



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 104th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 141

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1995

No. 117

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

O gracious God, from whom all blessings flow and from whom comes every good gift, we are indebted to You for our hopes, our dreams, our faith. On this day we are specially thankful for all those people who use their abilities to alleviate the conflicts between nations or individuals, who work to ease estrangement between the nations and who bring serenity and a peace to others. Our prayer is to repeat the truth that peacemakers are blessed, that those who encourage reconciliation are honored among us, and that those who seek peace will be blessed, for it is in giving to others that we receive Your bountiful gifts of peace in our own hearts. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BROWN] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will recognize 10 Members on each side for 1-minute speeches.

SAVE MEDICARE

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

Mr. LARGENT. Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, the Medicare Trustees, a bipartisan group appointed by both Republican and Democrat administrations, confirmed to Members of the House of Representatives that unless substantial reforms are made, Medicare will go bankrupt in just 7 years.

To reemphasize—if no action is taken to reform Medicare, and spending continues to increase at the current rate, Medicare will go bankrupt by the year 2002.

This is why we have been working in the House to develop proposals to preserve and protect Medicare. During this work the first and foremost concern is to ensure that Medicare patients receive quality, affordable, and easily accessible health care.

After studying the problem, we learned that preserving the financial stability of the Medicare system can be achieved by doing two things.

First, we must simplify the Medicare system—we must cut out burdensome paperwork and redtape. By private industry standards, the program today is an outdated, Government-run bureaucracy.

We must open up more opportunities within Medicare for seniors to have access to the same type of voluntary offerings available in the private sector.

Second, we must aggressively go after waste, fraud, and abuse that exists in the Medicare system. Ten percent or \$16 billion of the Medicare budget is spent on fraudulent and abusive claims each year.

Critics are already claiming that this reform is a cut in the Medicare Program. This is simply not true. By enacting these modest reforms, Medicare will continue to increase—but at a slower rate.

In fact, costs per beneficiary will continue to increase from \$4,800 per participant in 1995, to \$6,400 per recipient in 2002. How is that a cut?

To play politics with this issue does not help in finding a solution to this problem. To do nothing is totally irresponsible, and unacceptable, as it will result in the Medicare system going bankrupt in 7 years.

Our commitment is to simplify Medicare in order to save Medicare—it is just that simple.

HISTORY OF MEDICARE

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago this month on July 30, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson in Independence, MO, signed the legislation creating Medicare. Earlier that year, 93 percent of House Republicans, including then-Congressman BOB DOLE from Kansas, opposed the creation of Medicare as we know it. Let me repeat that: 93 percent of Republican Members of the House of Representatives in 1965 opposed the creation of Medicare.

In the 1970's and the 1980's the far right of the Republican Party continued to try to make cuts in Medicare and dismantle that program. Today, in 1995, the mainstream part of the Republican Party, Republican leadership, again wants to dismantle Medicare and end the program as we know it.

They were wrong in 1965 when 93 percent of Republicans opposed Medicare. They were wrong in the 1970's and 1980's when the far right wing of the Republican Party wanted to cut Medicare, and they are wrong today to give tax breaks to the wealthy to the tune

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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of \$300 billion and cut Medicare \$270 billion.

Mr. Speaker, it is simply not right.

HOUSE AUDIT IS SYMBOL OF REPUBLICAN COMMITMENT TO OPENNESS

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

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, on opening day of the new Republican Congress we voted to have an independent audit of all House financial records. This week we fulfilled our promise.

Republicans are committed to having regular future audits. We will continue to monitor our progress and instill faith in the American people.

This audit is a symbol of the new Republican Congress and our commitment to openness and reform.

The auditors found that the Democratic controlled 103d Congress had gross disregard for financial controls, business-like practices and frequently waived congressional rules.

We Republicans have already implemented a number of reforms suggested by the auditors. This audit is a road map for future management improvements and for the sake of the American taxpayer we must stay on this course.

The American people deserve this type of government. That is what they voted for on November 8, and that is what the Republican Congress will deliver.

LAWS ARE MEANINGLESS WITHOUT ENFORCEMENT

(Ms. FURSE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FURSE. Mr. Speaker, question: What is the best way to gut a law when you do not want people to know what you are really doing?

Answer: Do what the new majority is doing, cut all the funding for enforcement, and call it fiscal responsibility.

It is obvious that they do not want to be seen for what they really are, anti-environment. So they have decided to take all the money away from enforcement. Everybody knows a law is meaningless if you cannot enforce it.

The new strategy is so simple, but it is so wrong. Here is how it works. If you and your cronies do not like the Clean Air Act regulations, just slash the enforcement funding, and you gut the act without having to vote against the act.

If you and your special interest friends do not like the environmental protection of the Clean Water Act, just zero out the enforcement budget. If you and your buddies do not like the Endangered Species Act and wildlife protection laws, cut all the enforcement money, and poachers and habitat destroyers will go scott free.

The cuts this Republican Congress is making to our environmental protec-

tion laws are extreme, unwise, and underhanded.

MEDICARE

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

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, it is common knowledge that liberal Democrats have absolutely no plan to save Medicare. None. The closest they come to saving Medicare is Bill Clinton's alleged balanced budget. And even here, the Democrats would just delay Medicare bankruptcy by just 3 years—which is not really saving Medicare.

We can also see that liberal Democrats will not even recognize the report of the Medicare Trustees that says Medicare will be stone, cold bankrupt in just 7 years.

After all this, though, Democrats breathlessly defend this program and denounce any Republican effort to save Medicare. Well, my friends you can not have it both ways.

If Democrats want to continue Medicare, but reject the Republican plan, you really only have three options: First, you must increase payroll taxes by 44 percent; or, second, you must immediately decrease Medicare spending by 30 percent; or, third, you must dramatically increase premiums paid by our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, to Republicans none of these possibilities are acceptable. But they show why the Democrats have been so silent about honestly dealing with Medicare.

FOUR JAPANESE TRADING COMPANIES NOW LARGEST IN THE WORLD

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, for years the biggest company in the world—General Motors. Not any more. The new Fortune 500 list, the biggest company in the world, Mitsubishi of Japan; No. 2, Mitsui of Japan; No. 3, Itochu of Japan; No. 4, Sumitomo of Japan; and General Motors, No. 5, barely holding off Marubeni of Japan.

Unbelievable. Mitsubishi is now so big, they are bigger than AT&T, duPont, Citicorp, and Procter & Gamble combined. And, guess what, ladies and gentlemen? All these Japanese companies have one thing in common. They are all trading companies. They make their money selling to America, exporting to your town and my town. And while Japan is selling to America, Congress is fighting over food stamps.

Beam me up. There is no intelligence life left here. No wonder we have a record trade deficit. I yield back my yen.

WE ARE NOT CUTTING MEDICARE

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

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, according to the President and I quote.

Today, Medicaid and Medicare are going up three times the rate of inflation. We propose to let it grow at two times the rate of inflation. That is not a Medicare cut or a Medicaid cut. So when you hear all this business about cuts, let me caution you that that is not what's going on.

While this statement is an excerpt from a speech given to the AARP in 1993, the President's words are very relevant to the current debate on Medicare.

House Republicans are not proposing Medicare cuts. In fact, under our balanced budget plan Medicare will still be one of the fastest growing programs in the Federal budget. And spending per Medicare beneficiary will increase from \$4,800 this year to \$6,700 in 2002.

Mr. Speaker, saving Medicare from bankruptcy is too important for politics as usual. Instead of scaring seniors with imaginary Medicare cuts, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle need to acknowledge the pending crisis in Medicare, roll up their sleeves, and help us preserve, protect, and strengthen this vital program.

REPUBLICAN PLAN TO CHANGE MEDICARE

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans have discovered the crisis in Medicare. We did not hear much about it last year when they stonewalled health care reform. We did not hear a thing about it during the contract in the first 100 days of the Congress or during the elections.

Suddenly they have discovered it. We have got to cut \$270 billion out of Medicare. That is the bottom line, they tell us. And these cuts are to be revealed on the 22d of September, not before, and adopted on the 1st of October; 8 or 9 days for debate, discussion, hearings. The largest changes ever in Medicare, in 8 days.

Why 8 days? I think it is because what they are proposing. Beneficiaries who want to enroll in MediGap plans, they are going to penalize them. They are going to make them pay more for Medicare. They do not think you should have MediGap insurance, and the rich people do not need it, so why should average Americans?

MediGap coverages would be prohibited from covering part B expenses. They would increase premiums for Medicare recipients, impose a 20-percent coinsurance on home health services, a 20-percent coinsurance on skilled nursing, a 20-percent coinsurance on clinical laboratory.