

So we must again visit the balanced budget question. We must move forward with a real balanced budget to respond to the demand of the people that we institute a culture, at least a governmental culture of responsibility that will set an example for this society. We must move forward on the reforms which are before us. We cannot stop now. We must continue to address the agenda of the American people.

This is the great opportunity of this Congress, that we change the way Washington does business. And by changing the way Washington does business, we signal to America that there is a new demand for accountability and responsibility in this society: We no longer spend money we do not have; we no longer fail to live under the laws which we pass; we no longer try to direct the activities of other governmental entities. No, our conduct will be responsible instead of irresponsible—pay our debts, live under the laws we pass. Yes, we will stop telling governments much better prepared to make decisions than we are how those decisions ought to be made. All of those things are included in the monumental changes sweeping through the Congress. But the sweeping through is not complete. Sweeping through is a process, and it is a process which we must continue, which we must extend, which we must, as a matter of fact, complete. We must have the discipline and the determination to carry through on these programs.

We are in the midst of a debate on the question of product liability. The question is whether companies will be held responsible for things they really had nothing to do with, whether rental car companies that had nothing but ownership of a car which was stolen or otherwise wrongfully taken will be held accountable for millions of dollars of damage done with the car.

We have a tremendous energy that is pent up, a momentum in the culture of irresponsibility, and it is not easy for us to stop the spending, to stop the conduct which has promoted and validated irresponsibility for the last several decades. It is something on which we have made a great start and from which we should not turn. It is a task which we must continue.

So as we review, looking back, the significant achievements of the first 100 days, let us never forsake the potentials of the next 100 days. I think we have reached a threshold, a tipping point. We have reached an opportunity to continue to institute as a regular means of operation this culture of responsibility in Government. Let us make sure that in these next 100 days we do not turn back; that we continue to move forward on the agenda of the American people.

Mr. THURMOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

(The remarks of Mr. THURMOND pertaining to the introduction of S. 727 and S. 728 are located in today's

RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

(The remarks of Mr. LOTT and Mr. BAUCUS pertaining to the introduction of S. 729 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. PRYOR addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). Under the previous order, the Senator from Arkansas is recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I thank the Chair for recognizing me.

AN IRRESPONSIBLE LETTER

Mr. PRYOR. When President Clinton recently issued a warning against intemperate speech, Mr. President, a lot of people took those remarks as an attack on radio talk show hosts. But I would like to point out that the talk show hosts by no means have a corner on that market, and that we should all focus our attention on the rhetoric that is used by certain public interest groups and ourselves alike when we try to raise money through the coffers of public interest groups for our political campaigns.

I would particularly, Mr. President, like to call your attention to a recent letter issued by the National Rifle Association under the signature of its executive vice president, Wayne LaPierre.

This 5-page poison-pen letter is a revolting example of hateful, incendiary, irresponsible speech. It seeks to whip the readers into a frenzy against the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Mr. President, this letter is obscene. While the ostensible purpose of this letter is to raise money for the National Rifle Association, it may well have the unintended and unfortunate side effect of stoking the fires of militant groups across this country of whom our citizens now have cause to fear.

In his letter, Mr. LaPierre says that the Federal ban on semiautomatic weapons "gives jack-booted Government thugs more power to take our constitutional rights away, break in our doors, seize our guns, destroy our property, and even injure or kill us."

Mr. LaPierre further continues in his letter:

In Clinton's administration, if you have a badge, you have the Government's go-ahead to harass, intimidate, even murder law-abiding citizens.

Randy Weaver at Ruby Ridge . . . Waco and the Branch Davidians . . . Not too long ago, it was unthinkable for Federal agents wearing Nazi bucket helmets and black storm trooper uniforms to attack law-abiding citizens.

Not today, not with Clinton.

In another part of the letter, Mr. LaPierre warns that what he sees as the attack on the second amendment to the Constitution "is only the first in a long campaign to destroy the freedoms at the core of American life." The letter continues:

You can see it when jack-booted Government thugs, wearing black, armed to the teeth, break down a door, open fire with an automatic weapon, and kill or maim law-abiding citizens.

Mr. LaPierre calls for a "major show of force" by America's 80 million gun owners. Mr. LaPierre concludes:

This, the battle we're fighting today, is a battle to retake the most precious, the most sacred ground on Earth. This is a battle for freedom.

Well, Mr. President, these are very stirring words indeed, and I am sure it has been quite a success for the national fundraising activities of the National Rifle Association. It has been a great fundraising tool.

I noticed yesterday that Mr. LaPierre told a reporter, and I quote, "the last thing the NRA wants is a fight with the ATF." Mr. President, I would be hard pressed to conclude that, based upon the incendiary, obscene nature of this letter that Mr. LaPierre sent across our country.

Let me make it very clear that I am not today blaming the National Rifle Association for the explosion in Oklahoma City, but I am suggesting that I think that any reasonable person would conclude that the words Wayne LaPierre has been using, the images he has been conjuring up has played directly into the fears that exist in the types of groups that apparently are responsible for the bombing and other terrorist attacks.

In that regard, the paid lobbyists and the chief fundraiser for the National Rifle Association have been tossing kerosene onto the fire. The leaders of the National Rifle Association must realize that these words have consequences and rights are accompanied by responsibilities. A loose tongue, Mr. President, can be just as dangerous as an unholstered gun when either is employed by an irresponsible person.

The National Rifle Association takes great pride in touting its programs to train responsible gun owners. I hope that its leadership today will now realize the need to teach and practice itself the responsible use of free speech.

Before the folks at the National Rifle Association start accusing this Senator of trying to take away their first amendment rights, as well as their second amendment rights, let me make it very plain that I have no intention of taking action to forcibly muzzle any of them through any action by the Congress of the United States. I am not questioning the right of the NRA to say what it wishes in its fundraising letters. But I do believe, Mr. President, that Wayne LaPierre should be absolutely ashamed of what he has written in this letter to his members of the National Rifle Association.

Just because in our society one might have the right to do something or to say something does not mean that he should say it. Just because one has the protection of the first amendment in our Constitution is no reason

to abuse that protection or to abuse the first amendment.

Politicians and lobbyists, unfortunately, have relied much too heavily on the language of hyperbole to claim its share of the marketplace of ideas. This letter, written by the executive vice president of the National Rifle Association, is certainly not the only instance of hyperbole and the National Rifle Association is certainly far from its only practitioner.

Mr. President, I today am not attacking the members of the National Rifle Association, but I cannot believe—knowing many good members of that organization—I cannot believe that the National Rifle Association members support their organization, their leadership demonizing a Federal law enforcement official or an agency.

Mr. President, how much time do I have, I might ask?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 1 minute 20 seconds.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I can remember about 35 years ago when I was first elected to a position of State representative of Ouachita County. During my first term in office, I first heard of the National Rifle Association. I would like to tell you about it, if I might.

Over one weekend during that first term of my first session, a young child, 5 or 6 years of age, in a grocery store parking lot saw a gun rack in a truck in the next vehicle, got out of his parents' car while they were in the store, got into the truck, took the rifle from the gun rack and killed himself accidentally. The town became very upset, and they asked me to see if there was anything we could do about it.

I introduced the next week, at the behest of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, with the support of law enforcement officials throughout the State, a very simple proposal that said something like this: That no automobile—truck or car—in the incorporated city limits of any community in our State of Arkansas shall be able to carry a loaded shotgun or a rifle. Pretty simple. It passed 99-0 in the house of representatives.

It went to the State senate and, Mr. President, that is when I first heard of the National Rifle Association. All of a sudden, throughout America, there was a bulletin that Representative PRYOR is trying to take your guns away in the State of Arkansas, and if this happens, it is going to happen all across the country and we need to stop it now.

Needless to say, Mr. President, my bill did not become law. It died in the State senate of Arkansas. I remember still getting hundreds of telegrams and letters from all over our country protesting this legislation.

But there is one I especially recall, one specific letter I received during that battle. It was from a former college roommate I had from the University of Arkansas, and it went something like this: Dear DAVID, I never knew all that time that I was your friend and roommate at the university that you were a Communist.

Well, Mr. President, that is what we have today—the selling of fear. It is continuing and it must stop. I am hopeful, Mr. President, that the membership of the National Rifle Association will question some of the positions of its leadership in attempting to sell fear at this most incendiary time in our Nation's history.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the letter from Mr. LaPierre be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

DEAR FELLOW AMERICANS: I've worn out a lot of shoe leather walking the halls of Congress. I've met key leaders, I've talked with old allies, I've met with the new Congressmen and many staff members.

What I'm hearing and seeing concerns me.

Many of our new Congressmen are ignoring America's 80 million gun owners. Some have forgotten what we did to elect them. Others say our demands to restore our Constitutional freedoms are "politically out of line."

Don't get me wrong, not all of them are like this. Senator Phil Gramm, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and Congressman Bill McCollum, Bill Brewster and Harold Volkmer are all coming to our aid. But too many others are not.

And without a major show of force by America's 80 million gun owners, America will resume its long march down the road to gun bans, destruction of the Constitution and loss of every sacred freedom.

I want you to know I'm not looking for a fight.

But when you consider the facts of our current situation, you too, will see we have no other choice.

Fact No. 1: The Congress' leading anti-gunners, Senators Dianne Feinstein, Ted Kennedy and Congressmen Charles Schumer and Major Owens all survived their last elections.

They've pledged to fight us to the bitter end for Brady II and its ammo taxes, licensing and registration schemes, gun rationing, bureaucrats with the power to determine if you "need" a gun and yes, the repeal of the Second Amendment.

It doesn't matter to them that the Brady Law is a failure.

It doesn't matter to them that the Brady Law has become one more tool that government agents are using to deny the Constitutional rights of law abiding citizens.

It doesn't matter to them that the semi-auto ban gives jack-booted government thugs more power to take away our Constitutional rights, break in our doors, seize our guns, destroy our property, and even injure or kill us.

Schumer, Feinstein, Kennedy, Owens and the rest of the anti-gunners want more and more gun control.

It can be something small and subtle like a regulation expanding the disqualification criteria for the Brady Law. They're fighting for anything that makes it harder for you to own a gun.

The gun banners simply don't like you. They don't trust you. They don't want you to own a gun. And they'll stop at nothing until they've forced you to turn over your guns to the government.

Fact No. 2: If the anti-gunners fail to achieve their goals in Congress, they have a fall-back position in Bill Clinton, the most anti-gun President in American history.

In two short years, Bill Clinton launched two successful attacks on the Constitution. He signed two gun control bills into law. He

has sworn to veto any repeal of the semi-auto ban and any restoration of our Constitutional rights.

His Interior and Agriculture Departments have set their sights on closing hunting lands.

And his Environmental Protection Agency is attempting to take jurisdiction over existing uses of lead. This, of course, includes gun ranges and spent shot.

What's more, gun owners aren't the only ones Clinton's EPA has set its sights on. They're after fishermen, too. They want to BAN the use of small lead fishing sinkers and, of gravest concern, they want to stop the home casting of these sinkers.

If fishing sinkers are on the Clinton bureaucrat's list, you know what's next: lead shot, lead bullets, bullet casting and reloading.

Clinton's State Department is also adding to the attacks on gun owners and our Constitutional freedoms. In December, he signed the Summit of the Americas agreements which pledges that the U.S. Government will push for additional gun control.

Over in the Justice Department, Clinton's Attorney General Janet Reno has signaled her intent to "squash" the states' rights movement and deny states their Constitutional power.

And worst of all,

Fact No. 3: President Clinton's army of anti-gun government agents continues to intimidate and harass law-abiding citizens.

In Clinton's administration, if you have a badge, you have the government's go-ahead to harass, intimidate, even murder law-abiding citizens.

Randy Weaver at Ruby Ridge . . . Waco and the Branch Davidians . . . Not too long ago, it was unthinkable for Federal agents wearing nazi bucket helmets and black storm trooper uniforms to attack law-abiding citizens.

Not today, not with Clinton.

Our calls to investigate these outrageous assaults on our Constitutional freedoms are routinely silenced by the anti-gun media. But that's no surprise.

Fact No. 4: They've launched a new wave of brainwashing propaganda aimed at further destroying our Constitutional freedoms.

CBS, ABC, NBC, USA Today, Time, Newsweek and The New York Times have launched another round of phony polls and slanted stories to help the anti-gunners achieve their goals.

Their latest phony poll shows 70% of America support the "semi-auto" assault weapon ban.

That's simply not true. When it's explained that "semi-autos" are used in less than a fraction of one percent of crimes; that the ban only affects the law-abiding; and, that the ban is only one more way to deny Constitutional rights to the law-abiding, support for the ban drops to 30%.

But the media still uses this 70% statistic to trumpet the call for gun control.

What scares me the most about this 70% number is that the media has brainwashed 70% of Americans into believing that the government—and not each individual—is responsible for their personal protection.

Even worse, this 70% number means that there are enough people who can be brainwashed by the media to vote for a repeal of the Second Amendment if it were put to a vote.

The media, Clinton, the anti-gunners in Congress . . . this combination is a powder keg that could blow at any moment and it's set squarely underneath the Constitution.

And what this means is:

Fact No. 5: Congress must be forced to restore the Constitution, repeal the gun bans, investigate abuse by government agents and focus the public debate on criminal control, not gun control. . . .

. . . Or what we're seeing now will only be a momentary patch of sunshine on the road to doom for the Second Amendment and our Constitution.

There is hope, though. Despite the current situation, I'm encouraged by you and your fellow NRA members.

Everywhere I go, to every gun show, every NRA-ILA grassroots operation, every Friends of NRA Dinner, even in cabs and airports around the country, I run into NRA members who understand the stakes and stand ready to fight.

The question I hear from almost every one of these NRA members is the same: "What can I do next?"

If you're one of those members, I want to thank you for your courage, your conviction and your spirit. You keep me going. You keep me on the road. You give me strength to lead the battle.

And if you want to join me in taking the next step, I need you to do these two things today.

First, I need you to sign the enclosed Petitions to the United States Congress.

These petitions are addressed to the leaders of the U.S. Congress, Senator Robert Dole and Speaker Newt Gingrich, and your U.S. Senators Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Alfonse M. D'Amato and Congresswoman Sue Kelly.

Please be sure to sign all five petitions, then fold them and place them in the enclosed, postage-paid envelope addressed to me at NRA Headquarters.

These petitions spell out, in black and white, our agenda of repeal, reform, investigate and limit government power.

In the first amendment of the Bill of Rights, we are guaranteed the right to "petition our Government for a redress of grievances."

And that's exactly what we're going to do: redress our grievances in the biggest and most powerful display of political clout and commitment to the Constitution.

I want to personally deliver your five petitions, and the petitions of all 3.5 million of your fellow NRA members—17.5 million petitions in all—to Congress.

And I want to show the leadership in Congress, and your Senators and Congressmen from New York, that the number one priority in their Contract With America must be defending and restoring our Constitutional freedoms.

17.5 million Petitions to Congress is the largest "redress of grievances" since the Constitution and the Bill of Rights were written.

So I KNOW Congress will get the message. And I know they'll act on our agenda of Repeal, Reform and Investigate if only you and I speak out.

Your Petitions to Congress also sends another message—a message not spelled out on the Petitions themselves.

Each Congressman, on the average, will receive 8,000 Petitions from NRA members demanding action. 8,000 messages from angry voters sounds an alarm in every Congressman's head.

You see, most Congressional elections were won or lost by 5,000 votes or less. So, they'll realize that failing to defend the Second Amendment and failing to retake the Constitutional freedoms lost to the anti-gunners, could result in big losses at the next election!

That's why it's critical you take a few minutes to sign your Petitions to Congress and return them to me as soon as possible.

These petitions are our D-Day.

Armed with these petitions and our First Amendment rights, we are going to storm Congress, knock out anti-gunner strongholds and recapture every bit of ground we lost since Bill Clinton took office.

And if we're successful, these petitions will be the turning point in the history of the Constitution. . . . A day when our sacred right to keep and bear arms will be secure for the next generation of law-abiding Americans.

Second, when you return your signed Petitions to Congress, I need you to make a special contribution to the NRA of \$15, \$20, \$25, \$35, \$50 or the most generous amount you can afford.

Most Americans don't realize that our freedoms are slowly slipping away.

They don't understand that politicians and bureaucrats are chipping away at the American way of life.

They're destroying business, destroying our economy, destroying property rights, destroying our moral foundation, destroying our schools, destroying our culture. . . .

. . . Destroying our Constitution.

And the attack, either through legislation or regulation, on the Second Amendment is only the first in a long campaign to destroy the freedoms at the core of American life.

You can see it in the gun bans, certainly. But you can also see it in closed ranges, closed hunting lands, confiscated collectors' firearms, banned magazines and ammunition taxes.

You can see it when jack-booted government thugs, wearing black, armed to the teeth, break down a door, open fire with an automatic weapon, and kill or maim law-abiding citizens.

America's gun owners will only be the first to lose their freedoms.

If we lose the right to keep and bear arms, then the right to free speech, free practice of religion, and every other freedom in the Bill of Rights are sure to follow.

I am one American who is not going to sit on the sidelines and watch this happen.

And if you want to help me stop this destruction of the Constitution, then I hope you can make that special contribution of \$15, \$20, \$35, \$25 or \$50 to the NRA today.

With your special contribution, I'll have the financial ammo I need to keep Congress focused on the mission we've assigned them.

First, with your help, I will expand our petition campaign to involve as many of America's 80 million gun owners as possible.

If we can double the number of Petitions flooding Congress, we'll double the speed Congress deals with our demands to Repeal, Reform and Investigate. And with double the show of clout, we'll wipe out anti-gunner opposition.

Second, with your special contribution, I can increase the NRA's public exposure on talk shows, at rallies and shows, in radio and T.V. advertising and through broadcasts like the NRA's Town Meeting that first sounded our alarm in 16 million households, last summer.

Part of our problem is that far too few Americans understand what's at stake in these battles.

My ultimate goal is to educate the American people that this issue is not just about guns, not just about hunting, not just about personal protection; this issue is about freedom—Your Freedom.

I want to use the power of T.V. and radio to show the American people that, if the NRA fails to restore our Second Amendment freedoms, the attacks will begin on freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom from unreasonable search and seizure. . . .

. . . And that unless we take action today, the long slide down the slippery slope will

only continue until there's no freedom left in America at all.

I know you see it. The elbow room you have to hunt, shoot and live life the way you see fit is slowly disappearing.

And the truth is, NRA members have been hardened by legislative battles. And only NRA members have the courage, the conviction to draw the line in the sand.

That's why I'm hoping you can take a few moments to sign and date the enclosed Petitions and return them to me with your special contribution of \$15, \$20, \$25, \$35, \$50 or more in the enclosed postage-paid envelope today. Or, you can charge by phone by calling 800-547-4NRA today.

You know, besides going shooting, I love to go to football games. And every time I go, I always hear my fellow fans talk about the impact of "the 12th man."

The 11 players calling the plays and doing the hitting get a lot of their motivation from the 12th man in the stands. I'm talking about the crowd who cheers wildly when our team is on the offense, and drowns out the signals of the opposing team when they're on the defense.

I need you to be that 12th man.

I need you to sign your Petitions to Congress and return them to me today. That simple act will give our allies the political courage to do what's right, to push ahead with our agenda of Repeal, Reform and Investigate.

Likewise, your signed Petitions to Congress will confuse and demoralize the anti-gun team and their agenda of bans, taxes, intimidation, harassment and destruction of the Constitution.

I know I've said what I'm about to say before. But this is a message that resonates with NRA members across the land. It's something I hope you, too, will say whenever you have the occasion to defend our Constitutional freedoms.

This, the battle we're fighting today, is a battle to retake the most precious, most sacred ground on earth. This is a battle for freedom.

Please tell me you're ready to take the next step by returning your signed Petitions to Congress and special gift to me in the enclosed postage-paid envelope today.

Thank you, I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours in Freedom,

WAYNE LAPIERRE,

Executive Vice President.

P.S.—As a special thank you for making a special contribution of \$25 or more, I'd like to send you a copy of my national best-selling book, *Guns, Crime, and Freedom*. *Guns, Crime, and Freedom* is 263 pages of truth about guns, gun control, gun owners, the anti-gun media and what's happening to our freedoms.

I hope you'll read it and use it in your own personal campaign in New York to defend the Constitution. Use *Guns, Crime, and Freedom* to help you keep the pressure on Congress, write letters to the editor and teach other Americans about the battle we're fighting today. Thanks again for your support and friendship.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, before I commence my remarks I want to congratulate Senator PRYOR on the very bold and very strong statement that he has made this morning. I think he is right on the mark. I say to Senator PRYOR that, like he, we have a lot of good, decent, hard-working, law abiding NRA members in the State of Iowa—there are hundreds—like I am. I know that they are as repulsed by Mr. LaPierre's letter as the Senator from

Arkansas. It is a shame when you have an organization with a lot of fine people in it that do abide by the law, that do want to instill in people a respect for guns and to teach them how to use them legitimately, responsibly, and to have an organization, then, taken over by the likes of Wayne LaPierre, and to really take what could otherwise be a decent organization which could instill in young people a healthy respect for firearms and hunting, and to move that organization, as he has done with this kind of letter, into almost an organization that would be disrespectful of our Constitution and disrespectful of the United States of America, I know he does not speak for the members of the NRA that live in Iowa.

Mr. PRYOR. If I might say, I appreciate the Senator's remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Iowa [Mr. HARKIN] is recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes.

(The remarks of Mr. HARKIN pertaining to the introduction of legislation are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak as in morning business for a period of not more than 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEDICARE TICKING TIME BOMB

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, yesterday I began discussions on the pending insolvency of Medicare, predicted to occur in the year 2002, just 7 years from today.

I called Medicare a ticking time bomb. I expressed my concern that this body has not addressed that ticking time bomb. We must act now to preserve Medicare, to protect it, to save it, to disarm that ticking time bomb.

I will continue those discussions this morning.

Congress and all Americans must realize that it is the Federal Government, through the Medicare program, that is the purchaser of health care for this country's seniors and people with disabilities. The same Government that brought you \$100 hammers is also shopping for scalpels and stethoscopes. The Federal Government spends more money on health care than individuals, and more than employers. But, it's not our money. If it were, we would likely be more prudent consumers. We would likely react more quickly and more responsibly to skyrocketing costs.

So whose money do we spend? For the answer, we should revisit the creation of the program and remind ourselves of its intended role in our health care system when it was created in 1965. Also it is time to understand the shortfalls of the program.

Because the program was created to increase seniors' access to acute care, Congress mandated participation for hospital services, called Medicare part

A. After seniors pay for a relatively low deductible—\$716 in 1995, Medicare fully covers expenses for 60 hospital days. If a senior's hospitalization exceeds the 60 days in 1 year, he or she is responsible for a co-insurance fee—\$179 per day for the 61st through 90th days, and \$358 per day beyond that.

Medicare part A comprises 63 percent of all Medicare spending. It is funded by the Medicare portion of the Social Security payroll tax—a tax of 2.9 percent of all income—split evenly between employer and employee. Taxes collected from today's workers go directly to pay for services delivered to today's beneficiaries. It is important to understand that contributions to Medicare do not actually sit in the hospital insurance [HI] trust fund and wait for you. Rather, they are paid out immediately to meet the needs of today's seniors and people with disabilities. Beginning in 1997, the part A expenditures will exceed total income annually.

Medicare's part B goes to pay doctor bills and is voluntary. It is funded 30 percent from beneficiary premiums and 70 percent by automatic withdrawals from Treasury general revenues. Today, a senior opting for Medicare part B pays \$46.10 each month and is responsible for a \$100 annual deductible and 20 percent co-insurance for most services. General revenues provide a 70 to 75 percent premium subsidy and cover 80 percent of most services.

Theoretically, the funding arrangement for part A—the hospital insurance—would work fine if the demographics of the population were constant, if medical technology were constant, and if the growth of overall expenditures were constant. But, as we all know, this is not the case.

First—and most importantly—the elderly population is growing much faster than the overall population. In 1990, 2.1 million Americans qualified for Medicare. But in the year 2020, 3.9 million new enrollees will qualify—almost twice as many new enrollees will be qualifying that year. And who pays the bill? The working generation, which is not growing nearly as fast. When Medicare was created, two workers would cover the costs of the Medicare beneficiary. By the time I qualify for the program, it will take four workers to cover the same cost.

Consider the consequences of delaying Medicare reform. I have three sons: Bryan is 7 years old, Jonathan is 9, and Harrison is 11. In the year 2020, they will be 32, 34, and 36 years old. I will be 68 and eligible for Medicare benefits. My sons and their generation will pay for the services for my generation. It will take the taxes of all my three sons plus another individual just to pay for my own Medicare benefits. It is intolerable to punish our children, the next generation, with this inequity.

Second, medical breakthroughs are allowing people to live healthier and longer lives. Take my own field of heart disease as an example. Thirty

years ago, there were few heart intensive care units in the country. Coronary artery bypass surgery had never been performed. Cardiovascular drugs were in their infancy. Heart transplants were but a dream for the future. Today, because of advances in medical science and technology, people who used to die of their heart disease are living 10, 20, or 30 years longer, and those new technologies are expensive.

Back to my earlier question, "Whose money is this?" Medicare is paid for by three vehicles: a 2.9 percent payroll tax, split by employers and employees; general revenue tax dollars; and beneficiary premiums, copayments, and deductibles.

I think it is safe to say that tax-paying workers are more watchful of the money coming out of their pockets than is the Federal Government. I know the employers are. We have recently seen their impact on the health care system as they have struggled with increasing costs. I have witnessed through my own parents that seniors are prudent purchasers of health care services. Since Medicare was not designed as a comprehensive insurance program, seniors already shop for additional health care coverage. Most seniors today live within a fixed budget. They are careful to judge the value of their health care dollar.

By failing to mend this program, we are failing all of these groups who will suffer from our inattention in the years to come. Yet, there is an ongoing premise that the Federal Government should not attempt to manage its spending of the Medicare dollar. Every other purchaser has to manage his or her money. Why should the Federal Government be exempt?

And, how does this country pay for our failure to manage the Medicare Program? First, employers pay in the form of higher health care costs. For the last 10 years, Congress has chosen to repeatedly cut payments to physicians and hospitals for services delivered. This reduces program costs incrementally, but does little to reduce the overall rate of growth of expenditures. Lower Medicare payments, especially when coupled with even lower Medicaid payments, simply lead providers to shift costs and to charge self-pay and privately insured patients more. This increases everyone's insurance premiums. In east Tennessee, a recent survey of physician fees found that the private sector is paying physicians, on average, 220 percent above Medicare rates. Depending on the specific procedure, these private plans are paying anywhere from 43 to 461 percent above Medicare rates. Without Medicare reform, private health insurance will continue to climb even further out of reach and all Americans will suffer reduced access and thus reduced overall quality.

Second, the working generation pays for our mismanagement of Medicare through increased taxes. Over the last