

are, in my opinion, being irresponsible. This article was written by a Democratic Congressman from last year.

What I urge all of us in this Chamber to do is join with us next week in this debate. Join with us to find a bipartisan solution, and if you do not have a solution, do not get in the way. Work with us, join with us, and let us save Medicare for every citizen of this generation and let us save Medicare for every citizen of the next generation.

#### DEVASTATING CUTS IN MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to be here tonight and to be joined by my colleagues to talk about what we, some of us, have been talking about for the last several months, and specifically in the last several weeks, and that is the issue of the devastating cuts that the Republican leadership in this House would like to inflict on seniors in this country with \$270 billion of cuts in Medicare.

I think you need to put this issue into some perspective to understand how the special interests today are winning out over the public interest in this Congress. You really just have to take a look at today's newspapers. There really are two very poignant stories about two different groups who came to Washington, to the people's House, I might add, which is what this body is called. We are not only the House of Representatives, we are known as the people's House.

□ 2000

Well, we have two groups who came this week. One group's members got a private meeting with the Speaker of the House. The other group's members got arrested. Yes, my friends, the other group got arrested. When the American Medical Association and its high paid lobbyists came to Capitol Hill, they were given a closed door meeting with Speaker GINGRICH. And, lo and behold, after the meeting with the AMA, it announced that it would reverse itself and support Republican Medicare cuts.

You will note on Tuesday, October 10, in the report of the New York Times, it said "For months Republican plans to curb Federal health care spending have sailed along on a silent wave of interest group approval. But now cracks are showing. The American Medical Association is starting to complain about the impact on care." That was on October 10 in the New York Times.

Well, they had their closed door meeting with the Speaker of the House, and, guess what? It was a flip-flop. And here you have on Thursday, October 12, "House GOP Medicare bill wins over doctors with hidden enticements and the promise of profits."

When happened behind those closed doors? And I will quote to you the AMA representative, I believe his name is Kirk Johnson, in the paper said, "Doctors were promised billions of dollars more than they would receive under the original plan."

In other words, they were bought off by the Speaker, How were they bought off?

Today in the Wall Street Journal the headline is as shown here, that the House GOP Medicare bill wins over doctors with hidden enticements, promise of profits, and the Journal lays out what they call the Medicare sweeteners. These incentives include a provision to make it easier for doctors to set and profit from their own managed care plans known as provider service networks; a limit on payment of damages to some victims of medical malpractice; they would allow beneficiaries to set up medical savings accounts which would place no restrictions on the fees that doctors could charge those patients; and a promise to trim spending reductions in future fee for service payments by undisclosed amounts.

Together, these provisions, once again, amount to a windfall of billions of dollars that the AMA representative crowed about after his meeting with the Speaker. Am I against doctors making a profit? I do not think anyone is against doctors making a profit, no. But I will tell you what we are against. We are against doctors making a profit while seniors get the shaft.

You see, the \$270 billion in the Medicare cuts can only come from providers or from beneficiaries. And every time the Republicans cut a deal with the providers, they have to cut more health care for seniors.

Let me tell you, the American seniors are getting the message. They truly are. They understand this GOP shell game. Again, what I want to tell you is what happened yesterday, because it is equally important to find out about these two groups and what happened to them.

When you take a look at the group that came, the National Council for Senior Citizens, they came to Capitol Hill, they did not quite get the same kind of reception that the AMA did. The seniors got no meeting with the Speaker; they received no concessions, no deals. Instead, they were arrested. That is right, there were 15 senior citizens, some in wheelchairs, some with canes, that were arrested yesterday. They were put in handcuffs and they were taken away in a paddy-wagon.

What was their crime? They asked to speak in the people's House. That is what they were asking for, is an opportunity to participate in our democracy. And we have right here the photographs of those who were taken away. You will hear from some of my colleagues in a few minutes that they were there when this happened. You got here Teresa McKenna, age 68, from Falls Church, VA, with handcuffs being

put on her. You have Roberta Saxton right over there, who is from Maryland, and she is 67 years old. There she is being handcuffed.

Let me just say that they simply went, this group of seniors, to ask questions of the Committee on Commerce about the Republican plan, what is in it, what does it mean in terms of our lives, and they came to exercise their right as citizens. But they were turned away. The lights were turned off in the committee room and they were taken out to the paddy wagons.

Let me just say that we found out yesterday that daring to ask a question and asking that question, which is the right of every American citizen, that is punishable by a rest.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude my remarks, because I know my colleagues want to join in this debate this evening, but when it comes to the special interests, the Republicans, this Congress and the majority in this Congress, they are all ears for the special interests. But when it comes to the people in this nation, they turn a defense ear. That is not what we should be about.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. If the gentlewoman will yield, I really wonder who the Republicans are listening to, and I would like to hear later from members of that committee. Because as I am reading, a Republican Congressman the gentleman from Iowa, Dr. GREG GANSKE, from the Des Moines Register, said,

I guarantee you that these reductions will be bad for quality health care. Not just for our senior citizens, but also for working families. If Medicare and Medicaid cuts are too deep, hospitals and doctors will shy away from serving the elderly and poor or will try to push costs to the non-elderly, which could further increase the number of uninsured, or the quality of the whole health care system could decline.

Now, that is a Member of this body, who is a Republican and who is also a doctor.

Then from the New York Times, the American College of Surgeons, the American College of Surgeons said today that the Republican proposals would reduce Medicare payments for all surgical services by 10 to 12 percent next year. Cynthia Brown, manager of the College's Washington office, said these cuts would heavily penalize surgeons.

Maybe that is who they might be listening to, just the persons on the money-making end.

I have high regard for any physician that is attempting to practice good medicine. But I do not believe that even the physicians want to make it uncomfortable for our seniors and rob them of quality care just for a paycheck.

Now, according to a poll that was done by Lou Harris & Associates this month, 86 percent of wealthy Americans oppose Medicare cuts to pay for the tax breaks. Americans across the board overwhelmingly oppose using Medicare as a cash cow to pay for the

Republican plan to offer tax breaks to the very wealthy.

A recently released Harris poll suggests that the opposition is even stronger among the wealthiest Americans. When the question was asked "Do you favor or oppose cutting the future costs of Medicare to pay for a tax break," 86 percent of Americans with income of \$50,000 or more said they did not favor doing this, while only 83 percent of all Americans said they opposed the plan to cut services for our children and our senior citizens for a tax break for the wealthy.

While the tax break for the wealthy is being given attention, the tax break for the working poor has been taken away. It seems to me that we are not listening. Perhaps there are persons inside listening only to selective voices, but they are not listening to the majority of Americans, and this is a body that is of, by, and for the people.

So who are we hearing these quotes from? Selected persons that are making statements we all agree with, or from those persons that simply want to make a plea for the health of their future, and they get arrested?

They are proposing medical savings accounts. Well, we are talking about 80 percent of these people that have worked all of their working days paying into Social Security with the promise and the contract that when they retire and reach their days on a fixed income, they would have available to them a fund that they have paid into for health care.

While Medicaid was essentially passed as a program for our children, almost 70 percent of those dollars are being paid for long-term care for our seniors. And why is that? It is because our seniors do not have the money now. They are very stretched with what is being offered, and we are about to swipe that away from them.

Who are we listening to? Are we the only persons listening to the people of this Nation? I am hearing desperate voices. Why are the Republicans not listening? Because the polls are not made up by us, it is an independent poll. And I hear the question, we want to save our children's future.

Well, if we want to save our children's future, they must have a healthy present. If we do not provide for our children just the basic health care, they will not have a good future. They are being cheated out of the dollars even set aside for them now, because most of it by necessity is going for the care of our senior citizens.

I want to know who, who are the Republicans listening to. They are not listening to America.

Ms. DELAURO. I would love to have my colleague from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, join.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, to my colleague, thank you for the special order. It is a shame we have to come here late at night with an almost empty Chamber to talk about an issue which is literally on the minds of every American.

We are in the eleventh month of this Gingrich revolution in the House of Representatives. America remembers when it got started, some of the promises that were made.

Do you recall the promise from the Speaker that every amendment considered on the floor would go right up on the Internet so all across America Americans would know exactly what was being debated? There was to be no effort to put things through without clear scrutiny.

Do you recall the promise of open hearings so that every American would know what was going on in the House of Representatives under this new Gingrich revolution? Do you recall the promise of open rules, so that we could have as many amendments offered and have a healthy debate, a deliberative procedure?

Well, you may remember those promises but, frankly, take a look at what is happening with Medicare and Medicaid. A 421-page bill that has been heard one or two days at the most in committee, destined to come here to the floor of the House of Representatives next week, and we hear tonight from the majority leader, Mr. ARMEY, we are going to be given two hours of debate.

Well, one would think surely two hours is enough. It cannot be that complicated. For 70 million Americans it is very complicated. Medicare is literally, literally, their lifeline, as to whether or not they can obtain affordable quality health care. For my mother, for parents and grandparents of so many Americans, Medicare is more than just another government program. It is a lifeline.

The Republicans want to cut \$270 billion out of this program. You say, well, in Federal terms that cannot have much impact. But it will, in terms of the services that are offered to our parents and grandparents, in terms of the payments to the providers, in terms of the expenses which may be shifted to the families of our elderly when the elderly themselves cannot pay.

On the Medicaid side, the story is even more horrific. Half of the payments to nursing homes across America are made by Medicaid. The Republicans are coming on the floor with a proposal that does not protect families of those in nursing homes from having their own assets attacked once the elderly person in the nursing home runs out of money.

It has got a long Federal term; it is called spousal impoverishment. In the State of Texas they brought it to the vernacular, it was the hock-your-home provision. Once grandma or grandpa is in a nursing home and runs out of money, they go back to the family and say maybe you ought to pay now, since they run out of money. The Federal law protects that from happening today. The Republican proposal does not contain that protection.

Is that an important thing to debate for families across America? Is that worth two hours of our time at least?

You bet it is. Instead, we are going to have this jammed down our throats. And when senior citizens came to this Capitol building and said they wanted to know what is in this bill, they wanted to know the impact it will have, they were greeted by the Gingrich revolutionaries with handcuffs. Sixty-seven and 68-year-old ladies who come into a committee room, irritate the chairman, and they are escorted out in handcuffs? What has this come to?

Frankly, what we are dealing with here is a fact that has been made known by the gentlewoman from Connecticut. If you are a special interest group, if you have a political action committee, if you have the clout, you get a personal meeting with Speaker GINGRICH and a deal. The doctors got it. I guess we should say God bless the doctors. They know how to work this system. But the seniors, obviously, have not figured it out. They still think this is on the square. They think you walk into a hearing room and learn what is in the bill and debate the bill and ask tough, yes, sir, tough questions. They were escorted out in handcuffs.

Thank goodness, the charges were dropped on them. But consider the embarrassment to these people who took time out of their own busy lives at a point in their lives when they are retired to come to the U.S. Capitol here to be arrested.

Now, the Speaker tells us if he does not get his way on this bill, he is going to shut down the Government. He is going to shut down the Government. Well, I have got a bill that I would like him to consider then if he would like to shut it down. If he wants a train wreck, it is called no budget, no pay. It says if Members of Congress are witnesses and part of a train wreck, then as the train crew, they are not going to get a paycheck.

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That's right. We close down the Federal Government. We close down the paychecks for Members of Congress starting with the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. If we think we can be that irresponsible, to jeopardize critical programs like Medicare and Medicaid in the Federal Government, we do not deserve a paycheck. That is my bill.

I hope Members on the floor tonight, Mr. Speaker, who are joining in this special order will try to address the central theme here, the central question: If the so-called proposal to save Medicare is so good, so right, and so timely, why are the Republicans hiding it? Why will they not bring it out in the public for us to have a hearing? Why can we have no more than 2 hours of debate on the floor?

I will tell my colleagues why. Because these crazy ideas cannot stand the glare of sunlight. They cannot make it in the court of public opinion. And the bottom line is, Americans

know, as sure as I am standing here, we are cutting Medicare for a tax cut for the wealthiest people in this country. It is Republican trickle-down economics. It is good news for doctors in big business, but not good news for grandparents.

I thank the gentlewoman for taking the special order.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois, and it is the question of—

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, would the gentlewoman yield 1 minute?

Ms. DELAURO. What is before the light of day and what are we going to show to the public so that they can have an opportunity to be heard.

I understand that my colleagues want me to yield. I do have folks that want to have an opportunity, and they have been here for a long time to get to speak, so I want to accommodate them and then I will be happy to entertain your comments.

Mr. GREENWOOD. If the gentlewoman would just yield for 15 seconds.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman for 15 seconds.

Mr. GREENWOOD. My recommendation, and I have done this before, is instead of having the taxpayers pay for an hour of one side of the issues is to engage in debate, to have an actual discussion.

The facts presented about the arrest yesterday, if one iota of what has been said tonight was true, we would be joined together. The fact of the matter is, it is completely untrue. If we would share time over the next hour and a half, Americans could learn the truth. If my colleagues do not want to share time, it is sort of like saying they do not want the truth to be known.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments, and I have the highest regards for my colleague, except that those of us on this side of the aisle have been calling for hearings, for debate. We actually had an amendment on this floor of the House where we said let us go for 4 weeks of hearings.

We have had 6 days of hearings on a highway bill, 28 days on Whitewater, 10 days on Ruby Ridge, 10 days on Waco, and yet we were only allowed 1 day of hearings in this body on Medicare, and I might add, on Medicaid, zero hearings. So that I am pleased that my colleague has come down, but the long and the short of it is, it is truly disingenuous to come down and ask for time when this is our time to talk about this issue and we have asked over and over and over again.

I would like to really ask, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE], who wants to get involved in this discussion, to make her voice heard on this issue.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for her leadership, and I comment as well on the colleague on the other side of the aisle, with great respect for wanting to air fully a matter that real-

ly Democrats have been calling for a full airing for months and months and months.

Be it briefly, I am just going to comment and draw the attention of the American public to what I think visually they saw yesterday. I am a little surprised and taken aback that we can explain everything further than what the cameras visually showed, and that was that an elderly citizen—and I think that we have missed the alphabet. Children, c-h-i-l-d-r-e-n, taken care of by Medicaid. And then our senior citizens, s-e-n-i-o-r-s, seniors who have given to this country. We have missed our learning in school. We have them in handcuffs.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know what more we can explain than that this senior citizen, who was handcuffed in the hearing room, was simply trying to express her opposition to the fact that she would be paying higher premiums; that she would not be able to choose a physician that she had developed a confidence in.

Yesterday and the day before was a slam dunk, not for cancer prevention, but I guess for the proliferation of cancer. When we deny women the opportunity for a mammogram right in the Halls of Congress, where we were trying to attempt to reform health care and provide incentives for Medicare and Medicaid recipients, we slam dunked cancer screening, slam dunked preventive activities by refusing amendments Democrats had offered.

Likewise, while this woman was handcuffed, rather than respond to an amendment by the Democrats that offered opportunities for better rural and urban health care, giving incentives to primary care physicians who went into areas that were little utilized, or provided little service in terms of medical care, that too was slam dunked; that too was refused by the Republicans.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation here where my colleague on the other side of the aisle is claiming that there is an explanation to a lady in handcuffs. I do not understand that, because it clearly shows someone who was trying to express their views on Medicare, the opposition, to the hidden and covert Republican plan, taken away by Gestapo-like tactics.

I am not reflecting on the great policemen we have on Capitol Hill. They were following instructions. But they were taken away when they were simply trying to say give us an understanding, have a hearing and let us have input. Let us not cut \$270 billion from Medicare on the basis of giving tax cuts to those making over \$100,000.

Mr. Speaker, to the gentlewoman from Connecticut I simply wanted to say to her that this is appalling. This is one that should incense all America. This is not a question of whether we should have a reasonable debate. We had hearings out on the grassy area in front of the Capitol because the doors were closed to Democrats to be able to

hear from constituents about these issues.

I think now the point is the Republicans have presented their case under cover of cause. We are here now tonight shedding light and asking the American people to stand up along with us to bring back reality and reason to Medicare reform and health care reform and realize that our children and our seniors, the alphabets, count in America today. And I yield back my time to the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Texas, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, for her eloquent statement and remarks. She has been very, very active in this area over the last several months.

To shed some further light on what is going on with seniors and the intimidation, I would like to yield time to my colleague, DAVID SKAGGS, from Colorado.

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for the chance to participate this evening.

I do not know what may have happened in the hearing room yesterday, it is an unfortunate scene, obviously, but it is, I think, not coincidental that the day before we are to take up floor consideration of this legislation next week, there will be a hearing in a subcommittee of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight at which the National Council on Senior Citizens has been called to testify.

They have become essentially the favorite whipping group of many who are masquerading a new piece of anti-first-amendment legislation, a gag rule for nonprofits and many other people in this country. The National Council for Senior Citizens have really been the whipping group for their effort to silence people who want to participate in the political life of this country.

Interestingly, the National Council has received a questionnaire, as did previous witnesses called before this subcommittee on the so-called Istook-MicIntosh-Ehrlich proposal, a questionnaire that calls them to account for all of their political activities over the last 5 years, State, Federal, and local, and all of the political activities of any organizations that may be affiliated with them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, just stop and think what that sounds like. At least it brings back memories for me of the early 1950's in this country in which free American citizens were hauled before committees of Congress with the full power and authority, and the chilling effect that that can have if that authority is improperly used, and taken to task for the exercise of their rights, using their time and their resources, their rights under the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Now, we have had a lot of things going on in this place that many of us disagree with this year, but if we start

tampering with the lifeblood of this democracy, which is the free flow of information, the full participation in the political life of this country of every American and every group of Americans that has a claim to make, an argument to make, a case to make before their elected representatives in the Congress of the United States, we are in real trouble.

That is the corrective device for this democracy, is the free flow of ideas and information and, yes, indeed, criticism. It can be awkward at times, it can be unpleasant and offensive at times, ideas that we disagree with often are, but when we start to impede that fundamental tenet of free political expression in this country, and that is what is at issue here through the McIntosh-Istook proposal and its application to groups like the National Council of Senior Citizens, we are in trouble. Beware. Stand up for your rights.

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you to my colleague from Colorado, because in this Chamber he has an outstanding reputation for someone who is vigilant about the Constitution and the rights of the people in this Nation. We are all, and everyone should be very, very grateful to him for being that kind of a watchdog.

We cannot really see these constitutional rights erode, because vigorous informed debate and differences in ideas is what makes this Nation great. I share your concern, because for people who are living this every day, the way we have, we are seeing that if the majority does not agree with a point of view, they do not agree with a piece of legislation, it is either not discussed or it is given short shrift, or it is given 1 or 2 hours of debate, or it is taken up in the middle of the night so that there cannot be that free and informed debate on issues that are vital to this Nation's survival.

This in particular, the National Council of Senior Citizens, has been the most vocal group, in fact, about what will happen if we have \$270 billion in cuts for Medicare, and \$182 billion cuts in Medicaid.

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield, it is especially ironic, I think, that a citizens group wanting to present their views, to lobby, if you will, are subjected to this kind of regime and the effort to silence them is being characterized, or caricatured, as lobbying reform. Meanwhile, the real lobbying reform that needs to go on in this place is shunted off as something we simply do not have time for, even though we have already passed it last year twice.

It really gives us reason to stop and think where are the values here? Who is being heard? Whose lobbying is being preferred, I would ask the gentlewoman?

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, that is true. We voted that twice last year, and Democrats have brought the issue of lobby reform and gift ban to this House probably five times in the last

several months. Each time we are told that there is no time to do it, we cannot take it up. In the one instance where it did come up, it was voted down. It is now going to be postponed until some other time, and when a lobbying group, just in a week, in the face of seniors who were arrested, came in and within 2 days time, within 2 days time, changed their tune and were rewarded for doing that.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his vigilance.

Ms. FURSE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield, not only was I in that committee room, I am a member of this committee and we, the Democrats on that committee, have asked over and over and over again for hearings on the Medicare bill because we are very concerned that there is stuff in there that nobody understands.

We wanted a hearing with the trustees. We hear the Republicans talk about the trustees' report. We asked for a hearing with them. We asked for a hearing with seniors. We thought that maybe we could have the AMA there. We could have everybody there to talk about this bill. But we were refused a hearing.

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Now, yesterday before the markup, the markup on a 400-page bill, of which there have been no hearings on that particular bill, a group of senior citizens came into the hearing room, into the markup room. They had respectfully asked, no, I would say they begged for answers.

They said, What is this bill going to do to our health care? They begged. They said, Just tell us, give us some time, talk to us about what is in the bill. And they were a group, some very, very senior.

I would like you to look at this picture here of this lady. In this picture, that police person is not putting a bracelet on that lady's arms. He is putting handcuffs, handcuffs. Her name is Roberta Saxton. She is age 67.

Now, I am a senior. I understand how frightening that must have been.

Well, what happened in that committee room was quite extraordinary and quite horrifying. All the Republicans left the room. The lights were turned off in that room. It was pitch black, except for the lights of some camera people.

We called for the lights to go on again. This was the people's House. This is the place where things are supposed to be out in the open, out in the sunlight. The lights did go on finally. The Republicans returned to the committee and called for arresting of these seniors, seniors like Roberta. There were two people in wheelchairs. There were some who were 90 years old. These were people asking about their health care.

We then had an extraordinary event. The press were asked to—no, they were told by the police to leave the room.

The press are the eyes and the ears of the American public. They were asked

to leave the hearing room. And then the police were told by the chairman, I presume, to begin arresting, arresting these seniors. I and four other Members, Democratic Members, went with the seniors, as they were pushed out in wheelchairs with canes, they were there to ask, tell us what is in the bill. And what did they get? They got arrested.

We went with them, some of the Members, just to see that they were all right. These were old people. These were frightened people. These were people, American people.

Well, we know what is in the bill. There are \$272 billion of cuts, \$272 billions of cuts. What do those cuts mean? Well, obviously, they are not going to mean huge cuts for the doctors because the doctors got a hearing. They got a hearing. The seniors did not.

Now, is it not interesting, why did not have a hearing? We were told there was no time for a hearing. And yet today in that same committee we had a hearing, oh, there was a hearing, oh, yes, there was time, on the cellular industry. Well, that is fine. That is very interesting. But the cellular industry does not affect every senior in this country, and Medicare does, except it vitally affects seniors like this lady in the photograph, this lady here. You see the photograph. She came to talk to her representatives. She was arrested.

But the special interests were not arrested. The lobbyists were in the room all through the markup. The AMA got a meeting. Why did not the seniors get a meeting? Why did not the Democratic Members get a meeting? We asked for a hearing. Why was the press removed from that room? Why was the public thrown out? Why were seniors in wheelchairs removed?

Well, as I say, I went with them and other Members went with them, because you know what they were there to do. They were there to do their duty. It is the duty of the American people to come to their elected officials and say, Tell us, tell us what is in here.

Well, I guess in our committee we have found that we have lots of time, lots of time for the special interests. But we have no time for the special people, the seniors of America whose Medicare is being cut every minute we sit here and pass this bill with no hearings.

I thank the gentlewoman for allowing me to tell what happened when I was there, what happened to senior Americans who came to the people's House to ask that their questions be answered and instead they got arrested.

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Oregon for the eyewitness account and really for her concern and her compassion in accompanying Theresa McKenna and others who were taken away. It is a gesture of the kind of concern and the kind of individual the gentlewoman is and the kind of representative the gentlewoman is, of the interests of the people

that she represents and all people who come here who ought to be treated in a very, very special way. Because without the people who are out there in each of our districts, we do not serve in this people's House. We only serve at their pleasure, and we need to keep that very, very much in mind when we are supposed to be doing the people's business in this House every single day.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to yield to my colleague, the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON], to join in this discussion. I thank the gentlewoman for her continued interest.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut and thank her for arranging this opportunity so that our colleagues and the Americans can understand what we are really talking about here today. We are really talking about opportunity for all Americans to have access, to have access to express their views. I think yesterday we understood how democracy worked well for some and not well at all for others.

If you have a lot of money and you are very wealthy and influential, you get a hearing, but also you get a great deal, too. But if you are an ordinary citizen and you have faith in your government and come to express redress, they simply wanted to find out what was going on. They wanted to say to the committee how health care is so important. They wanted to know how that plan would enable them to provide for their health care, because many of them, as you know, are people who receive less than \$25,000 a year, average \$13,000, because they have to make choices, choices whether they will be able to have food or prescriptions. They simply wanted to have an opportunity to redress.

This is a slippery slope we are going on. It is a dangerous prescription for democracy, if indeed we are going to reward those who are willing to support certain legislation with great deals; and, yet, those who want to express their opposition, we reward them by having them arrested. This is a democracy. We should be outraged at that.

We should really be outraged at that, that the average American, in particular senior citizens, people who are going to be impacted more than anyone else simply wanted to have an opportunity to see their government working, this is democracy at its best and at its worst. It works well if you have money. It does not work so well if you do not have money.

Let me just say one final concluding statement. They would have said, if we had listened to them, that they are not statistics, they are people, they are grandmothers, they are aunts, they are grandfathers, they are people we know. They are people who are struggling. They are families in this country who really want a chance to have just an ordinary life. That is not too much to ask of people. And it is not too much to

ask of us as legislators to be responsive to those individuals. In fact, in North Carolina there are 999,000 Medicare patients, 985,000 Medicaid recipients.

If you combine that, North Carolina will lose \$15.5 billion over a 7-year period. That is a lot of money to pull out of the infrastructure. That is going to affect a lot of Americans. We have not had hearings on that. We are about to vote on something next week that is going to be very, very dangerous.

I want to thank, again, the gentlewoman from Connecticut who has provided outstanding leadership in bringing the clarity of the issues and the impact.

Mr. Speaker, I will include for the RECORD the remainder of my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday this Congress punished senior citizens who challenged cuts in Medicare and rewarded physicians who cut a deal on Medicare.

Something is wrong with those priorities.

When those who voice their opposition are silenced and only those who surrender support are promoted, we have a dangerous prescription.

The proposed cuts in Medicare is a glaring example of the politics of division and dual standard.

Mr. Speaker, the seniors who visited the Commerce Committee wanted an opportunity to speak about the plan that we will vote on next week, because many of them will not be able to afford health care, will get less quality care and will lose the security of a system that has served millions of Americans well for 30 years.

That is because the majority wants to cut the funds for Medicare by \$270 billion.

These cuts go too far, and would not be necessary, if the majority would simply put off their plan to give a free tax ride of \$245 billion to the wealthiest Americans.

The cut that is being proposed is roughly three times higher than any previous cut.

This cut will reduce the overall size of the Medicare program by 25 percent—raising the cost of premiums and copayments to each of North Carolina's 999,000 Medicare beneficiaries by more than \$2,000, over the next 7 years.

And, when the Medicare cuts are combined with the cuts in the Medicaid Program, Federal health care dollars coming into North Carolina will be reduced by more than \$15 billion.

The Medicaid cuts affect North Carolinians of all ages—the elderly, children, the disabled, the poor. There are some 985,000 Medicaid recipients in our State. We would be forced to eliminate coverage for almost half of those Medicaid recipients.

If we had taken the time to listen to the seniors who visited Congress on Wednesday, they would remind us that these are not just numbers. These are people.

These are grandmothers and grandfathers. These are families, struggling to survive in an ailing economy. These are not just faces in the crowd. These are neighbors—people we know.

The Medicare cuts will be especially painful, since more than 8 out of 10 of all Medicare benefits go to senior citizens with incomes of \$25,000 or less!

Those who are pushing these plans fought the creation of Medicare in 1965, and now, in

1995, are seeking to do what they failed to do in 1965—cut the comfort of retirement from our senior citizens.

It is estimated that these plans will cost North Carolinians a loss of over \$3,000 for each Medicare recipient in North Carolina between now and the year 2002, and a loss of some \$900 for each recipient each year thereafter. And while Medicare support is declining, the population in North Carolina is growing.

This year, we have 6.6 million people. Soon, we will have 7.2 million. Thus, more people will be forced to depend on less money for adequate health care.

Medicare beneficiaries will be forced to pay more and get less and they will have far less choice in their health care providers. These so-called savings that will come from Medicare will actually be paid out of the pockets of seniors and working families in America.

Rural North Carolina, where health care is already behind, will be especially hard hit by these cuts.

Medicare spending in the rural areas of North Carolina will be cut by \$3.3 billion—a 20-percent cut in the year 2002 alone. Worse, rural North Carolina will lose some of the limited number of hospitals we have.

Because of poverty, rural hospitals lose money on Medicare, while urban hospitals make a small profit. Medicare accounts for between 50 and 80 percent of the revenue of rural hospitals.

The typical rural hospital, under the majority's plan, will lose some \$5 million in Medicare funding, over 7 years. That kind of loss can not be sustained.

Rural hospitals already need 5,084 more primary care physicians to have the same doctor to population ratio as the Nation as a whole.

Yet, with the proposed, severe cuts, according to the American Medical Association, the institution that yesterday made the deal, the cuts "will unquestionably cause some physicians to leave Medicare."

We all support the concept of a balanced budget, and acknowledge that some sacrifices must be made; but we should not place the burden solely on those who can least afford it and let those who can afford it get a free tax ride! Where is the balance in that kind of budget?

During the last Congress, the very people who now seek our trust in their Medicare and Medicaid cutting plan rejected every initiative that would have strengthened the Medicare Trust Fund even further.

The fact is that they are using the trust fund solvency issue as a smoke screen.

They are using the Medicare program as a bank for the best off, so that they can fulfill their campaign promise—a tax cut for the wealthy.

If they dropped the idea of a tax cut for the wealthy, they would not need to make such deep cuts in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

The so-called looming Medicare bankruptcy is more fiction than fact. It is a very convenient myth, but it is not reality.

The fact is that, with the proposed cuts in Medicare, senior citizens will be seriously hurt, while not one penny would be contributed to the trust fund.

This plan will mean tougher times for families and especially for senior citizens—those who have labored a lifetime under the belief

that they truly had a Contract With America. They can barely afford health care now.

When the majority adds \$2,400 to their health care costs by the year 2002, many will have to choose between heat and health, a warm coat or a trip to the doctor—many may have to even choose between eating and health.

Something is wrong with those priorities.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR], the chief deputy whip, the minority whip. There are not many words to say what kind of strength and deliberation he has brought to this discussion and of the serious cuts in Medicare.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, and I thank my colleague from North Carolina for her words this evening and my friend, the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SKAGGS], for his thoughts on this important issue, the arresting of the seniors who were trying to express their views on an issue that is critical not only to them but I believe to the rest of the country as well.

I am going to demand an apology from the Speaker and the Republican leadership to these seniors. Nothing short of that is in order. It seems to me that that was one of the most disgraceful exhibitions of thwarting democracy that I have seen in my years in this institution.

I was not shocked and I was not surprised because, quite frankly, this whole experience over the last year has been a narrowing of voices in this institution. It started off at the beginning of this Congress when the Black Caucus was disbanded, the Hispanic Caucus, the Environmental Caucus, the Women's Caucus, and then it continued when they took away our research arm, the Democratic Study Group of the Democratic Party. And then it continued further with closed rules where we could not debate fully the issues at hand. And then it continued further as we took on the most important issue perhaps of this Congress, Medicare and Medicaid both. We got a total of one hearing. There is a narrowing of voices.

Then we read today in the newspaper that the Speaker is going to close the place down because he cannot get his way. He has told the committees to close up shop. I am going to make the deals for you. They are going to come out on the floor of the House with my imprimatur on it or nobody's imprimatur on it.

I would like to talk about a couple back-room deals here this evening, particularly the one that was cut with the AMA, the American Medical Association, recently.

I want to trace that for just a second this evening because it is worth going over. After sharply criticizing the Republican Medicare plan last week for including price rollbacks that will impact on the quality of care, the American Medical Association quickly changed its tune. What caused this change of heart, it was a back-room

deal with the Speaker which limits Medicare's planned fee rollback for physicians. In a closed-door meeting which occurred late at night while the committees, by the way, were busy, the Committee on Ways and Means was busy working to pass the Medicare plan, Speaker GINGRICH cut a deal that brought the support, bought the support of the AMA.

The details of this secret deal have remained closed to the public, but according to an AMA official, the deal is worth billions of dollars to doctors. Let me say that again. According to an AMA official, the deal is worth billions of dollars to doctors. In simple terms, the AMA named a price, and the Republicans met it.

Let me trace exactly what happened here over the past week. On Wednesday, the 4th of October, there was criticism. James Stacey of the American Medical Association is quoted in the New York Times as saying: This Republican Medicare plan causes real problems for the AMA. It would be a major blow to the traditional fee-for-service Medicare program.

Tuesday afternoon, October 10, less than a week later, more criticism. Kirk Johnson, AMA General Counsel, quoted in the New York Times: What we cannot agree to are price rollbacks that will impact on the quality of care.

The reductions were so severe, he said, that they will unquestionably cause some physicians to leave Medicare.

Tuesday afternoon, October 10th, the deal is struck. Johnson and the AMA officials meet with the Republican leader in the Speaker's office. The AMA calls the press to the Speaker's office to announce their support for the Republican Medicare plan. On Thursday, October 12, the details emerge. The Wall Street Journal reports on the AMA-Gingrich secret deal. And I quote: "Kirk Johnson, the AMA's general counsel, suggested to several reporters that the improvements would be worth billions of dollars to physicians."

The New York Times quotes Johnson commenting further on the secret deal, and I quote: "It's wrong to suggest that the AMA endorsement was contingent on billions of dollars. There isn't a precise figure. We don't know the amount."

So what we have here is the Republicans and the AMA coming together and refusing to disclose the final details of the deal. What we can be sure of is that doctors got what they wanted while seniors, like the two that we were talking about this evening, were left out in the cold, were taken handcuffed by authorities out of a committee room and were not allowed to speak.

I want to talk about the Speaker's own words, because I think they are instructive here this evening.

□ 2045

On Tuesday, Speaker GINGRICH sealed his backroom deal, as I said, with the

AMA, and the deal occurred while the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Commerce were acting on the GOP Medicare plan. But history buffs will no doubt remember these immortal words to live by that were uttered by the Speaker when he appeared before the AMA on March 24, 1993, and I want to quote what the Speaker said. He said, "If I had one plea in mind, it would be for simple honesty. The American people deserve to be told the truth. They deserve to be told the truth by the President. If I had a second plea, it would be for openness." That is what he said. The Speaker said, "It would be for openness. The American people, when you are dealing with their lives, when your dealing with 14 percent of the gross national product, deserve to have an open opportunity to understand who is in the room." Well, Mr. Speaker, the American people did not see what was in the room when you cut the deal that was worth billions of dollars to the docs in the country. They did not see what was in the room when you made a special deal on your medical accounts and, for those who are not familiar with that, these medical savings accounts come at a price as well.

The main advocate for the medical savings account was a gentleman by the name of Mr. Rooney, who has Golden Rule Insurance, and a CBS News analysis of Golden Rule and Rooney and associates' donations to Republican causes are as follows: Gingrich campaign, \$45,000; Republican Party, \$1,200,000; GOPAC, \$157,000. These are the contributions by Mr. Rooney and Golden Rule Insurance Co.

So the deals have been cut. The seniors have been left out in the cold, and as my colleagues have suggested, this is a shameful episode in the history of this Congress.

The thing that just drives me to the wall, quite frankly, is that we are talking about people here who make a very meager amount of money. A report issued a month ago by our Labor Department said that the seniors in this country, 60 percent, I want to repeat this, 60 percent of the seniors in the United States of America have incomes, combined incomes, retirement and Social Security incomes of \$10,000 a year or less. Sixty percent of combined incomes of \$10,000 a year or less, combined retirement and Social Security.

They are asking, the Republicans are asking those folks to pay an extra thousand bucks out of their pocket while the docs get billions of dollars' worth of deals that have been cut. Mr. Rooney and his insurance company are going to make millions, if not billions, of dollars on this.

Something is wrong in America, ladies and gentlemen, when we are doing that to the most vulnerable of our society, the seniors and the young people who are taking the hit on Medicaid.

Medicaid provides health care for two out of every five children in our country, and that is being cut by \$182 billion.

So I thank my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO], for taking this time and for giving me the opportunity to express my concerns and outrage over what we have seen here in the Capitol in the last several days.

Ms. DELAURO. I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR], for making his comments. Clearly, those children were not in the room. Seniors were not in the room. Working families were not in the room. But Mr. Rooney and the AMA are in the room, and I think you were very clear in delineating how that process has worked here over the last several days.

I might just add one point to what you have said. Our Republican colleagues have said that they are going to save the Medicare Program, and they make reference to the trustees' report of what is needed and what is necessary to save it, and the trustees, what they do not pull out from what the trustees have said is that \$90 billion would be the amount of money to take us to the year 2006 and so forth. What is happening with the additional \$180 billion?

Mr. BONIOR. It is going to a tax cut that will benefit primarily the most wealthy individuals and corporations in our society.

Ms. DELAURO. Furthermore, what they will say, our colleagues will say, and probably say here this evening, is that we do not have a plan. Well, first of all, Medicare is a plan, if we can fix some portions of it, which we need to and are willing to, without destroying it, and there are a number of suggestions in which to do that.

Second, in the Committee on Ways and Means there was a Democratic alternative that was put forward. It was for \$90 billion to cover what the trustees have talked about, and that was voted down, and that gives me an opportunity to have my colleague, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK], join this debate.

Mr. STUPAK. Two points I would like to make, really, three points.

First of all, you say, no plans. Democrats offered two plans in Committee on Commerce last night. Both were shot down on parliamentary rules only. I offered one plan, only 39 pages long, which cuts out fraud and abuse. We can save the system there. Also, the gentleman from California [Mr. WAXMAN] offered a plan. Never a comment on it. We were just ruled out of order. I defeated one of the parliamentary inquiries on my legislation. Then they brought up another one, because I used the word "hospital," hospital trust fund, which is part of Medicare, because I used "hospital," part A. We have jurisdiction over part B. They ruled me out of order and silenced my plan before we could even have a vote.

The other point I would like to make, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] mentioned the MSA's, medical savings accounts. You know, even Ross Perot says this is dangerous, go slowly, do not do it too quickly. We offered a proposal to do a pilot program on MSA's. Again, that was defeated.

These figures you mentioned, I say to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR], about the payment due in 1996, \$3.1 billion, then again a total over 7 years as we are trying to save Medicare, \$15.3 billion. Understand, folks, that comes immediately out of the Medicare trust fund. There will not be a bill to the American people. It is a bill to the seniors who have paid into the Medicare trust fund.

As soon as these seniors sign up for the medical savings account, you have to transfer. Here is a trust fund they are claiming is going to go bankrupt, so let us further bankrupt it by taking out these MSA's, medical savings accounts, before anyone even knows if they work. In the private sectors they have not worked.

As I said, even Ross Perot said do not do it, go slowly, you are playing on thin ice here. You can bankrupt, a spiraling bankruptcy, into the Medicare system before it ever even gets going, instead of needing \$90 billion to save the system. If the MSA's come out, we will need at least \$105 billion plus. They may work, but do we have to throw all of our health care system, the seniors, health care system, to an MSA plan and try to force them into these medical savings accounts without even knowing if it is going to work? Is Medicare not a valuable program that helps our seniors? Do they want us to gamble with their health care system on a system that is not even tried, a system that will immediately start draining the Medicare trust fund? That does not make sense.

Mr. BONIOR. These medical savings accounts, they are for the healthy and the wealthy, basically. These insurance companies are not going to take care of you if you have got a preexisting condition. They cherry-pick. That is how they make their dollars. So we are going to be providing hard-earned Medicare dollars in our trust fund to people who frankly will not use it, will not need it, and the deductible is \$10,000 on this thing.

You know, it is something that we ought not to be fooling around with at this time because of its very nature and who it is targeted for. It is not targeted for the average person who needs it, and it benefits a few insurance companies that basically are going to be cherry-picking.

Ms. DELAURO. That point that you made about the \$10,000, that is in the very fine print. An insurance company under these medical savings accounts could charge up to \$10,000 deductible, and that is truly incredible with what the seniors would have to go through. But once again, you are taking a look at a special interest that would derive

real benefit from this effort at the expense of seniors who are on limited incomes.

Mr. STUPAK. You mentioned earlier, you were talking about the incident that happened on the Committee on Commerce. I sit on the Committee on Commerce. I am a former police officer. I spent 12-13 years in law enforcement. In fact, one of my posts was with Michigan State police at the State capital post. We had to go periodically to demonstrations outside the capital hearing rooms, things like that.

I would say in this picture here, you see a police officer putting what we call flexicuffs on this individual. That is a standard operating procedure.

I want to say that Capital Police who were put in a tough, a very difficult situation, handled themselves very professionally. They were very courteous.

Not only was I at the committee, but I went down to where this photograph was taken in the basement of the Rayburn Building, as they were loading the individuals in the squad cars to take them to the booking station. I went down to the police captain, police headquarters, where these people were being booked, and observed the procedure. Having been a former police officer, needless to say, I was somewhat interested.

I also wanted to go because I had offered my seat on the Committee on Commerce to one of those seniors who was standing there, and when the commotion broke out, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. BLILEY], the chairman, sort of adjourned the committee, and my Republican friends all left, and then they turned off the lights so everybody was sort of in the dark.

Then a few minutes later, now they abandoned the committee room, they turned off the lights, a few minutes later they come back in, and they are told they will have to sit down and be quite or face arrest.

Most Members were standing up, so I offered my seat to the lady standing next to me, Barbara, I forget her last name. She was from Maryland. I went with her. She was quite concerned. She had never been arrested. They were fingerprinted, photographed, handcuffed, actually put in a holding room until later that afternoon they were allowed to bond out before a magistrate. You could not just get an appearance ticket like a traffic ticket, which is an acceptable thing, but because this is a bondable offense, they actually had to be held at the District of Columbia court and bond out later that afternoon.

The police officers again did an excellent job under some tough circumstances. But I do not believe in, having been a police officer and having dealt with civil disobedience in government, I do not believe the arrest was necessary, especially after we abandoned the hearing room, the mark room, if you will, turned off the lights, come back, tell them to sit down.

This lady that I assisted did sit down, and then she faced arrest when she sat

down in my chair after I gave her permission.

The part that bothers me, the earlier, a week ago, last Monday, we started this so-called markup, the National Council for Senior Citizens came in with mail bags, invited in by the Republicans, dumped 100,000 mailgrams in front of all of us. This gentleman in the group was allowed to make a speech. There were not supposed to be witnesses, but he was allowed to make a speech as they were dumping the mail. Then they grabbed a handful of mailgrams. As what has happened so often in the past, they were false, fictitious, 75 of them my staff and I went through, and again, being a police officer, I was rather curious. I started to go through them. Two were from people who were deceased. Their family members wrote back and said "deceased," and gave the day they were deceased. One died in September 1994, but they counted them as supporting the Republican Medicare plan. Another five were unsigned. One was addressed to "contributor." Apparently, this individual contributed to some campaign or something through this organization. So it was addressed to "contributor."

Three of them had written comments on the back, just destroying the Republican Medicare plan. One of them wrote on there, "I do not want to be forced into managed care." Another one said, "I want the Federal employees' health benefit like you have." Another one said, "Why do you take these pay raises? Give us what you have." They were anything but ringing endorsements of the Republican plan.

I think what is going on here is groups who speak up are subject to silence, either through not allowing the groups to have their voices heard or, when they try to be heard, maybe even face arrest. They bring forth mailgrams which people do not exist, they are unsigned, they are in complete opposition.

I am very concerned about the image that is being put forth that all of these people support it. The only ones we hear from are people who are supportive of the plan, or allegedly supportive of the plan, and the other thing that bothers me is when we did tort reform, started out being medical security reform earlier in the committee, there were actually highly paid lobbyists sitting in the top row of the dais while the hearings were going on. They approved the amendments being offered by both sides. These people came in to have their voices heard are not allowed to sit in the committee room, even in my chair. How could lobbyists be allowed to sit at the top of the dais and review the amendments and give their "yes" or "no"?

We need fairness. We need openness, much like the Speaker said. I would invite him or anyone to have that fairness and openness in all committees. Let us no longer do any legislation without hearings.

I thank you for allowing me to say a few words this evening.

Ms. DELAURO. Our time is just about concluded. I want to thank all my colleagues who came out tonight to engage in this discussion.

The long and the short of it is that this is a serious debate. It is one that all Americans ought to be able to have their voices heard. What we have found out is that only some of the voices have been heard. The voices of seniors, the voices of working families have not been heard in this process, but the voices of special interests have been heard.

We need to have a safe and secure Medicare system.

The Democrats have an alternative. They presented that alternative in committee. It was voted down, and open hearings and open debate on this issue have been curtailed to only those who support the majority position or who have a financial interest in what does finally happen.

□ 2100

#### THE REST OF THE STORY ON MEDICARE

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here tonight. I would like to start by saying that as you would hear on some radio stations by Paul Harvey or his son, now you will hear the rest of the story.

Very soon we will have a tripod over here, so we will be able to show you some of the charts we have brought along. But, basically, I wanted to say that, in plain English terms, the Republican Party has come up with a plan, a specific plan, that will preserve and protect Medicare for our parents and our grandparents.

What is wonderful about this plan is that it will still balance the budget, which will secure a future for our children. No seniors will be forced from Medicare. Seniors will have the right to alternative choices. They will have the right to stay with their current doctor or hospital.

Over the course of the next hour, we hope to talk about some of the specifics of this plan. We also want to address some of the real needs that have been created by this plan running down the wrong path for some time.

I want to start out with a chart that shows what the President's Social Security Medicare Board of Trustees report has said. There are three members of this Board of Trustees that are from President Clinton's Cabinet, and as you can see in this chart here, it says "The fund is projected to be exhausted in 2001."

That means by the year 2002, Medicare is going to have a very serious

problem. What is very good about finding this out at this point in time is that we have time to correct the problem. We do not want to let the train get down the path too far, because it could result in a train wreck. Instead, we are able to change the system, and preserve and protect Medicare for our seniors.

This chart shows part A trust fund, and it shows graphically what is going to happen to the trust fund. It starts over on the left side at approximately 1993 and goes over to 2004. Right in the center here is zero, which indicates the balance of the trust fund. Up here is \$150 billion, and the bottom is negative \$150 billion. As you see, as the path progresses over time, this red line indicates that we will cross the zero line or, in other words, go bankrupt, by approximately the year 2002, again, conforming what was told to us by the President's Board of Trustees.

Now, part of the plan that we have in the Republican Party, many people have said that there are going to be cuts that are going to be put in place, and that these cuts are going to fund tax breaks given by Republicans to their rich friends.

Nothing could be further from the truth, for several reasons. First of all, I want to tell people there are not cuts to Medicare. There are no cuts in the Republican plan. There is limited growth.

But if you look at this next chart, it shows that we start, today, 1995, seniors receive \$4,816. Now, that is what the average recipient gets per year under the current plan. Over the next 7 years, in the Republican plan, that grows 43 percent from \$4,800 to \$6,734. As the title across the bottom says, where is the cut?

Now, this is going to result in a reduction in growth of about \$270 billion. That number is very specific. It was chosen for a reason. It was targeted for a reason. The reason is that is what it is going to take to preserve and protect the program.

Now, there have been some other plans that were put forward by the President and by Members of the Democrat Party that were to save less an amount of money, which just prolonged the agony. It did not reform the system or preserve and protect the choices that elderly people will have, and it did not give them the opportunity for options, for alternative plans.

We will talk a little bit more about this later, but it is a very comprehensive plan. It is one that has been long in the making.

I want to give you some of the sponsors of this plan. We heard a lot about the American Medical Association. They are at the top of the list. They do support the Republican plan to preserve and protect Medicare. I have an ad, a copy of an ad that was run by the American Medical Association, and it has a quote from Lonnie Barstow, president of the American Medical Association. I just want to read four brief quotes from this.