[Mr. HOKE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

TOP 10 GOP OUTRAGES REGARDING MEDICARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, before I begin my next text, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York [Ms. SLAUGHTER].

FORGERY OF NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE DOCUMENT

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] for that, because I want to tell everyone what Washington's dirty little secret is, since they have been talking about it all afternoon.

The committee staff of this group over here forged a document yesterday. They took a letterhead from an organization that they had asked to come in to testify, took it, as though it was from this organization, copied down the board of directors and listed their members and put next to some of them millions of dollars that they claimed they got in Federal grants.

Mr. Speaker, when we heard from the the National Alliance for Justice, the woman who heads it up, she told these people over here that she does not get a dime's worth of Federal money. She said that she not only resented the fact that they forged that document with false testimony, but she also said, I will not tell you what these people get in Federal money. I do not know. But there is one person here, she said, this afternoon, that has given me permission to tell you how much Federal money she gets. It is the Arts Alliance. Zero. Zip.

Mr. Speaker, do the people care on this committee? Not a bit. I sat as a member at the Waco hearings.

Mr. MCINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, would the gentlewoman yield?

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I control the time, and the gentleman will have time later.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from West Virginia controls the time.

Mr. MCINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman has made a very serious——

Mr. WISE. Regular order, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT). The gentleman from West Virginia controls the time and has yielded to the gentlewoman from New York.

The gentlewoman from New York may proceed.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, on the Waco hearings we found that the committee had turned over lots of its responsibilities to the NRA, and now we find this same committee staff is forging documents to be given out to the press purporting to be a true statement. Mr. Speaker, in the name of all the men and women who served us before in this House, who stood on this floor and with truth and with eloquence did the best they could for the American people, I am more than outraged at the dirty little secret that this subcommittee would stoop to crime in order to make their point.

I am sure they are going to have an hour more of it this afternoon, but if people want to know the truth of the testimony, they should let us send them the record of that hearing.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I am going to address an issue because, as this Congress heads off for recess, I think it is time to talk about the Republican excesses.

What has been going on here for the last few weeks, Mr. Speaker, it suddenly occurred to me, I hear a lot about Medicare when I am home, and I hear a lot about Medicaid, and they are very, very important topics. But I think it is also important to look at some of the other things taking place that affect middle-income and low-income men and women in this country and to talk about exactly what is taking place.

It occurred to me it is a lot like watching a freight train go by. The train builds up speed, and when it starts rolling, a person cannot pay attention to what is in each car, they just know there is an enormity. There is a big train going by. I want to talk about what is in each car. So I have compiled a list here, and with apologies to David Letterman, we have titled it the top 10 GOP outrages, because I think the people in the country, Mr. Speaker, ought to know exactly what has taken place.

This is not a complete list. This is only a quick culling of the various committees to see what we consider to be the top 10 outrages. Top 10 outrage No. 1, this is the most incredible one, in some ways, to me, because it is the idea that came about in the Senate finance committee called child support surcharges.

People are not going to believe this one. This is if an individual has to get the State to get child support for them and to track their deadbeat spouse down someplace to get that child support, they will now pay a 10 percent surcharge under this one. They will pay a 10 percent commission. Child support surcharges. I like it. It turns every human resource worker into a bounty hunter. Put a star on them, send them out, 10 percent right off the top. They are already down, let us put them down a little more.

No. 9 sort of follows up on this. This does get into the Medicaid area. No. 9 is liens on Medicaid families. This one may boggle people's minds a little bit. Medicaid families, by definition, for the most part, are already low income. In many cases they may be middle-income families that have their mother or father or grandparent in a nursing home. This takes all the Federal protections that are built in against putting them into poverty.

What it would do, Mr. Speaker, is to permit Medicaid to put liens on the elderly and their families in this way. There would be no more guarantee under the Medicaid block grant of coverage for nursing home care after an individual or family has spent its savings. Right now if a family spends their assets down to a certain level, they do not get kicked out of the nursing home. This would remove that protection. It eliminates current protections that stop the States from imposing liens on personal residences. That is homes and farms.

States would be required to require adult children of nursing home residents to contribute toward the cost of their parents' care, regardless of the financial obligations. Regardless of the financial circumstance or family obligations of the adult children. The States could be allowed to do this.

There would, finally, be no more guarantee, it is gone, that spouses of nursing home residents would be able to retain enough monthly income to remain in the community. Presently, there is some protections for families from Medicaid. Those protections under the Medicaid legislation would be removed. That is No. 9.

Now, Mr. Speaker, continuing in the same vein let us go to No. 8. No. 8 is no more Federal nursing home standards. That one, I know, is hard to believe, that anyone, in their right mind, would say that after all the years that it took to finally get some nursing home standards, some minimal standards so that people are no longer lying in their feces, so that they are guaranteed adequate care, so that they cannot be strapped down without adequate due process, so that a whole lot of other things cannot happen to the loved ones we put in nursing homes, I know it is hard to believe, but, yes, it is true there would be no more Federal nursing home standards. It would strictly be up to the States.

I happen to think States are quite capable of the job, but the reality is, in many cases, it took the Federal Government to make sure there were adequate nursing home standards. So that is No. 8, no more nursing home standards.

To continue this juggernaut, No. 7, if an individual cannot get in the nursing home to get warm, they should not go home, because there is no more energy assistance. The LIHEAP program, the Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance has been stricken by the Republican leadership. It has eliminated all funding for LIHEAP, the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program that provides heating assistance for low-income senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, in my State of West Virginia alone last year, LIHEAP served 190,000 people in the coldest

parts of the winter, and it was $12.2 million of energy assistance.

We can see a pattern developing here. We are going to charge people for getting them their child support, we are going to put increased liens on Medicaid families, we are going to remove the Federal nursing home standards and so that when they get home there is no energy assistance to assist them there either.

I want to turn for a second now, Mr. Speaker, to those men and women who are working and who have been trying to put away enough for their retirement. I call this one ''There may not be any light at the end of the tunnel after all.'' We have worked for 40 years for our pension; right? Well, problem. Because No. 6 is the pension grab.

Here is what happened, just happened last week in the Committee on Ways and Means under the Republican leadership, they have now permitted employees to raid the employee pension plans.

Here is how it works. Presently, companies that want to go into pension assets, the ones that have been built up for the benefit of the retirees, if they want to go in without penalty they can only do so to use the funds for the health insurance for retirees. But to use the money for other reasons they have to pay a penalty tax of 50 percent withdrawal.

What that does, Mr. Speaker, is it tells them to keep their fingers off the pension fund. I think we remember the 1980's and the trouble a lot of people got into, both pensioners and companies. This is designed to stop that and it has been pretty effective.

Now, the Republican leadership would permit firms with pension plans that hold at least 125 percent of the assets needed to meet anticipated pension liabilities to withdraw the funds for any purpose, any purpose, without the worker's permission. We may say what is the problem? One hundred twenty-five percent of assets needed, surely that is enough to cover any future liabilities. Mr. Speaker, it is enough to cover it today when the stock market is high, but what about those pension plans that are heavily involved in stock purchases? What happens when those stock values drop? Does anyone think the stock market is not going to dip?

What happens is, after they have gone in and taken the money out and the stock market drops, then that pension fund is undervalued. The great all American pension grab.

We are not content just to stop with seniors or potential retirees or working people, let us move to No. 5. This one is kind of old but it has such resonance that I thought it should be brought up there because this one will create the ultimate food fight and it is cuts in child nutrition.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, what this will do is to put the school lunch, the school breakfast, the summer lunch program into block grants with lower funding levels, and also the women, infant and children program will go into a separate block grant and send it to the States. And, yes, I have heard the arguments ad infinitem, ad nauseam. It is like eating the third helping of broccoli to hear this again, about how it is not a cut, it is an increase because we are giving it a 4.5-percent increase.

Mr. Speaker, what they are not saying is that is not enough to keep up with the demand. They are also not telling us that while it is a 4.5-percent increase in their calculations for school lunches, they took from something else that is all in the block grant. It is like it is all on one tray now, and now we have to decide how many beans we want and how many carrots and so on.

Mr. Speaker, West Virginia alone received $50 million in cash assistance and $5 million in commodity assistance last year, served 180,000 school lunches, and 77,000 school breakfasts. 57 percent of school lunches in my State go to those who qualify for a free or reduced lunch. And just so we understand, Mr. Speaker, West Virginia is not simply relying on the Federal Government, we put an equal amount of money in ourselves. But making this into a block grant and cutting school nutrition and child nutrition is going to be a real body blow to our children. As the button once said, pick on somebody your own size.

Let us jump back for a second to senior citizens. This one kind of fascinates me. There have been a lot of hearings around here. Mr. Speaker, we all know we can walk up and down these halls everyday and there is no shortage of hearings. My goodness, we had 28 days of hearings on Whitewater alone. The only person who has not been called as a witness is Socks, but he may be coming up shortly.

On this one, what is the program that probably is the most important, the largest part of our budget in health care, most important to 37 million Americans and senior citizens? Medicare. This program has just celebrated its 30th anniversary. Its 30th birthday. If we are going to change it, one would think we would have, I presume, a lot of exhaustive fact-finding hearings. But this leads to number four on our list of Republican outrages. One day of hearings on Medicare.

That is true, the program that is scheduled to be cut $270 billion, the program that 37 million senior citizens depend upon, the program that is vital to many of the health care providers in this country, the program that helps fund the medical education and research that we all take for granted in this country, that program, 30 years of experience, gets one day of hearings. And, incidentally, some of the witnesses not permitted to testify were the trustees of the Medicare program.

□ 1645

Is not it interesting, every Republican I know has been waving the Medicare trustees' report saying this is why we have to make these cuts because of the Medicare trustees' report and then they never invited the people who wrote the report that they are talking about. Interesting. Anyway, that earned outrage No. 4.

But turning quickly in the same vein to outrage No. 3, No. 3 is $270 billion in Medicare cuts. Why is that an outrage? If that is what is necessary to save the program, by golly do it. That is what senior citizens are saying. They want to see the program made solvent. The outrage is that what everyone estimates to save the program is not $270 billion over 7 years; it is somewhere between $90 billion and $120 billion on 7 years. That leaves a gap of $150 to $170 billion too much that they are taking out of Medicare.

And where does that go? Well, it goes, of course, to the tax cut. We will talk about that in a minute; that is $245 billion. But it has other implications as well. The 40 percent of the money that will come out of Medicare will not go to save Medicare because it cannot. Medicare is in two parts, Part A, the trust fund, and Part B, outpatient care. The trust fund is what is considered in trouble. The trust fund is the only part that you can put money in to ''save.'' That is estimated to be $90 billion, and yet 40 percent of the money comes out of Part B and therefore does not even go toward the trust fund. It will result in higher premiums for our senior citizens. It is going to result in a lot of troubles for our hospitals.

In West Virginia, Calhoun General closed just this week. I cannot say it is because of this, but this will make it inevitable that other hospitals close. What happens when a hospital closes in that area? When you are injured in Calhoun County, you have a 90-minute drive to the closest emergency room. That is what it means.

That is No. 3, $270 billion in Medicare cuts, and would not it be nice if we could let the Medicare trustees tell the Committee on Ways and Means what they think of the committee's proposals?

No. 2, 100 percent of senior citizens are going to take a whack, a real hit because of No. 3. Hold that figure in mind. It is not too hard to remember. 100 percent. Every senior citizen. Now, outrage No. 2 is tax breaks for the wealthy, because as those senior citizens are being cut about three times what is necessary to make Medicare solvent where is the difference going? The difference is going to the $245 billion tax cut basically to the upper income.

Now, I have heard the talk about how there is a $500 child care tax credit and that will go to middle income and low-income people. The problem is it will not, Mr. Speaker. This tax cut, 51 percent of the benefits go to people making over $100,000 a year, they get around $2,400 back. Now, for the person

making $20,000 a year or less, they get something like $90 back.

What does that translate into? For about two-thirds of the people in my State, it is 20 cents a day, is what they get back in a tax cut; $7 a day is what the person over $100,000 a year gets back. The person getting 20 cents back loses their student loan ability and their Medicaid, they lose their earned income tax credit assistance, and they will pay more for Medicare. Their senior citizen mother or father or grandparent, they may be paying a lot more for them out of pocket, so they are going to lose a whole lot because of this.

So, tax cuts, I thought we were about balancing the budget. If you are balancing the budget, which is tough enough to do in 7 years without a tax cut, you really want to add $245 billion. Incidentally, if you are making $350,000 a year, you hit the lotto because you get $20,000 a year back. The folks at the other end get 20 cents a day back. That is No. 2, tax cuts for the wealthy.

No. 1, I know, Mr. Speaker, this is just a crescendo of excitement. Drum rolls. Really, BOB, that is the No. 1 outrage. It is enough, BOB, you really ought to stop. Stop me, Mr. Speaker, before I peel again.

Here we go. No. 1 is after a lot of consultation, remember I just told you about the tax cut for the wealthy? Now I know you are not going to believe this, Mr. Speaker, but it is true. A middle income tax increase. That is right. Middle income tax increase. While the Republican leadership is putting through a bill that will cut taxes for the wealthiest, it is increasing taxes for low and middle income persons.

BOB, you must be all wet. They would not do that, would they? Look at what happens. Presently there is something in the law right now called the earned income tax credit. A working family in this country that earns under, I believe, $28,000 a year is eligible for a tax credit. And it not only goes to their income taxes; it means they can get money back from their Social Security tax, their FICA tax and sales tax. It is money directly in their hands.

What it means it is good for business and it is good for the employee, because it is like subsidizing the low-income worker. And when Congress voted to increase that earned income tax credit just 2 years ago that I proudly voted for, and I might add not one Republican voted for, when Congress voted to increase that, it voted to make the person making minimum wage, about $4.25, in effect it made their wage about $6. Not one penny came out of the employer, but it was done through the Tax Code.

So now it is being proposed in the Committee on Ways and Means to take back some of that tax credit. What that is is a middle income tax increase. These people will be paying more in taxes after all this passes than they did before.

Let me tell my colleagues in West Virginia, that means that 98,800 middle income families will face a tax increase, about 90 percent of the families in this program. Remember, the Republican tax plan for a child care credit, it does not pay you the money if you did not pay that much in taxes, so you do not get as much benefit from it if you are in the lower income brackets. But this program, the one they are cutting into, that does pay you. So the Republican plan means very little for low income and middle income people. This plan puts money in your pockets, and that is the one they are cutting. So, the $500 per child tax credit does not help many of our middle income families. In fact, one in three American children will receive no aid from their credit. They do get aid from this. And so after everything is done, there is a middle income tax increase coming, thank to the Republican leadership.

So let me just quickly run over this list again because I know everybody has got pencils and they are jotting it down. I think Mr. Speaker, that it would be worthwhile for every Member to be talking about this when they are home. The excesses are during the recess, and I hope that every constituent across the country will ask with these 10 things, the 10 top outrages that Congress has been working on in the last few weeks.

First of all, No. 10, child support surcharge. That is right, charging single parent families 10 percent to go get the child support that they are not able to get themselves.

No. 9, relaxing and doing away with the regulations that stop people from having liens put on them on Medicaid families.

No. 8, removing Federal nursing home standards.

No. 7, no more energy assistance for low income senior citizens.

No. 6, going after the pensions and permitting corporations to take money out of pension funds without adequate protection and with no penalty.

No. 5, cutting child nutrition programs making it harder for kids to be able to get that one hot meal a day.

No. 4, only 1 day of Medicare hearings when they were able to have 28 days of hearings on Whitewater, 10 on Waco, and however many have been going on on Ruby Ridge.

No. 3, $270 billion in Medicare cuts when $90 billion will do the job.

No. 2, tax breaks for the wealthy.

And of course, No. 1 at the same time they are giving tax breaks for the wealthy No. 1 is actually asking middle income and low-income people to pay a tax increase.

Mr. Speaker, those are my selections for the top 10 GOP outrages of the last 2 weeks, and my hope is that we will all be hearing about these a lot during our October recess.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE].

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT). The gentleman from New Jersey is recognized for up to 36 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Chairman, I would also like to point out that one of the items that the gentleman from West Virginia mentioned as one of his top Republican outrages was the fact that there was only 1 day of hearings on Medicare last week in the House of Representatives before the Committee on Ways and Means.

However, I would like to point out that in my committee, the Committee on Commerce which also has jurisdiction over Medicare, as well as jurisdiction over Medicaid, which is the Federal Health Care Program for poor people, we have not had any hearings on either one of the issues.

In fact, last Friday, we reported out a Medicaid reform bill that cuts Medicaid by $180 billion and essentially eliminates the entitlement status of Medicaid, so that poor people have no guarantee of health insurance anymore. We did not have a single day of hearings on the Medicaid changes.

In addition, I understand now that the Republican leadership has finally introduced a Medicare reform bill in order to implement the $270 billion in cuts to Medicare, and my committee, the Committee on Commerce, will be meeting on Monday, this coming Monday, to mark up the Medicare bill without even 1 hour or 1 minute of hearings on the Medicare bill.

So here we have a situation where probably the most important change that will take place in this House and in this Congress, the effects and the changes on Medicare and Medicaid which affect millions and millions of Americans, and we will not have had a single day of hearings on either one of these bills before the time when they came to the committee to be marked up.

It is indeed an outrage. It is an outrage that is out of proportion, when we think about the level of cuts; $270 billion in cuts in Medicare and $180 billion in cuts in Medicaid. Cuts that these two health insurance programs, primarily for seniors, cannot take without major changes that are going to be negative and affect the quality of Americans' health care, and particularly seniors' health care, in a very, very negative way.

Fortunately, the Democrats, realizing the fact that there were not going to be any hearings on either one of these programs, decided, starting last week, to have their own hearings, alternative hearings on the Medicare Program on the lawn of the Capitol. We finished 4 days, today, of those hearings, and I want to tell my colleagues that they were very productive hearings.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to give some information about what some of my constituents said who attended the hearings, both health care providers, representatives of hospitals in my district in New Jersey, as well as senior citizens and senior citizen advocates from my home State of New Jersey.

Before I get to that, I wanted to point out the fact that increasingly

this opposition to Speaker GINGRICH and the Republican leadership's Medicare cuts and Medicare changes for both Medicare and Medicaid are being opposed in a bipartisan fashion.

One of the things that has bothered me the last few weeks in listening to some of the statements on the floor of this House is that increasingly my colleagues on the other side, on the Republican side, suggest that somehow this is all very partisan, that the Democrats are attacking the Republican leadership for the changes that are being proposed in Medicare and Medicaid, and that all of this is coming from the Democratic side and that we are just being very partisan about it.

The reality is that increasingly, over the last weeks, it has not been a partisan battle. There has been bipartisan opposition to the Medicare and Medicaid proposals that Speaker GINGRICH and the Republican leadership have come forward with.

In a sampling of opposition, this Wednesday there were a number of Republican Senators who expressed concern about the Medicare proposal put forward by the Republican leadership. On Wednesday, there were three Republican Senators who voiced doubts about mixing a big tax cut with planned surgery on Medicare and Medicaid. They said in essence, look, why is it that we are cutting Medicare and Medicaid this amount in order to finance a very large tax cut primarily for wealthy people?

Senator ORRIN HATCH of Utah and Senator ALAN SIMPSON of Wyoming and Senator ALFONSE D'AMATO of New York expressed skepticism about cutting taxes while Congress is struggling to balance the budget. They indicated strongly their concern about how they are going to make these cuts in Medicare at the same time that tax cuts were being proposed for wealthy Americans.

In addition to that, I was very pleased to see that in my own home State, the gentlewoman from New Jersey [Mrs. ROUKEMA] has expressed concern about both the Medicare changes as well as the Medicaid changes. The gentlewoman is quoted in an article that is in today's New York Times where she says she is concerned about the effects of the Medicare proposals.

Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman noted recent estimates from the Congressional Budget Office showing that most of the $270 billion in Medicare savings would be achieved by limiting payments to hospitals, nursing homes, and home care agencies.

These are sobering numbers. They open up a number of concerns about whether the savings will come through a reduction of care or through the new choices that people are given.

□ 1700

I would like to repeat again. In my home State of New Jersey, along the Jersey shore which I represent in Congress, I represent a large part of the New Jersey shore, we had three Republican State legislators. they are Senator Leonard Connors, Assemblyman Jeffrey Moran and Assemblyman Christopher Moran, all Republicans from Ocean County in New Jersey. They sent a letter to Senator DOLE and also to Speaker GINGRICH this week asking them to back off on the proposed cuts in Medicare because of the impacts that they could have on senior citizens.

They pointed out that financing tax breaks for the rich on the backs of our elderly is morally bankrupt. The Senator and the two assemblymen, again all Republican, also were critical of the increases proposed by Speaker GINGRICH in his plan in the Medicare part B coverage, from $552 annually to $1,116. they said the plan is signing a death warrant for millions of senior citizens across the country.

So for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who would suggest that somehow this is strictly the Democrats that are complaining about these cuts in Medicare and what they are going to mean for senior citizens, I tell you we have U.S. Senators, U.S. Congressmen, we have State legislators from the State of New Jersey, all Republicans who are concerned about what is happening here. They have reason to be concerned, for a number of reasons.

Let me give some of the concerns expressed at the alternative hearings that were held by the Democratic Caucus on the lawn on the East Front of the Capitol this week. I attended each of those hearings. We had some representatives from my district in New Jersey who spoke out each of the days, Wednesday through today, and expressed their concerns.

One of the speakers who gave testimony who I was most impressed with was Dr. Anita Curran, who is associate dean for Environmental and Community Medicine at the University of Medicine and Dentistry in New Jersey and the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Brunswick, which is in my district. Dr. Curran pointed out how every aspect of health care in New Jersey as well as in this country as a whole is very interconnected and that programs like Medicaid for the poor, Medicare for senior citizens, nutrition programs, even some of the welfare reform that we have talked about on the House floor, the very cuts that impact health care in each of these programs have a cumulative effect.

She represents the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, a teaching hospital. Many of the significant cuts in Medicare affect teaching hospitals, making it more difficult for those hospitals to train residents and train doctors who are going to go into the community in the future. A lot of those doctors at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School also work at the Eric B. Chandler Health Center, which is a community-based health center in New Brunswick that handles a lot of Medicaid recipients, poor people who are on Medicaid.

What Dr. Curran pointed out is that when you cut back on the amount of money going to teaching hospitals, like Robert Wood Johnson, you are also having an impact on the community health center because there will not be the teachers there to work at the community health center and help the poor and needy people in New Brunswick and in the area served by the Eric B. Chandler Health Center.

Also, the Medicaid dollars that are being cut for the health center through Medicaid are going to have an effect on the teaching hospital because now all of a sudden there is less money coming in through Medicaid as well. So the cutbacks in Medicare and the cutbacks in Medicaid do not just affect seniors, they do not just affect poor people, they also affect everyone. Essentially, if the hospital in the community does not have the money to operate and either has to close or cut back on services either for inpatients or for outpatients, everyone suffers, and that is the dramatic impact of these cuts both in Medicare and Medicaid.

We had other people that spoke at the hearings that were held out on the lawn. I wanted to mention Margaret Chester, who is executive director of the Middlesex County Office on Aging in my district. She spoke very eloquently about the programs and how these cutbacks are going to affect the senior population that are helped by the Middlesex County Office on Aging.

One of the things I asked about, which was particularly disturbing, again points out how the interrelationship between cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, are a group of seniors or elderly who are called qualified Medicaid beneficiaries. These are seniors who are low income. I think they cannot be making more than about $625 a month through Social Security or pensions or whatever they get. And right now under current law, their Medicare part B premiums the premium that they have to pay in order to have their doctor bills covered through Medicare, that money is paid by Medicaid. So even though they are on Medicare, the program for seniors, and they have to pay this premium to get their doctor's bills paid, Medicaid says for that Medicare part B premium.

Under the Medicaid bill that was passed out of the Committee on Commerce, my Committee on Commerce last Friday, there no longer is any guarantee that Medicaid will pay that part B premium for those elderly and poor Medicare senior recipients. Where are they going to get the money? Where are they going to get the money to pay for that part B insurance to cover their doctor bills? They are already so poor that they barely can make ends meet.

Their Medicare part B premiums under Speaker GINGRICH and the Republican leadership proposal are going to double over the next 7 years. So, if they were paying $40 now, they are going to be paying probably $100 within

the next 7 years. Yet they do not have Medicaid paying for any part of it anymore. There is no way that they can afford to pay that. The end result is that, if some of the States decide not to take on that extra burden, they are simply going to be out on the street. They will not have any health care.

Last, today at our alternative Medicare hearings, we had two senior citizen advocates from my district, one is Dave Sheehan, who is the director of the Edison Township Senior Center in Edison, NJ, and also Dave Keiserman, who is State chairman of the New Jersey Council on Senior Citizens. And what they pointed out and what I wanted to reiterate today is how unable, how difficult it is going to be, if not impossible, for seniors who now receive Medicare to pay these additional payments out of pocket that have been proposed in both the bill put forward by the Republican leadership in the House and the bill put forward by the Republican leadership in the Senate.

I already mentioned some of the proposals in the House bill with regard to Medicare part B that pays for doctors' expenses for seniors, doubling of the part B premiums over the next 7 years. How can these seniors, most of whom make less than $25,000 a year, something like 75 percent of the seniors in the country make less than $25,000 per year, how are they going to be able to pay double their part B premiums? But if you look at the Senate bill, the one that is being considered on the other side of the Capitol, they go beyond the increase in the part B premiums. They talk about doubling the part B deductible from $100 today to $210 in 7 years. They talk about also delaying eligibility for Medicare from age 65 to age 67. We really do not know how far these additional out-of-pocket payments are going to go. We have heard now about increased deductibles, increased part B premiums, raising the age of eligibility for seniors for Medicare. Where do we go from here?

Well, the bottom line is that increasingly what we are finding, when these Republican leadership proposals go to the Congressional Budget Office, is that there are huge gaps in how much money they can actually save. There is a real question about whether or not any of these proposals on the Senate side or the House side are going to be able to save $270 billion to achieve that level of cuts in Medicare. And so what I think is going to happen is that we are going to see more and more of an effort to try to find more and more of that money to pay for those cuts out of increased out-of-pocket costs to the beneficiaries, to the senior citizens.

Do not be surprised to see larger deductibles. Do not be surprised to see copayments. Do not be surprised to see eligibility going from 65 to 67 or maybe even to 70. Do not be surprised to see even larger Medicare part B premiums than what has already been discussed.

I just wanted to spend a little time, Mr. Speaker, if I could, on Medicaid, the program for poor people, which I would point out again, 70 percent of that money in New Jersey for Medicaid goes to pay for senior citizens and those who are primarily in nursing homes. The figure for the rest of the country is pretty much the same. A majority of the money that we now spend on Medicaid, even though it is a program for poor people, is for senior citizens, most of which pays for nursing home care.

The bill that our Committee on Commerce reported out on Medicaid last Friday was a travesty. We had no hearings, again. Whatever they do on Ways and Means, we do not have any hearings in the Committee on Commerce. We get the bill and then the next day we have the markup, and we do not even have an opportunity to have a hearing at all.

In the Committee on Commerce, the Medicaid bill that was reported out was indeed a travesty. The New York Times, in an editorial on September 26 called it a cruel revision of Medicaid. Just let me give you a sentence for two. They said, ''Congress shows no signs of slowing its assault on the social safety net stitched together over six decades. The House Commerce Committee tore another hole in the net on Friday by eliminating the Federal guarantee of Medicaid insurance.''

Essentially, what the Republicans did in this Medicaid bill was to eliminate the entitlement statute for Medicaid. So in effect, there is no guarantee that anyone gets Medicaid coverage anymore. They send the money in a block grant to the States, and they leave it up to the States to decide what they want to do with the money, with very few strings attached.

I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I had a forum last Monday, actually it was Tuesday, in my district, after this Medicaid bill had passed out of the Committee on Commerce. And I told the senior citizens at a senior center in Long Branch, the town that I live in, about some of these cuts and what they will mean, and they were really outraged. And they had reason to be outraged.

One of the things that we pointed out to the seniors and really to my constituents in general is the fact that all the protections that existed under the Medicaid Program in the past, when someone had to be placed in a nursing home, all the protections with regard to the nursing home, all the protections with regard to the family of the person who went to the nursing home, the family, the spouse that had to stay back in the home or the kids that were still in the community, all those were just eliminated completely by the Republican majority on the Committee on Commerce.

There are no longer any nursing home standards. The money goes to the States in a block grant. The nursing homes can do what they want unless the States come in and start regulating them. So all the concerns about proper sanitation in nursing homes, code enforcement in nursing homes, proper care, that there are nurses that are visiting the patients in nursing homes, none of that has any Federal protection anymore. Just as bad was the fact that the protections for the spouse who has to stay at home were eliminated.

Right now, under current law, if your husband goes to a nursing home and you are the woman who stays at home, you get to keep your home, you get to keep your car. And you get to keep about $14,000 in a savings account that they cannot go against you to pay for that nursing home care for your husband who is in the nursing home. That is all out the window now. If a State wants to, they can simply go after those assets or include those assets in calculating whether or not someone is eligible for Medicaid placement in nursing home.

They also eliminated all the protections under current law for children. So there is nothing to prevent a State, if it wants to, to say, your dad is now in a nursing home and so we are going to go after your house, the children, or we are going to go after your assets to pay for his nursing home care. Again, all those protections were simply eliminated.

The other thing that happened, which I found extremely disturbing, is that the Federal law right now with regard to Medicaid, links the actual reimbursement rate that is paid to nursing homes to a standard based on the amount of money that is necessary to pay for adequate care. In other words, the States, under current law, have to give the nursing homes enough money to pay for adequate care of the person who is in the nursing home. That was abolished. We had a vote on it. Again, it was voted down by the Republican majority.

So what we are going to see increasingly is less money going to the States, no safeguards for the States, the States paying less and less money for nursing home care that is less than adequate, and no way to make sure that under Federal law that those nursing homes are adequate and provide proper care.

The last thing that I wanted to mention, going back again to the fact that this is not at all a partisan issue, and I hate the fact that it keeps being characterized as such, is that in my home State of New Jersey, in a lot of the other States around the country, many of the Republican elected officials have been very critical of this Republican leadership Medicaid proposal because of the formula that is being used to decide how much the individual States are going to receive.

I would point out that it really does not matter what the formula is because since there is going to be so much less money going to the States to pay for Medicaid, however you figure out the formula, the States are not going to have enough money to provide adequate care. But I want to commend my

Governor, Governor Christine Whitman, and also the members of my State delegation, the Republicans in my State delegation, New Jersey, all of whom have protested to Speaker GINGRICH and to the Republican leadership that the formula for Medicaid is inadequate and certainly unfair to the State of New Jersey.

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Now what the Governor of New Jersey pointed out is that in the next year, in 1996, there will be a 7.2-percent Medicaid grant increase to the States under the formula that Speaker GINGRICH has put forward, but after that, for the fiscal years from 1997 to 2000, there is only a 2-percent annual increase in the amount of money the States get to provide for Medicaid expenses, and essentially what the Governors said, and I quote, is that ''we cannot achieve that level of savings, we cannot operate that program with the level of money that we are going to be getting from Medicaid.''

So, if I could just conclude by pointing out again, as much as most of the people opposing this Gingrich plan are Democrats, there are a lot of Republicans in my State and in other parts of the country at every level, whether it is the Senate, whether it is the Governors, whether it is the other members of our congressional delegation, or State legislators who are pointing out that there is absolutely no way that we can continue to provide adequate care under the Medicaid Program for our poor people and particularly for our elderly who are the main beneficiaries of the Medicaid Program, and the same concerns are now being expressed as well on the Medicare Program, that this level of cuts that are being proposed by Speaker GINGRICH and the Republican leadership are simply inadequate to provide quality care for our seniors and for the people who are part of the Medicare and Medicaid Programs.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the cracks are starting to show, that we are seeing a slowdown in effect in the effort to try to move both of these bills through Congress. We have a week now, next week, and there will be no votes on the floor of the House of Representatives on any bills, and I am hopeful that the momentum will continue to build during this next week so that, when we come back around Columbus Day, there will be even more and more opposition on a bipartisan basis to these terrible changes that are being proposed in the Medicare and Medicaid Programs.

CONGRATULATING NATIONAL ''VOICE OF DEMOCRACY'' WINNER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, to begin this special order tonight I would like to read a statement and some passages to pay tribute to a young man in my district. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to pay tribute to a truly remarkable youngster. His name is Niles Randolph, and he is the first-place winner of the Veterans of Foreign Wars ''Voice of Democracy'' broadcast scriptwriting contest for the State of Minnesota.

Niles is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Randolph and is currently a senior at Mayo High School in Rochester, MN. He was sponsored by VFW Post 1215 and its ladies auxiliary in Rochester.

His interests include football, playing the guitar, soccer, and racquetball. He is also a member of the National Honor Society and has held the offices of 6th grade class officer, 9th grade class officer and 11th grade junior representative.

Niles is interested in attending the University of Wisconsin at Madison or Drake University in Des Moines where he intends to pursue a degree in Public Relations—I am sure he will be very successful.

His essay titled ''My Vision for America'' was a genuinely patriotic piece of writing, and I am honored to share several passages from that tonight:

I was once told the story of two brothers who quarreled all the time. The father of the boys, to tech a lesson, gave them a bundle of sticks tied together and challenged them to break it. Try as they might, they could not. Then the father untied the sticks and gave each one separately to the boys. He again challenged them to break the sticks. They did with ease. The father then said, ''You see my sons, untied as one, the sticks are strong and cannot be broken. Apart, they are weak and vulnerable.'' No longer did the brothers quarrel.

My vision for America is one of unity. As the story relates, we are strong when tied together. When we are separate, we are weak and vulnerable. When we are together as Americans, free from prejudice, ignorance and selfishness, we are strong. That is my vision for America.

To attain greater unity, I feel we must look at the basic unit of our nation. That unity is the family. The strengthening of the American family is an essential key to the solidarity of our nation. The family is the teacher of moral principles and values, the most influential guide in someone's life. Too many times in modern society do we see the decay of family; failed marriages and single parents, or the increase in gang numbers due to lack of family support. The family has been the backbone of American society throughout our history. It has been the reason America has remained as strong as it has. The family is where it all starts, where everyone develops their character and their values, where everyone must attain their moral principles.

In becoming a more unified nation, we must eliminate prejudice. Racial and sexual prejudice undermine the American idea of equality and equal opportunity.

All of these factors combine to make a unified America. Through patriotism, stronger family bonds, education, and elimination of prejudice, we stand united as one, as the sticks were unbreakable when tied together. Let us maintain our seat as leaders of the world in morality and virtue. Let us come together in unity. This is my vision for America.

Mr. Speaker, I submit the balance of the text to be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

MY VISION FOR AMERICA

I was once told the story of two brothers who quarreled all the time. The father of the boys, to teach a lesson, gave them a bundle of sticks tied together and challenged them to break it. Try as they might, they could not. Then the father untied the sticks and gave each one separately to the boys. He again challenged them to break the sticks. They did with ease. The father then said, ''You see my sons, united as one, the sticks are strong and cannot be broken. Apart, they are weak and vulnerable.'' No longer did the brothers quarrel.

My vision for America is one of unity. As the story relates, we are strong when united together. When we are separate, we are weak and vulnerable. When we are together as Americans, free from prejudice, ignorance, and selfishness, we are strong. That is my vision for America.

I am a member of my high school football team. Through experience, I have learned that teamwork is the key to winning. When members of the team fight, or become selfish in their interests, they are drawn apart and more often than not, we lose. In order to succeed there must be blockers for each running back and defensive support on every play.

I can see a correlation between American society and my football experiences. If we are together in our interests and goals, we will succeed as a nation. If there is sound education for our youth, it is much like having the blocker for the running back. The youth and the running back are much more likely to succeed. If we have a strong family bond and support, it is much like the defensive support, as it reinforces. If we are drawn apart by prejudice and lack of patriotism, it is much like team members fighting or being selfish. Whether in football or in society we must be united to succeed.

To accomplish this goal, we must embrace patriotism. People are often concerned only with their current situations and problems. Nobody must forget the America that has given us such unequaled opportunity and liberty. My vision for America would be a patriotic America. An America concerned about the future of our nation, as the past generations have been concerned. From the times of the Revolutionary War, to the times of Korea and Vietnam, our predecessors have given their very lives for the benefit of America and it's future generations.

A revival of these principals and regard for our nation would unquestionably bring us together as Americans.

To attain greater unity, I feel we must look at the basic unit of our nation. That unit is the family. The strengthening of the American family is an essential key to the solidarity of our nation. The family is the teacher of moral principles and values, the most influential guide in someone's life. Too many times in modern society do we see the decay of family; failed marriages and single parents, or the increase in gang numbers due to lack of family support.

The family has been the backbone of American society throughout our history. It has been the reason America has remained as strong as it has. The family is where it all starts, where everyone develops their character and their values, where everyone must attain their moral principles. In the past, families have been the base of America. They can be the base once again. The strengthening of the family unit is my vision for America.