

the House Public Works and Transportation Committee in the 102d Congress, he was successful in directing hundreds of millions of dollars for South Bay highways, railways, and wetlands.

It is with a sad heart that I say goodbye to my dear friend. NORM you have been an inspiration to me and a great void will be left with your departure. The world and this country is a better place because of your service. You have been a true friend to the people of California and indeed all Americans and we wish you well and best of luck in this new chapter of your life.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BROWN of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of this special order tonight.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALMON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

THE DEMOCRAT PLAN IS BETTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. BARRETT] is recognized for 30 minutes to conclude the time designated for the minority.

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to the gentleman from California [Mr. MINETA] too. As a newer Member I can say that the highest compliment I can pay him is that I consider him a normal person. He is a person who is very approachable, one who has treated the younger, newer Members with a lot of respect, and I think he has done a great job for this institution, and I am sorry to see him leaving this fine institution.

Mr. Speaker, I was in my office earlier tonight, and I was listening to some of the discourse on the floor here and several of my colleagues talking about the Medicare debate that is going on in the House right now, and I was listening to one of my colleagues talking about the terrible crisis, the terrible crisis we are facing in Medicare and how can the Democrats possibly ignore the crisis, that this system is falling apart, that we have to do something now, right now, to insure stability for people in this country to have health care.

Mr. Speaker, as I was listening to that debate, I thought back to my hometown of Milwaukee, and I thought back to two older women I know in my community that I had the pleasure of working with several years ago, and there were two sisters who lived together, and they were living in the home that they had owned for many, many years, and they noticed there was some water in the basement, and they thought, "Well, we should deal with this problem. We are willing to pay the price to fix the damage of water in our basement."

So what they did was they called the contractor, and the contractor came

out and said, "Yes, there is water in your basement. The foundation of your home is collapsing. We are going to have to tear down a wall and rebuild it."

Well, the two older women were on fixed incomes, and obviously they were very shook up by this news, but they wanted to do the right thing, they wanted to pay their fair share, and they wanted to have the problem solved. So they agreed to do that. They agreed to pay several thousand dollars to have the wall replaced and rebuilt.

Mr. Speaker, no sooner had these contractors ripped down and built up a new wall in the basement, than they came back to the two sisters and said, "We have got even worse news for you. Doing the one wall isn't enough. We are going to have to rip down another wall, and rebuild that one." And ultimately it became a third wall.

□ 2115

The two sisters who had water in their basement and knew they had a problem, a problem that had to be solved, were faced with basically a \$10,000 bill for having three walls rebuilt in their basement.

What does that story have to do with Medicare? The reason that story is similar to Medicare is because the people in this country, and the older people in this country, recognize that there are some problems with Medicare. They are willing to pay a fair price to have the Medicare problem resolved, to fix the system, to get the water out of the basement, to make sure their home is stable. However, they are not willing to be duped by contractors who come in and tell them that their whole house is crumbling; that instead of having to pay \$1,000 or \$2,000 to repair a problem, they are going to have to pay \$10,000 or their entire house is going to collapse, and have the contractor run away with the money and pocket it for himself or for his friends.

I think that story is very, very analogous to the debate going on in Congress right now. As this debate has unfolded, I have listened to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle talk about the problems. I have tried to listen to them and agree with them where I think they are on the mark. But what I have noticed is while they make several statements that are true and that I agree with, and I think a majority of Americans agree with, they do not tell, as Paul Harvey would say, the rest of the story. That story, or the rest of that story, is why this Republican plan is so wrong, and should be rejected by this House.

Let me start out by telling the parts of the story that are being put forth by the Republicans that I agree with. I agree that the President and his trustees have said that there are problems with the Medicare system. This is, of course, something they have said many times before, and Congress has always acted responsibly, without raising the

flags and hooting and hollering and saying that the sky is falling. Congress has always addressed those problems. In fact, the trustees' report from last year says that the problem was worse than the problem this year. Of course, when the Democrats stepped to the plate to address the problem, the Republicans said they are too taking too much of a cut out of Medicare.

But now the situation is different. Now the Republicans are in control. They are saying, "Let us cut the growth." There is growth in Medicare, but they are saying, "Let us cut that growth \$270 billion," and at the same time they are saying, "Let us give a \$245 billion tax cut that disproportionately benefits the wealthy in this country."

I think what is going on there is very similar to the situation with the two older women with the basement. We do have some problems with Medicare. They should be fixed. They can be fixed for about \$90 billion.

The other \$180 billion is going to that tax cut that disproportionately benefits the wealthy in this country, and I think that is dead wrong. I think that is something that Congress should reject.

Mr. Speaker, the other place where I agree with the Republicans, and I actually had my staff check this because so many times I heard Members from the Republican Party step in this well and say, "Hey, there is growth in Medicare. We are not cutting spending. In fact," they say, "the spending per recipient is going to go from \$4,700 per recipient to \$6,800 in the year 2002."

The first time I heard that, I thought, "Wow, that sounds pretty good. It has gone from \$4,700 per recipient to \$6,080 per recipient." I actually did the math. It is a 45-percent increase. I thought, "All right, I'm not going to dispute that. I'm not going to say they are not telling the truth, because I have checked the figures and they are going to be spending 45 percent more in the year 2002 than they are in the year 1995."

However, as I talked to seniors in my district, and discussed with them this issue, their reaction was "Well, I'm not really that interested in what the spending is by the government per recipient, because that is the money that goes to physicians and hospitals and nursing homes, home health providers, groups like that. That really does not address the amount of money that I am paying out of my pocket." How much is that 68- or 69-year-old widow on a fixed income paying out of her pocket for Medicare? That is where we have to hear the rest of the story.

Let us use the 2 years that the Republicans have used in bragging about the growth in Medicare. Let us use 1995, and let us use the year 2002. Those are the 2 years that we have heard literally hundreds of times in this well talking about the growth of Medicare. Again, it is going to go from \$4,700 or

\$4,800 to \$6,080 a year, a 45-percent increase.

I have not heard a single Republican stand in this well and talk about what the premium growth is going to be over that same period. Not a single Republican has done what Paul Harvey does, and that is tell the rest of the story. Let us tell the rest of the story in terms of what the premium increases are going to be for that 68-year-old widow on a fixed income.

Right now, that senior is paying \$46.10 per month. It comes out to \$500 a year, somewhere around there. Under the plan that is being put forth by the majority, by the Republican Party, that amount is going to go to \$90 to \$93 a month, at least. We have not seen the figures. We do not know how much of a shortfall there is going to be, but we can be certain it is going to go from \$46.10 a month to at least \$90 to \$93 a month.

Why have we not heard from the Republicans the rest of the story? Why have they not stood in the well to tell us that? The reason is obvious. The reason is because it is a 100-percent increase, that is, a 100-percent increase in the amount that senior citizens are going to pay for monthly premiums.

Again, it is important to note that I am using the same base year and the same outyear that the Republicans used when they brag about this 45-percent increase in the spending per recipient. That figure is correct, the Republicans are correct, the Government will spend 45 percent more per recipient. They are slowing the growth there. However, they are not slowing the growth as to what the recipients, what the beneficiaries, the widows in our communities, are going to be paying. So on the one hand, you see a 45-percent growth in what the Government is spending, but as far as that person who lives in the heartland, they are going to see a 100-percent increase under this plan.

Let us use the figures a little bit and talk about how that compares to the tax package. If we have a senior citizen who is paying \$90 to \$93 a month for their benefits under Medicare, that comes out to just about \$1,100 a year. If you are a senior citizen who is on a fixed income of \$8,000 a year, and your rent is, say, \$500 a month, right there you are talking \$6,000. You are going to put another \$1,100 for Medicare. What are they going to live on? What are they going to live on?

Traditionally what we have done is we have allowed the States to use their Medicaid dollars to supplement that, to help them pay their premiums, but that is not something we want to do in this Congress. We are not going to require them to help pay their Medicare premiums. What is even more striking to me is that this Congress, under the bill that has not yet been introduced but that is being discussed, is going to have seniors paying \$1,100 a year for Medicare premiums and at the same time it is going to tell a couple with an

income of \$200,000, who has two dependents, that they should get a tax credit of \$1,000. So we are telling the couple with \$200,000 income, "You get a \$1,000 tax credit," and we are telling the single widow on a fixed income, "You are now going to pay \$1,100 per year for your health care premiums under Medicare."

The response, of course, probably from my colleagues on the other side, "We are just letting them pay the same percentage that they are paying now. They do not mention that under current law it is supposed to drop back down to 25 percent. They are saying, "Let us just continue and have them pay 31½ percent."

That gets to the very essence as to why we are missing the boat in health care reform. There is absolutely no attempt being made to seriously deal with those costs. It does not matter to the people who are pushing this package that the costs are going to continue to rise. They are going to slow down what the Government plans to pay for those costs, but they are not seriously going to deal with the costs. They are going to allow that gap between what the Government pays and what the individual has to pay out of their pocket to grow and grow and grow, so the providers will not want to provide the services, hospitals will not want to provide the services, seniors will have to pay more out of their pocket, and all of this is being done so we can have a \$245 billion tax cut that disproportionately benefits the wealthy in this country.

Mr. Speaker, what do the American people want to have done? It is clear. The American people want the Medicare system to be working. They want to make sure that it does not fail, they want it to be fixed if there are problems, and I think we should do that. That is why the Democrats are now moving forward with their bill that will fix the problems of Medicare at the tune of \$90 billion, not \$270 billion, \$90 billion. The reason they can do it for \$90 billion, rather than \$270 billion, is that they are not shaving \$180 billion off. They are not building an extra two walls, if you will, or tearing down two walls in the basement that do not need to be torn down. They are solving the problem.

The other issue we have to face is when the Republicans talk about fixing the system, they are not talking about fixing the system for the baby boomers, they are talking about plugging the hole for another 5 years so the system will be flush through the year 2006.

That is exactly what the Democratic proposal that is going to be introduced later this week is also going to do. It is going to take care of the problem through the year 2006, it is going to do so without doubling the premiums that senior citizens pay, it is going to do so in a fair way.

They can do so in a fair way because it does not have this tradeoff that on

the one hand says, "All right, senior citizens, in the year 2002 you are going to pay \$1,100 for your health care premiums; a family with an income of \$200, we are going to give you a \$1,000 tax credit."

I would ask the people in this body to do what the American people want us to do. They want us to fix the health care system. They want us to get rid of the deficit. Those are their two major concerns. We can do both of those, we should do both of those, and we should forget about this tax cut that disproportionately benefits the wealthiest people in this country, because if we do that we can solve this problem, and we can do so without doubling the insurance premiums that the older people in this country pay each year.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF REPUBLICANS DURING THE LAST YEAR, AND THE REPUBLICAN PLAN TO SAVE MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALMON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. CHABOT] will be joining us, and also the gentleman from Washington [Mr. TATE], and we look forward to an hour of trying to give accurate information to those that might be viewing this 1 hour.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. CHABOT].

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding to me, and we appreciate the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES] getting the time this evening so we could talk among ourselves and talk to the American public this evening, first of all about what we accomplished in the last year, and then we would also like to go into considerable detail about the Republican plan to save Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, the interesting thing is it was 1 year ago today, as a matter of fact, that all three of us and many of our colleagues came to this city from communities all over the country. My district is the First District of Ohio, most of the city of Cincinnati, and many of the western suburban areas of Cincinnati, and I came from that area, and you gentlemen came from your districts. We came here to Washington to sign what I really believe was an historic document.

I had talked to a lot of people in my community, and I asked them, "If you were Congress, what would you do? What do you think this Congress should be about? What kind of changes would you like to see made?" I heard the same types of things, it turns out, that you gentlemen were hearing in your districts: that people thought taxes were way too high, they were sick and tired of money being spent up here in Washington so excessively that we had such a huge debt, they wanted