

in taxes and revenues from this. It is a win-win for everyone.

In recent months the Federal Government, the Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife, in an attempt to cut some costs have thought about closing some of these fish hatcheries. I know the distinguished occupant of the chair probably has some of the same problems that we have in the State of Arkansas.

My colleague, Senator BUMPERS, and I held a town meeting near one of these hatcheries. In fact, it was on April Fool's Day, April 1. Truly, we had an overflow crowd. I must say that 99 percent of the people who attended this town meeting on the possibility of closing these hatcheries were extremely bewildered that it was even under consideration to close these fish hatcheries. They are money-making operations for our State. They certainly create revenues for the Federal Government.

Once again, Mr. President, I want to thank my friends for working out what we think is a temporary solution to the closing of the fish hatcheries by making available in this legislation what I consider to be a moratorium, at least until next March, on the closing of any fish hatcheries in our country.

During that time, we will work with the distinguished chairman. We will do everything possible to negotiate and with our ultimate bottom line of convincing those in authority, Fish and Wildlife Service, Members of the House and Senate on committees that appropriate the money for these fish hatcheries, to show them what a win-win situation this Federal fish hatchery program has been.

I thank the distinguished Senator and look forward to working with him over the next several months.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, the Senator from Arkansas is most gracious and is the kind of Senator with whom it is a pleasure to work. He makes me want to agree with him.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for about 7 minutes as if in morning business.

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

#### MEDICARE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise today to return to a topic which has been talked about and discussed on the floor this morning but which even more intensely will be talked about a lot over the next 3 weeks; that is, our Medicare system.

It is a system, a program that, as a physician, I have been involved in in a very intimate way—as a physician with patients—every day for the last 15 years of my life. I have taken care of and worked, in a doctor-patient relationship, with individuals who rely on Medicare, who expect to have Medicare help them, be with them for the remainder of their lives and for that next generation. But shortly after coming to Washington, just 8 months ago now, there became very clear to me a message which most Americans do not understand—my patients did not understand, Tennesseans do not understand, and Americans do not understand, but it is something about which people in Washington say, “Well, it is not that big a deal,” but it is a big deal for the American people. And that is that Medicare is going broke and will be bankrupt in 7 years unless we act and act now and not just tinker with the system and make some little fine-tuning.

That is not going to do it. We will be in the same situation next year. And what is different this year and the next short-term 2 years is that within 18 months we are going to be spending more in the Medicare trust fund than is coming in, and in 7 years that trust fund will be bankrupt.

We are not going to be talking about less Medicare; we are going to be talking about no Medicare for our senior citizens.

The story is told so clearly, and it is in this little booklet. This little booklet I want every American, all of our Senators, all of our Congressmen and Congresswomen to read. It is the report of the Medicare trustees, the Medicare board of trustees which consists of three members of the President's Cabinet. It says in very clear terms—and let me quote from it—“The Medicare program is clearly unsustainable in its present form.”

It says, and I quote, “We strongly”—the Medicare trustees, bipartisan, including three members of the President's Cabinet—“recommend that the crisis presented by the financial condition of the Medicare trust funds be urgently addressed on a comprehensive basis, including a review of the program's financing methods, benefit provisions and delivery mechanisms.” It is said right here in this book Medicare is going to be bankrupt unless we do something.

Based on these facts, the Medicare trustees urged that the program be addressed and addressed immediately, and the gravest danger to this program and to the Nation's seniors who depend on it is continuation of the status quo and doing nothing.

My second point is that Republicans are responding to this urgent call. It is being addressed straight up front, in very direct fashion. No longer can the trust fund tolerate growth of 10.5 percent. The plan that we have put on the table is to allow it to still grow but allow it to grow at 6.4 percent. Thus, we are not cutting Medicare. It is not

a cut in Tennessee when you are going to spend more next year and the year after that and the year after that, yet we see propaganda coming out from across the aisle and from the White House saying each county is being cut.

Each county is going to receive more in Medicare next year and not less. In 1995, Medicare will spend \$178 billion. In 2002, under the Republican plan, that spending will exceed \$273 billion—a 54-percent increase.

What does it boil down to on an individual basis? It means that this year in Medicare we are spending about \$4,800 per individual; 7 years from now we are going to be spending \$6,700. That is an increase of 40 percent between now and the year 2002.

So let us get our terminology straight. Let us shoot straight with the American people so that we can engage in a dialog that will truly be beneficial to the current generation to preserve Medicare, to protect Medicare and to strengthen the program so that it will be there not just for this generation but that next generation.

I think the message really needs to be made very clear to the American people that, No. 1, Medicare is going bankrupt, and No. 2, that there is something we can do but it has to be a dialog.

Over the next several weeks, we as Republicans are going to continue to listen—to listen to the providers, to listen to the senior citizens, to listen to all Americans, bring everybody to the table so that we together in a bipartisan way can work to solve what is a significant challenge, but it is a challenge we must face because without that the Medicare Program will be bankrupt.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS, 1996

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I know that the distinguished manager of the bill is waiting for other matters to be brought up. I am just going to speak very briefly on a matter that will be coming up this morning.

There will be a debate on what level of funding we have for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. There is no question in my mind that some would like to eliminate both of them. Some have said this will be a trophy on their wall if this new Congress were to eliminate the National Endowment for