

## MEDICARE

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

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, after hearing the debate on MediGap this morning, I am here today to make a plea on Medicare. Let us stop the demagoguery—let us roll up our sleeves and deal with the problem. The Medicare trustees have just reported to us that if we do nothing to save the system, the part A trust fund, the heart of the program starts to go broke next year and is bankrupt entirely in 7 short years—not unanticipated by those who have been following it closely—but sobering nonetheless.

Let us deal with it—and the sooner the better. The new CBO Director told us the obvious in recent testimony: "Any delay will require dramatic cuts and program changes in the future." If we start to reform the system now, I believe we can accomplish the twin goals of saving the program from bankruptcy and improving it through private sector innovation, expanded choice and cracking down on fraud. We can do it because, as President Clinton told the AARP in 1993, "Today, Medicaid and Medicare are going up at three times the rate of inflation. We propose to let it go up at two times the rate of inflation. That is not a Medicare or Medicaid cut. So when you hear all this business about cuts, let me caution you that that is not what is going on. We are going to have increases in Medicare and Medicaid, and a reduction in the rate of growth." Let us act now in a bipartisan manner before the problem gets out of hand.

The Medicare trustee report itself stated, "these programs are too important to be politicized and [we] urge that a highly professional, nonpartisan approach continue to be followed."

## DON'T LET REPUBLICANS SLAM THE DOOR SHUT ON STAFFORD LOANS

(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 rise to speak in opposition to the Republican budget proposal as it specifically relates to higher education. Yesterday, I talked about cuts in our elementary and secondary education funds that will hurt our children in public schools. Today, I am going to talk about the House proposal that will increase college costs for 4.5 million college students by eliminating the in-school interest subsidy on Stafford loans. Families who rely on Stafford student loans would pay up to \$3,000 more for the cost of a college education.

These extra costs could put a college education out of reach for many young people in my district. I have a picture

here of a young lady, Yuroba Harris. Yuroba is an honor student at the University of Houston. In order to earn extra money for books and tuition, she works in my district office part time, serving the constituents of the 29th District in Houston, TX.

Elimination of the in-school interest subsidy could put college out of reach for a lot of young people like Yuroba and other middle-class and poor young people all over my district. There is an old proverb: Give a person a fish and they will eat today. Teach them to fish and they will eat for a lifetime. Let us not cut education. Let us make sure they can eat for a lifetime.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF AMERICA'S FOREIGN AID PROGRAM

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, we have been debating the foreign aid bill for the last few days and we have heard a lot of criticisms about foreign aid programs. Some are justified and some are not, but undoubtedly some good things have been accomplished. I would like to include in the RECORD, following my remarks, a recent Cincinnati Post guest column written by my friend, Dan Radford, executive secretary-treasurer of the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council, who has had a very productive working relationship with the U.S. Information Agency.

Working under a grant from USIA, the AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union Institute has worked closely with trade union leaders from Ukraine and Kazakhstan. A delegation from those former Soviet States recently visited Cincinnati to get some positive exposure to our political and economic system, with the local labor council serving as host.

It is my hope that as we move toward a more streamlined and productive foreign policy apparatus, we will be able to work with groups like this and continue in a more efficient way to provide the means for such positive dialog.

I include the Radford article in the RECORD at this time as a valuable contribution to the discussion.

The text of the article is as follows:

## LABOR UNIONS HELP NURTURE DEMOCRACIES IN EASTERN EUROPE

(By V. Daniel Radford)

Semyon Karikov and Gennady Nikitin, trade union leaders from Ukraine and Kazakhstan, visited our city recently to learn about the role institutions like unions play in the community and in our system of government. Their visit was made possible by the AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union Institute under a grant from the U.S. Information Agency. We at the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council served as their local hosts. I had already been on several educational exchange trips to Romania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic under the same FTUI/USIA program.

Why are these exchanges important, and why should our government support these

types of activities? Simply put, because it is in our direct interest to help the countries of Eastern Europe to build institutions—like unions—that bring the rule of law and economic stability to their countries.

Educational exchanges can assist in this process. During their visit, for example, Karikov and Nikitin met with county and city officials from both political parties, with union leaders and rank and file members, and with community political activists. They were given an overview of labor's role in protecting workplace rights and in expressing the voice of workers in politics and economics of a democratic society. They can take these lessons about involvement back to their unions and communities at home.

While Semyon and Gennady visited our city, we learned something too, about how hard life is in the countries of the former Soviet Union. Workers labor in dangerous conditions with no safety equipment and return home to eat their meager meals in the dark and cold because there is no heat or electricity. At times they go weeks and sometimes months without pay; they continue working just to keep their jobs.

Workers in Eastern Europe are still struggling for democracy. In Ukraine and Kazakhstan democracies are not established, and the rule of law doesn't exist. In Ukraine, for example, a man summoned to the police station for questioning was tried, convicted, and carted away to prison on the spot. In both countries, the so-called ex-communists have teamed up with former security officers and mafia-like criminal elements to dominate many aspects of society.

So, for humanitarian reasons alone, the U.S. should remain engaged in helping those who seek to build democracy in Eastern Europe.

It is in our own interest as well: the lack of stability in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and other countries in the former Soviet Union directly threatens the United States. Organized crime groups in Russia alone are roughly ten times larger than the American Mafia. According to FBI Director Louis Freeh "these same crime groups also pose a significant and direct threat to the United States \* \* \* (they) are engaged in a wide range of criminal activities, including complex tax and health care fraud schemes, extortion, money laundering, and drug trafficking."

An even more ominous threat, Secretary of Defense William Perry recently warned, "are (the) still more than 20,000 nuclear weapons in four countries of the former Soviet Union; Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus." He points out that these weapons "could be reconstituted into a threat or that some of them could find a way to rogue regimes."

A growing web of international organized criminals who can control—and sell—sizable stockpiles of nuclear weapons: it's a crisis waiting to happen.

Only a firm, stable government and economy can keep these weapons and criminals under control. Democracy with worker participation can help stabilize nations like Kazakhstan and the Ukraine.

As we have witnessed with Solidarity in Poland, unions have been key in advancing the spread of democracy in the region. And, as we see here at home, unions have a crucial balancing voice in a market economy. During my FTUI visits, I saw Eastern European unions taking steps toward greater political and community involvement, pushing for free elections, a free press, and an understanding and control of economic forces. I think our educational exchanges helped move this process along.

It's fair to ask ourselves if in this time of cost cutting, we can afford programs like the one that brought Semyon and Gennady here.