act to make sure that our country is safer, that our troops have what they need for this war on terror.

All of this prompted me to think that it was time to sort of recap where we are, where we have been, where we are, and where we are going in this war against the Islamic extremists who attacked us so horrifically and so viciously on September 11.

We also have coming up tomorrow Military Spouse Appreciation Day, and that certainly is one of those events that the timing of which has come together to make me want to come to the floor and discuss with my colleagues our progress in this war on terror.

I hope to be joined by some more of my colleagues here in a minute. We had a little bit of scrambling to get the timing right. The early vote today had people out of pocket, as we used to say.

Let me start by just recapping some of the really, really big events that we have seen happen in the last few months. I have a picture here next to me that I think is absolutely astonishing in its implication.

These are women in Afghanistan who are serving now as police officers in the Afghani security forces. Just think about that. Before September 11, before we were attacked, before our country decided to step out and defend itself and freedom loving nations of the world by going after the brutal terrorists who had attacked us in Afghanistan, these women could not be seen in public without being shrouded from head to toe. They had no place in official Afghani society. They could not go to school.

It is remarkable to think what has happened with the free elections last