which Medicare operates that this is the cost of the program that has to be anticipated.

So if we do not follow those cost estimates by the CBO and we come in with $100 billion, $200 billion cut, that is a cut; no way other than that is an explanation of what the Republican plan is all about.

So I caution the seniors not to get confused. What we are dealing with here is a major, drastic cut of the Medicare Program, and the dollars are important, but it is the restructuring of this program that is far more devastating.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BROWN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. CLAYTON of Ohio addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. BARRETT], as the designee of the minority leader, be recognized before the designee of the majority leader for 10 minutes, notwithstanding the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995.

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

There was no objection.

WELFARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. BARRETT] is recognized for 10 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House of Representatives will be considering a bill dealing with the W–2 Wisconsin Works Program. I would like to spend a few minutes talking about that bill tomorrow, because I think it is a bill that is frankly a bill that should not be before the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, when I am home in my district in Wisconsin, one of the questions I am asked most often is, Why cannot the Democrats and Republicans get along better? Why does every issue have to turn into a partisan issue? I think that this issue is an excellent example of a time when an issue that should not be a partisan issue has become one, and it has become a partisan issue unfortunately, and I think unnecessarily.

Several weeks ago President Clinton in his Saturday weekend radio address announced that he supported the waiver request that would be coming from the State of Wisconsin. In essence, he offered an olive branch to the Republicans. He said, I agree with you. What is happening tomorrow is that the Republicans are taking this olive branch, they are breaking it in half, and they are sticking it in the President's eye. They are trying to embarrass him, they are trying not to work together at a time where I think Republicans and Democrats can work together. Again, I think that that is very unfortunate.

I think the people in this body should have a little history of the W–2 legislation that passed the State of Wisconsin. This is legislation that passed the State legislature earlier this year and was sent to the Governor. At that time the Governor of the State of Wisconsin used his partial veto power 97 times; 97 times he lined out parts of this legislation that affected 27 different areas of this legislation. He then took 5 weeks to prepare some waiver requests, and last week he announced at a press conference that he would be delivering these waiver requests to the President of the United States. The following morning, he took the waiver requests to the White House.

That day, I called his office and called the office of the Department of Health and Social Services in the State of Wisconsin, since I represent the district that is most affected in this entire country by the W–2 program. I asked for a copy of the waiver requests. Those came yesterday. It is interesting that those came yesterday, because we are going to be voting on this legislation tomorrow.

Let us get to this legislation, because for the first time that I have been able to discover in the history of this country, we are going to have a freestanding bill and the Congress of the United States is going to grant waivers to a State without any prior hearing, without any public input, without any chance for people who are affected by this program to have any input, to have any recourse with their elected officials. The people who are affected by this program are in essence being told, you are shut out of the process.

Mr. Speaker, this is arrogance at its worst. This is an arrogant misuse of power and it is an arrogant misuse of the process of this institution.

Now, what should happen? Mr. Speaker, tomorrow there is going to be a substitute amendment that is going to be offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. KLECZKA]. That amendment is going to do several things. First, it is going to encourage the Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services to grant these waivers, but it is going to encourage the Secretary to do so after the public has been given an opportunity to have their input. That is what normally happens.

What is ironic about this is that this is a situation where the last time a waiver request was granted by a President without this due process, without the 30-day public hearing period, the courts struck it down. They said, you have to have the public hearing. What is happening here is we are trying to circumvent that process. We do not want the people of this country to have the ability to hear and have the legislators hear what they have to say.

The legislation that is offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. KLECZKA] is also going to say that this waiver should be granted if the W–2 waiver requests that have been submitted to the President of the United States are consistent with the public representations that the Governor of the State of Wisconsin has made. That is all we are asking.

We are asking two things: First, that the public have an opportunity to have their concerns mentioned; and second, we are asking that the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, who has made representations on this issue, that the waivers are consistent with those representations. I do not see where that is any great disservice to the people who are pushing this waiver.

I would also like, Mr. Speaker, to talk a little bit about the merits of the plan. Welfare reform is something that everyone in this body is interested in. People from both sides of the aisle recognize that the current welfare system is not working. But as we seek to improve this welfare system, we cannot ignore the fact that real people are involved in this system, that real people are the ones that may be hurt if we act cavalierly.

The Governor of the State of Wisconsin said, oh, yes, there are going to be speed bumps in this process. Mr. Speaker, our job as legislators is to make sure that real people are not those speed bumps, and I represent the district in this country that is going to be most affected by this plan.

I would like to point out just a couple of things about this plan. This plan requires women who have given birth to return to work after 12 weeks. I am not going to debate the merits of that. There are people here who think that is a good idea; there are people here who think that is a bad idea. But what it does not recognize is that by pouring literally thousands more children into the child care system in Milwaukee County, it is going to overload the system. The system is not equipped at this time to deal with that.

What is going to happen? These women are going to be given a choice. They are either going to put their children in substandard care, or they are going to stay home and lose their benefits. We are talking about 4-month old babies here who are going to be put in substandard care or their mothers are going to lose their benefits.

Now, that is under the merits. But I do not want to spend all my time on

the merits, because what we are seeing tomorrow is one of the worst abuses of the legislative process that I have seen since I have been in this body. The first time in the Nation's history we are going to have a stand-alone waiver request. And are the committees of jurisdiction going to be asked to consider this? Absolutely not. Are we going to have any public hearings on this? Absolutely not. Is a single public American going to be able to have their concerns addressed? Absolutely not.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, I was on a radio program in my district and the question came, well, what happens to the Indians in the State of Wisconsin who are affected by this? What if this violates one of the treaties? Have you looked at that? I explained to them that there is not a single legislator outside of the State of Wisconsin who has ever looked at these waiver requests. There are 600 pages of waiver requests that are going to be approved by this body tomorrow, and no one had looked at them and there has been no public hearing on them.

All we are doing is denying the people of the State of Wisconsin and the people of every other State in this country the ability to have their voice be heard. That is not the way this institution should operate, Mr. Speaker. That is not the way this Government should operate.

Now, when this piece of legislation passed the State of Wisconsin's legislature, it did so on a bipartisan basis. But the Governor changed it in some significant ways, but at the time that he signed it, the law of this land was that this body, or this Government more correctly, the Federal Government, would examine those waivers to make sure that they were consistent with the U.S. Constitution, that they were consistent with Federal law.

Now the majority is saying, forget about it, it does not matter to us whether they are consistent with the U.S. Constitution. It does not matter to us whether they are consistent with Federal law.

But perhaps the most galling part of this entire process, Mr. Speaker, is that this is a situation where the State of Wisconsin has come to this administration numerous times asking for waivers, and each and every time it has come to this administration asking for waivers, what has happened? President Clinton has granted the waivers.

We are not dealing with a situation where President Clinton has been unresponsive. We are not dealing with a situation where he has denied the request for flexibility or the chance for States to act as laboratories of democracy. No. He has worked together on a partnership. He has worked together to allow the State of Wisconsin to experiment. But that is not enough, because now we are dealing with Presidential politics.

So instead of the State and the President working together in a partnership to try to improve the lives of the people of Wisconsin, we have the President of the United States who has offered an olive branch.

Some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle probably did not like the fact that he agreed that he should have the waiver request approved. They did not like it because they felt that he was stealing their issue, that welfare reform is somehow a Republican issue and President Clinton has decided that he agrees with this experiment in the State of Wisconsin. They feel like he pulled one over on them.

But there is not what the American people want. The American people do not care if it is a Republican issue or a Democratic issue; they care if we are making progress.

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So it was wrong, Mr. President. When President Clinton offered an olive branch, the Republicans should not have taken that olive branch, broken it, and stuck it in his eye. That is not the way this body should operate.

REPUBLICANS VIEW ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 30 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, we wanted to talk tonight in response to some of the things that have been going on in Washington. I have with me the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] and the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. HAYWORTH].

I think our first topic that we will go ahead and talk about is this Wisconsin waiver, which basically is saying it gives the State of Wisconsin the right to make their own laws on governing and reforming welfare. President Clinton went out there 2 weeks ago and said, ''I support the waiver for you, I like what you're doing, it's great,'' and when the cameras were on, he was 100 percent for it. Then when the cameras turned off, he backed off.

But the second thing that happened is the Republican Party said, ''Great, a bipartisan chance to work on welfare reform. We welcome it.'' Here is a President who said he wanted to end welfare as we know it, not extend welfare as he has been doing, so let us give him the Wisconsin waiver.

It has been debated, as I understand it from the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. KLUG], 18 months in the Wisconsin Legislature. The gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] was in the State legislature. What is your comment on this?

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I was in a border State in Minnesota. We have been debating welfare reform for a long time. I think you have characterized it absolutely correctly, that this bill that passed the Wisconsin Legislature, it is a giant step forward in terms of encouraging more work and personal responsibility.

The President went to Wisconsin, said that he supported what was happening in Wisconsin, would grant them the waiver, and then somewhere between getting on the plane in Madison to fly back to Washington, something happened and all of a sudden some of the bureaucrats here in Washington apparently got to the President and said well, maybe we cannot support all of those waivers, and all we are trying to do is actually help the President to keep one more campaign promise. I am really surprised at the characterization we heard here just a few moments ago.

Mr. HAYWORTH. I would join my colleague from Minnesota, and I thank my friend from Georgia for yielding. Yes, I would have to take issue with the statements of our friend from Wisconsin, playing off some of the philosophical biases of some of the self-appointed potentates and pundits around the Beltway as if issues are there to be stolen or plagiarized.

That is not the issue in this case. What is the issue is something that is seemingly oft repeated in this dynmaic which exists between the legislative branch of government and the executive branch, and that is, unfortunately, and I say this not with any glee nor with venom or vitriol, there simply is an inconsistency between the President's words and the President's deeds.

And so again what we are doing in the new majority, with sincere folks from the other side of the aisle, is to step beyond partisanship and give the President the vote of confidence, I think we could almost say, to move forward with the very waivers he so willingly embraced. My friend from Georgia recalls that twice now we have passed welfare reform, mindful of the President's words to end welfare as we know it. We have done it twice and twice we have seen that legislation vetoed.

Mr. KINGSTON. I want to make the point that the liberal media has given President Clinton a free ride on just about any issue. What the Congress is saying, ''We're giving you a chance, Mr. President, if you're going to talk the talk, walk the walk.''

You mentioned that we have passed welfare twice and it has been vetoed by this President twice. In fact, the last bill passed the U.S. Senate by a vote of 87 to 12. That is a very strong bipartisan statement, particularly from the Senate which is not exactly letting a lot of legislation go.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I would just add to that, the discussion we have had today and we have heard tonight on special orders is really again sort of back to this fundamental debate between those who believe that in the final analysis Washington knows best and those of us who would like to see, whether we are talking about Medicare reform or welfare reform, to decentralize this thing and allow States and individuals to