

Instead, it's senior citizens, the poor, students and ordinary Americans who'll see programs they depend on gutted, while business, finance and the richest 1 or 2 percent, far from making sacrifices, actually get new benefits and new tax reductions.

He says:

In short, aid to dependent grandmothers, children, college students and city dwellers is to be slashed, while aid to dependent corporations, stockbrokers, generals and assorted James Bond imitators survives and even grows. And if the deficit is substantially reduced under a program like this, there'll be a second stage of further upward income redistribution from upper bracket profits in the stock and bond markets.

Again, Kevin Phillips, a Republican says:

If the U.S. budget deficit problem does represent the fiscal equivalent of war—and maybe it does—then what we are really looking at is one of the most flagrant examples of war profiteering this century has seen.

Mr. President, the debate will be about priorities. We ought to balance the budget, we ought to do it by the year 2002, but there are a lot of ways to get to that destination. You do not have to run down the road and stop and pick up a few dollars from those who cannot afford it and then make another stop and give to those who have a substantial amount already. That is the purpose of, I think, the discussion of the Senator from Hawaii.

We are talking about the Republican party that brings a budget to the floor and gives very big tax cuts for the wealthy and takes it from things that are important—kids who go to school, working families and the elderly. We think that these priorities are not in step or keeping with the best interests of this country.

Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my time to the Senator from Hawaii, Senator AKAKA.

Mr. AKAKA addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

MAJORITY'S BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR MEDICARE AND VETERAN'S ADMINISTRATION HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I want to say good morning to my friend who is now presiding, Senator INHOFE, from Oklahoma, and wish him a good day.

I am here to express some of my concerns about some parts of the budget, and particularly Medicare and Veterans' Administration health care programs.

Mr. President, earlier this week the Republican-controlled Budget Committees unveiled their 7-year budget resolutions. The House resolution provides a generous tax cut for wealthy Americans. The Senate resolution would allow not one, but two tax cut proposals. The first would be \$170 billion in tax cuts once the Congressional Budget Office certifies that the savings from cutting Medicare, education, VA health care, and the other programs targeted for reductions are, in fact, achieved.

Further tax cuts would be permitted if the budget is reduced by an amount that is greater than the reductions already proposed by the Senate budget resolution. We can clearly see that Republicans in the House and Senate have laid the foundation for implementing the tax proposals outlined in the Contract With America. To pay for their tax cuts they must reduce programs that help working families and the elderly.

The Senate budget resolution proposes a \$256 billion cut in Medicare spending over 7 years, but provides no guidelines on how these savings will be achieved. This will be the largest Medicare cut in history, and the impact on beneficiaries and providers will be very painful.

If Medicare cuts of this magnitude are approved, the Department of Health and Human Services estimates that senior citizen's out-of-pocket expenses will increase by \$900 a year, or a total of \$3,500 over the 7 years. Eighty-three percent of Medicare benefits go to beneficiaries with incomes under \$25,000.

It is obvious who will be hurt by these cuts. Our Nation's low-income elderly, who can least afford it, will bear the brunt of the Medicare cuts.

In addition, cuts to providers will have serious ramifications on health care costs since they are passed along to other health care consumers. Provider cuts could have a devastating impact on urban hospitals which already bear a disproportionate share of the Nation's growing burden of uncompensated care. Reductions in Medicare payments will also endanger access to care in rural areas. Nearly 10 million Medicare beneficiaries—25 percent of the total Medicare population—live in rural areas. There is often only a single hospital in their county. Significant cuts in Medicare may force rural hospitals to close or cause more providers to refuse to treat Medicare beneficiaries.

The Senate Budget Committee was given the opportunity to restore the cuts in Medicare funding. Two amendments were offered to scrap the tax cut for the rich in order to fund Medicare. Unfortunately, they were rejected on party-line votes. This massive cut in Medicare funding would not be necessary if the majority abandoned their tax cut for the wealthy.

Under the Republican plan, the wealthy will gain while our elderly population suffers more pain. Instead of cutting Medicare, we must work to ensure that any effort to maintain the solvency of the Medicare trust fund does not put Medicare beneficiaries at risk. And, we must protect the program for future enrollees. This problem can and should be solved in the context of health care reform.

I recognize the critical need to ensure long-term stability in the Medicare Program and I support efforts to balance our budget. However, I am opposed to arbitrarily cutting Medicare

to finance a tax break for wealthy Americans. I look forward to working with my colleagues on addressing these important issues.

Just as health care benefits are being cut for our senior citizens dependent on Medicare, the freeze proposed on veterans health care programs would be equally devastating for our elderly veterans.

At first glance, the majority budget seems to have little impact on veterans health care programs. The chairman's mark shields the Veterans Health Administration from cuts, and freezes funding at the 1995 level. However, if you examine the long-term impact of the proposal, you find that the proposed freeze will have a debilitating effect on health care provided to our Nation's veterans.

The budget resolution contains only half of the annual cost-of-living adjustments [COLA], so the Veterans' Administration must absorb the remainder of the increase from a budget that is already being held flat. This will mean that fewer resources will be available to veterans seeking access to veteran health care programs.

In fiscal year 1996, the majority's proposal will cut \$640 million from the Veterans Health Administration's budget compared to the President's budget request. The options to cope with this cut include the elimination of 8,200 health care providers and support staff or closing Veterans Administration Medical Centers [VAMC] to achieve a total reduction of 1,500 patient beds. In terms of direct care services, 57,000 inpatient and 1,300,000 outpatient visits for 142,000 patients would be foregone in fiscal year 1996 under the Republican proposal.

Under their proposal, by the year 2002, 53,000 full-time-equivalent positions would be eliminated or 35 Veterans' Administration medical centers would have to be closed. Over a 7-year period, one-fourth of the current medical care positions would have to be eliminated and 35 of the 159 Veterans' Administration medical centers currently serving veterans across the country would be closed if the Republican proposal is implemented.

Health care facilities and personnel are not the only areas which will be affected by the majority's proposal. Medical research within the Veterans' Administration would also be frozen at the fiscal year 1995 appropriation level. This will significantly impact the specialized services the Veterans' Administration provides, including spinal cord and prosthetics research. In fiscal year 1996, over 150 projects would have to be terminated to meet the budget constraints imposed by the majority.

The cumulative impact for Veterans Health Administration services over 7 years would decimate the Veterans' Administration health care system as we know it. By the year 2002, the Veterans Health Administration budget would have lost \$20.6 billion over 7 years. Over 1.5 million inpatient and 34

million outpatient visits for 3.7 million patients would have been denied under the majority's budget blueprint, and we will have turned our backs on the majority of those who so valiantly served this Nation.

Mr. President, this has been our findings in reading through the budget proposal that will be presented today to the Senate. The majority's budget proposals for cuts to Medicare and freezing Veterans' Administration health care programs are simply, in my eyes and in my heart, unacceptable. You cannot single out health care for one segment of the population for cuts without serious consequences. The senior citizens of today, the veterans of today, should not have the rugs pulled out from under them. So, therefore, I urge my colleagues to reject these unwise proposals.

I yield the remainder of my time.

IS CONGRESS IRRESPONSIBLE? THE VOTERS HAVE SAID "YES"

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the impression simply will not go away: The \$4.8 trillion Federal debt is a grotesque parallel to the energizer bunny we see, and see, and see on television. The Federal debt keeps going and going and going—up, of course—always to the added misery of the American taxpayers.

So many politicians talk a good game—when, that is, they go home to talk—and "talk" is the operative word—about bringing Federal deficits and the Federal debt under control.

But, sad to say, so many of these very same politicians have regularly voted for one bloated spending bill after another during the 103d Congress and before. Come to think about it, this may have been a primary factor in the new configuration of U.S. Senators as a result of last November's elections.

In any event, Mr. President, as of yesterday, Wednesday, May 17, at the close of business, the total Federal debt stood—down to the penny—at exactly \$4,884,246,600,937.11 or \$18,540.68 per man, woman, and child on a per capital basis. *Res ipsa loquitur*.

THE RETIREMENT OF REAR ADM. PATRICK W. DRENNON, CEC, USN

Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, it has come to my attention that Rear Adm. Patrick W. Drennon will be retiring from the Navy after some 33 years of honorable and distinguished service.

He most recently served as the Director, Facilities and Engineering Division (N44) for the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Logistics), Washington, DC. In this capacity he has provided timely support and accurate information on Navy facility and engineering plans and programs to the Members of the Senate and our professional and personal staffs.

Admiral Drennon was previously the Commander of Western Division, Naval

Facilities Engineering Command [NAVFACENGCOM], headquartered in San Bruno, CA. This was following duty as Deputy Commander for Planning and Assistant Commander for Facilities and Real Estate at NAVFACENGCOM Headquarters in Alexandria, VA, and as Assistant for Civil Engineering (OP-04E) to the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Logistics), Washington, DC.

His other duty assignments have included: Assistant Resident Officer in Charge of Construction in Key West, FL; Public Works Officer at the Naval Facility and the Navy Representative for Construction while on the staff of the Commander, U.S. Forces in the Azores; Operations Officer of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion One on two deployments to Vietnam; an instructor at the Civil Engineer Corps Officers School at Port Hueneme, CA; and an Exchange Officer with the Mediterranean Division, Corps of Engineers, Livorno, Italy. While working with the Corps' Mediterranean Division, he served as the program manager for the planning and design of King Khalid Military City, Saudi Arabia.

Admiral Drennon also served in the Seabee Division, NAVFACENGCOM Headquarters; on the staff of the then-Director, Shore Activities Planning and Programming Division (OP-44) for the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, DC; and as the Executive Officer of the Public Works Center and Resident Officer in Charge of Construction in San Diego, CA.

His awards include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with Combat "V" and a Gold Star, the Meritorious Service Medal with a Gold Star, and the Navy Achievement Medal.

Rear Admiral Drennon has become widely acknowledged as a leader and visionary in the Civil Engineer Corps. As a fellow Georgia Tech Yellow Jacket, I can say that this is no real surprise as Rear Admiral Drennon began his distinguished naval career upon his commissioning out of the NROTC Program at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Mr. President, over the past several years many communities have experienced great anxiety and turmoil as a result of the Department of Defense's base closure process. Rear Admiral Drennon has played a vital role in promoting effective communications and harmonious working relationships in the Navy's base realignment and closure implementation process. He has assisted local civic leaders throughout the country in working through many challenging situations associated with base closure and realignment actions. Rear Admiral Drennon has been equally recognized and appreciated by all who have come to know him.

A man of Rear Admiral Drennon's talent and integrity is rare indeed, and while his honorable service will be genuinely missed, it gives me great pleasure today to recognize him before my colleagues and to wish him, his

wife, Cheryl, and his family every success as he brings to a close a long and distinguished career in the U.S. Navy.

TEXAS ACTS ON FLAG DESECRATION

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, Texas Secretary of State, the Honorable Antonio O. Garza, Jr., has forwarded to me a copy of a resolution passed by the Texas Legislature on March 9, 1995 and signed by Governor George Bush. The resolution petitions the U.S. Congress to propose to the States an amendment to the Constitution of the United States which protects the American flag from willful desecration. I supported the passage of such an amendment in 1990 when the Senate debated the issue and have cosponsored the most recent proposal to ban the desecration of our flag. Secretary Garza has requested that I place in the RECORD the text of the resolution adopted by the Texas Legislature. Because of the importance that I place on this issue, I am requesting unanimous consent that the text of the resolution and the text of a letter from Secretary of State Garza be printed in the RECORD in order that my colleagues have an opportunity to read for themselves this important expression of the collective will of the people of my State.

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

THE STATE OF TEXAS,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
Austin, TX, April 13, 1995.

Hon. PHIL GRAMM,
U.S. Senator, Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR GRAMM: Please find enclosed an official copy of Senate Concurrent Resolution 24, as passed by the 74th Legislature, Regular Session, 1995, of the State of Texas.

The 74th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby petitions the Congress of the United States of America to propose to the states an amendment to the United States Constitution, protecting the American flag and 50 state flags from willful desecration and exempting such desecration from constitutional construction as a First Amendment right.

It is also requested that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States.

Sincerely,

ANTONIO O. GARZA, Jr.,
Secretary of State.

Enclosure.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 24

Whereas, the United States flag belongs to all Americans and ought not be desecrated by any one individual, even under principles of free expression, any more than we would allow desecration of the Declaration of Independence, Statue of Liberty, Lincoln Memorial, Yellowstone National Park, or any other common inheritance which the people of this land hold dear; and

Whereas, the United States Supreme Court, in contravention of this postulate, has by a narrow decision held to be a First Amendment freedom the license to destroy