

Mr. LONGLEY. Mr. Speaker, we need to move beyond the harsh rhetoric, the sound bites, the slick language that emanates from focus groups. We have got to be honest. Medicare is in deeper trouble than we realized before. It began losing money last year a full 2 years earlier than anyone had thought it would, and it will be bankrupt in just 5 years unless we find a solution and begin to spend smarter.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a partisan issue. Medicare is a program that is paid for by taxes on the wages of working people and by seniors through their premiums. We must find a solution to protect it, not only for current seniors but also for future generations. We owe it to our workers and our seniors and the needs of the future generations of this country.

Mr. Speaker, the key to the solution is to attack waste, fraud, and abuse. We need to spend smarter. If we can just slow the growth of Medicare by spending smarter, we can save the system and give seniors in Maine and across the country a better program. But what we cannot do is make Medicare a partisan issue.

COMMITMENT TO A BALANCED BUDGET

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleagues, we do not need to make Medicare a partisan issue. The problem that we have is that last year it was a partisan issue, and it continues to be.

Let me give you an example of how this administration is dealing with the Medicare crisis. Here in Congress we were unable to come up with an agreement on the Medicare insolvency, and yet there is a program called Operation Restore Trust not only in my State of Texas but a number of States. That program was just given over \$4 million last year, and yet it returned 10 times that amount to the Medicare trust funds.

I believe this is an area that we need to devote more resources. The President has requested \$597 million for antifraud activities, which is \$150 million more than current spending. Let us give him that in this budget agreement we are talking about today so we can deal with Medicare fraud.

The problem we have is that they will not do it. Last year they wanted to cut the effort for Medicare fraud, and that is where the seniors know that we can get the money to protect Medicare. There is no silver bullet for balancing the budget. You have to do it every day, every year, and leaving the scene of the battle is not the way to do it.

MR. PRESIDENT, WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THAT MIDDLE-CLASS TAX CUT?

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, every now and then, I like to thumb through my copy of "Putting People First" then-candidate Bill Clinton's book of promises to the American people. And I couldn't help but notice when I last picked it up that the centerpiece of the Clinton campaign was a middle-class tax cut.

Let me read a little bit from the section entitled "Rewarding Work and Families" middle-class taxpayers will have a choice between a children's tax credit or a significant reduction in their income tax rate." That was candidate Clinton speaking.

Well, candidate Clinton became President Clinton and that one-time champion of the middle-class soon began singing an altogether different tune. This Congress passed a middle-class tax cut; 89 percent of that tax cut would go to families earning under \$75,000 per year. President Clinton said no and vetoed it. He called it a tax cut for the rich.

Mr. Speaker, as President Clinton gears up to become candidate Clinton again, I think the American people might want to join me in asking him. "Mr. President, whatever happened to that middle-class tax cut?"

MAKING A DIFFERENCE BY LEAVING

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, most of America's eyes were focused on Washington yesterday, when a public servant of many years indicated he was through. Oh, yes, he is running for the Presidency of the United States of America, but, frankly, Mr. Speaker, I think he was through with a logjam Republican Congress, one that did not have the sense of temperament of a moderate approach to running this Government, of ensuring that there would be a balanced budget, but yet having the face of respect and love for senior citizens, for this budget of 1997 posed by the Republicans will cut Medicare, will make cuts of \$167 billion in Medicare.

Frankly, I hope we will benefit from Senator DOLE running against this Republican Congress. In fact, instead of providing for those working poor who have made a commitment not to be on welfare, they are cutting taxes to those who are the working poor by \$20 billion by decreasing the earned income tax credit. Yes; education is out again, 22 percent below the 1996 budget. Last, no more summer jobs for our youth, who want to make a difference in their lives.

Yes; I hope his leaving will make a difference in Congress.

STOP DRUG PRODUCTION AT ITS SOURCE

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, one of the major issues facing America today is drugs and crime that is caused by drugs. They say there is a war against drugs, but we really do not have a war against drugs, and if we do, we are losing it.

If we really wanted to deal with the drug problem, we would attack it not only here in our country and at the borders but at its source. In Peru and Bolivia, 90 percent of the world's coca is produced. Ninety percent, we know exactly where it is grown. We could take U.S. airplanes and use environmentally safe herbicides and fly over the fields and drop them, and within 1 to 2 weeks knock out 90 percent of the world's coca and crack. And yet we do not do it.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to everybody in the House and administration, if we really want to have a war on drugs, let us attack it. Let us really win the war on drugs. Let us go to Peru and Bolivia and eradicate the drugs at its source. It will never get to our kids, it will not cause crime in America, and it will solve a big problem.

PERMISSION FOR SUNDRY COMMITTEES AND THEIR SUBCOMMITTEES TO SIT TODAY DURING 5-MINUTE RULE

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the following committees and their subcommittees be permitted to sit today while the House is meeting in the Committee of the Whole House under the 5-minute rule: Committee on Agriculture, Committee on Banking and Financial Services, Committee on Commerce, Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, Committee on House Oversight, Committee on International Relations, Committee on the Judiciary, Committee on Resources, Committee on Science, and Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

It is my understanding that the minority has been consulted and that there is no objection to these requests.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR H.R. 3259, INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT, FISCAL YEAR 1997

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1