

doctors of 40 percent. So those who are in the system now that are being told that somehow they are going to have to make extraordinary sacrifices, it is just not accurate.

Mr. MICA. Well, again, Mr. Speaker, nothing is certain. We are trying to do our best. We all have relatives. I have aunts who are on Medicare and trying to make it from week to week and month to month. We are concerned about these people. But our number one concern should be that we do not bankrupt the country. And simple math will show you that this whole structure we have created, this huge government program is going to collapse. Even the President's commission says that.

So we are willing to work with the other side. We are willing to work with the administration. We are willing to work with people who have ideas. We have held hundreds of hearings on this and Members have held literally thousands of town hall meetings trying to bring together the best ideas into a plan that makes sense.

The last thing we would want to do is hurt any senior citizen, someone in need or someone who needs that care. We think we can do a better job, and it is not necessarily throwing more money at the problem. That seems to be the only solution around here.

Do we do a better job, as proposed by some folks on the other side of the aisle or the administration, just by ignoring the problem or letting the waste continue? Well, we will let the waste go to 89 billion or let the waste go to 100 billion. This does not make sense. We need to make the system work and it should operate and function in a responsive, accountable fashion and give the people the choices that others have. Why confine them to one failed choice?

Mr. MILLER of Florida. You are chairman of the committee that is involved in Federal employee health insurance. We looked at that. That is basically what we are going to offer senior citizens, a separate system that gives a choice just like all Federal employees have a choice.

The Medicare program is a very complex system. If you are under Medicare you have to have three different insurance plans. You have a Medicare part A with one insurance company handling that. You have Medicare part B, which costs \$46.10 that another insurance company handles, and then you have a Medigap policy. That is a complicated system. That is part of the inefficiencies of Medicare. And as a Federal employee, we only have one insurance plan. Anybody in the private sector has one insurance plan. That simplifies it. It is going to be so much simpler. The benefits are going to be better, and we are going to slow the rate of growth. I do not see where the argument is, why anyone could disagree. We have more money every year.

Mr. SHAYS. I would love to just emphasize that point. I had more con-

stituents who said, I want the same kind of choices you have, Mr. Congressman, hopefully they call me CHRIS, but the bottom line is, they are saying as a Federal employee I get to choose a wide range of programs. I have to pay 28 percent of health care costs. But I can choose any kind of program. I can choose one that is more expensive, less expensive and so on. I just want to emphasize, the gentleman from Florida is right on target. We are doing what our constituents have asked: Give us the same kind of choices you have.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I am excited about the plan. I think we have been debating health care for almost 3 years. Now we are going to be able to do it. We are going to make the changes. We are going to give a better system to the seniors of our country. We are going to preserve a program that is so essential that we have to have it, and it is going to be there and it is going to be a much better plan. I do not understand what all this scare rhetoric is. It is politics. People do not want politics on this issue. It is too important for politics. I am getting tired of the scare tactics that keep coming in from the other side.

Mr. HAYWORTH. I guess it is just a situation where Halloween came a little bit early and lasted for the better part of 3 months. The chances now for us to expand choices, to offer real reform rather than a Band-Aid approach for the American people and preserve this program so that we can take the steps necessary in later years, indeed to preserve it for future generations, it is summed up in the name Medicare Plus. And as both my colleagues from Florida, Mr. Speaker, have indicated, it offers choice. And as my good friend from Connecticut so articulately phrased it, what is wrong with having that type of choice. We will leave it to the American people who duly elected us to debate this issue and make the necessary changes to preserve, protect, and improve Medicare.

Mr. SHAYS. I would just like to say, if I could, I compliment the President on one issue. He said to the American people, we need to deal with health care. It was a big wake-up call for a lot of Members of Congress. And what the President did is set in motion a number of us, if not all of us, giving this our number one priority and studying this issue tremendously. And so for that, it has been extraordinarily helpful because this is not something we just started working on.

You started and others and my colleagues started well before the President asked, but the general bottom line is that we have been working on this health care issue for over 3 years now and we think we have come to a plan that the American people really will find is what they want.

Mr. MICA. In closing, I just want to say again that I do not think there is any greater threat to senior citizens or all Americans, if this Congress does not act responsibly on the fiscal problems.

And they are not just Medicare, it is a big item, but it is also providing jobs and opportunity for this and future generations. And some of that does involve changing our tax policy. So we are going to have to do all of this. I think if we work together we can do a better job and we do not have to scare anyone in the process. But I think all of us working together we can improve what we have.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, just in closing, for the seniors of this country, we have a good program. You are going to be excited by this program when it comes out next year. It is going to save a system that is essential to keep up.

Do not get scared by the rhetoric out there. It is going to be a good program. You are going to be very pleased with it. It is going to continue to exist and that is what we are here for. We are going to preserve and protect Medicare.

STATE OF EMERGENCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, the state of emergency continues. You have just heard some of the brightest and most decent human beings in the Congress make a long statement about Medicare and health care funding, and neither one of them admitted that Medicaid will cease to be an entitlement under their bill. Millions of Americans who are now covered right now by Medicaid will no longer be covered as a result of the legislation that they want to pass.

They have not admitted that we are the only industrialized nation, we are the only industrialized nation other than South Africa that does not have universal health care coverage of some kind, are not moving in that direction. We were moving in that direction with Medicaid coverage for the poor, but they are going to take away the Medicaid entitlement. They say that we are going to be happy when we see the package. Americans will be happy when they see that less people are covered as a result of this legislation than were covered before. We are going backward and we should be happy.

There is a state of emergency that ought to be recognized here. Nearly half a million dedicated troops were here in Washington yesterday. Unfortunately, they had no commanders to tell them about the state of emergency. Unfortunately, no one told them to concentrate on the place where the real battles are being fought. They do not understand were the real battles are taking place. They do not understand that the state of emergency directly impacts on their lives.

They came, they are engaged, and I hope they will remain so. I want to discuss tonight how they must be energized and informed and directed to become a part of defending themselves

against the big guns that are aimed at them and their way of life.

Nearly half a million dedicated troops were in Washington yesterday. Nearly half a million young black males marched yesterday. But they were not told the nature of the war they are in and the danger they face, and they were not told how best to engage the enemy.

I want to talk about how they must engage the enemy.

First I want to just describe what happened yesterday. I want to use the language of some of the editorials and columnists who have commented on it. In the Daily News of New York City, the Daily News language I think was very sensitive to what happened. I quote from the Daily News editorial of today, October 17:

The pain of generations of hope denied brought a sea of seekers to Washington. They came seeking solutions to the problems that divide them from the rest of the nation and from themselves. From the cold of early morning to the setting of the sun over the Nation's Capitol, they stood patiently, admirably, listening, waiting for words to heal them, to inspire them. Most waited in vain. But the power of their presence was so strong that it captured the attention of a nation. The power of their presence was so strong that it captured the attention of the nation.

I think it is important to note that these dedicated young men who came, according to one poll that has been taken, came for many different reasons. Unfortunately, too few of them came to Washington, the capital of power, and understood that not only could they capture the attention of the Nation but they could do more.

They could have focused in on some of the emergencies that exist right here in this legislative hall. We are going to have a vote this Thursday on Medicare, Medicaid. Nobody talks about Medicaid very much, but Medicaid is part of the package, too. There is going to be a huge cut in Medicare. That is horrible. We want to stop that cut. I do not think we have the votes. It is going to pass the House with that huge \$270 billion cut over a 7-year period. More than \$180 billion will be cut from Medicaid. And Medicaid will no longer be an entitlement. Right now it is an entitlement.

In case people do not know what entitlement is, entitlement, in summary, is the Federal Government saying that you as a citizen of the United States have a right to this particular benefit if you qualify for it. It is a means-tested entitlement. It is not like the farm subsidies or cash subsidies in the farm program. No matter how rich you are, you are entitled to your cash subsidy for the growth of tobacco or peanuts or whatever.

Medicaid is a means-tested entitlement. You have to profess you are poor. You have to prove you have great need before you can qualify for Medicaid. And Medicaid is as close as we have gotten in this country to coverage of the poorest people with some kind of health care plan.

We are like South Africa in that we do not have any effort going forward to move toward universal coverage. So, even that which exists already under Medicaid will be taken away. And the only hope that is being held out is in the Senate where the great debate in the Senate is, they will leave the entitlement in place for pregnant women and children. They will leave the entitlement in place for pregnant women and children. They can get Medicaid. But the young black males and all the other poor males of America, you will not be entitled to Medicaid, no matter how you qualify.

If you have an accident on your job, the likelihood is that you will be in a situation where you do not have health care coverage because so many of the kinds of jobs that these young black males will have or young males entering the work force are not jobs where you have a health plan. There is no health plan. So young males are in jeopardy in terms of not only accidents on the job, which there might be some relief in terms of workmen's compensation, but they are in jeopardy in terms of other kinds of illnesses.

They are certainly in jeopardy in terms of the violence that takes place and I have seen by visiting some hospitals where they have convalescing people who are receiving therapy, large numbers of young men who are the victims of gun shots, gun play, and other kinds of violence that have partially disabled them, not only black men but white men also. Violence often causes young men to need a great deal of health care, very expensive health care, also, health care for people with great disabilities.

So they have the guns aimed at them. Speaker GINGRICH has said that politics is war without blood. So I do not hesitate to use the analogy of guns. Politics is war without blood. While we dillydally these few days, it is very slow around here, not much happened on the floor today. We had a few votes, we had a few suspensions discussed, but the guns are being maneuvered into position. Those guns will be aimed at the programs that have been put in place over the last 50 years, programs which are compassionate and programs which seek to help poor people, people who qualify because they are poor and they need help.

□ 2030

We have all kinds of programs in America which help people. We have programs that help people that have been victimized by earthquakes, and they do not have to have means tests, does not matter who it is. People have been victimized by floods. There is no means test necessary to get government assistance. There are those victimized by drought or by hurricanes. There are ways to get help without means tests. So we have a humane society in many ways that extends help, but we are saying for people who are in dire need of help because their health

is a problem, "We are going to cut it off. We are not going to have the Federal Government stand behind that. We are going to dump it off on the States." And the States have already made it quite clear that there is a minimum amount that they are going to offer in terms of additional help beyond what the Federal Government provides at present.

The big guns are aimed at the young men who were here yesterday. The earned income tax credit benefits poor families. It is a way to benefit working families. It is a way to reward people for working. We say we want people to go to work, and the earned income tax is one idea that brings to life the notion that people should be rewarded for work, but that is going to be cut, too. The gun is aimed at the earned income tax credit.

The guns are aimed at job training. We understand there are a lot of people being thrown out of work. There is a change in the industrial situation, and companies are changing in terms of technology. Downsizing, streamlining is taking place. I have talked about this before, and the only answer to it is in this transition period maximize the amount of education and job training so that people can recycle themselves, be helped to recycle themselves, but job training has been cut, too. Job training has been cut by \$5 billion by this Republican-controlled Congress. Job training programs cut, education programs have been cut, by \$4 billion.

The guns are aimed at the young persons who were here yesterday, and they did not hear anybody really focus on how important it was for them to understand and to rise up in very concrete, nonviolent, political ways to defend themselves.

Summer youth employment; many of the youngest youngsters there qualify for a summer youth employment program which has existed since the Great Society programs were created by Lyndon Johnson. Every summer minimum-wage jobs are available for 25 to 30 hours, and youngsters who are given those jobs and given some kind of training and prepare for the world of work as well as help to earn, allowed to earn, some money to go back to school, and I know from direct experience many of them end up contributing to their very poor families from the meager amounts of money they make in the summer youth employment program. That is zeroed out. The summer youth employment program, it is not just for men. It is for women, too, for females, too. That is zeroed out. It will exist no more as a result of legislation passed by this Republican-controlled House of Representatives.

The Senate, I think, have pretty much followed suit. I do not know of any effort to revitalize it. Title I, direct education program, Federal money flowing into the schools which have the younger sisters and brothers of the males who came here yesterday. Their nephews and nieces and their children

are in those schools. Title I is the only Federal program that helps elementary and secondary schools all across the Nation, and we have cut that by \$1.1 billion, which is one-seventh of the total amount.

Those young men and their families are targeted by the guns that are aimed at them, and they did not realize it. We must get to them and make them understand that there is a state of emergency and they must be involved in the fight to reverse this state of emergency. Their survival is at stake.

The crime prevention programs that were passed in the last Congress are on the chopping block. There is no more crime prevention of any significance in the bills that were passed by the Republican-controlled Congress. There are more prisons in greater amounts, and there are harsh regulations which force prisons to focus primarily on punishment and not on rehabilitation, but the young men who were here yesterday were not told about these changes.

Drug treatment is out of the window. Nothing of significance is going to happen with respect to drug treatment. The funding is no longer there.

One in three black males now are somewhere in the criminal justice system, either in prison, on parole, or probation, or under some kind of court supervision, one in three black males in America. A few years ago it was one in four. When these statistics came out, everybody was shocked. One in four black males in America are in the criminal justice system somewhere. Now it is one in three. In a few years will it be one in two? There is nothing to stop us from moving in that direction. But not much discussion of that took place yesterday either. We have to deal with the one in three right here.

There are bills on the floor in the next 2 weeks dealing with the prison system directly. The Sentencing Commission has recommended that we stop the discrepancy between the sentencing for people that have crack cocaine and those who have powdered cocaine because large numbers of blacks, females, and males, are being imprisoned for the possession of crack cocaine when more expensive and larger amounts of powdered cocaine, which are generally the choice of richer people, more affluent people, middle-class people, more white people; those persons are not sentenced in the same harsh way that those who have crack cocaine are. The Sentencing Commission has recommended a change, but the Republican-controlled majority does not want to allow that change to take place. The Sentencing Commission sees it as being the only just way to go, but that kind of justice is not accepted by the Republican majority control in this House.

The men who came yesterday are in serious trouble. They are in jeopardy, and they had some sense of the fact that they are in jeopardy. But men ev-

erywhere are in trouble, and too often they do not know it. Large numbers of men are in trouble, large numbers of families are in trouble, and I hate to continue to be repetitive and quote this article by Lester Thurow, but it is the best summary. It drives straight to the heart of the matter that you are going to find anywhere. Lester Thurow's article that I quoted several times in the past month is an article which appeared September 3, in the Sunday, New York Times just before Labor Day, and he was talking about the state of the working man in the world, not just in America. That article began with a statement that no country without a revolution or military defeat and subsequent occupation has ever experienced such a sharp shift in the distribution of earnings as America has in the last generation. At no other time have median wages of men fallen for more than two decades. Never before have a majority of American workers suffered real wage reductions while the per capita domestic product was advancing.

I read it because it needs to be read over, and over, and other again.

Now here is some parts I have not read and emphasized before. Let me just tell you how Lester Thurow brings this all together and focuses on families and focuses on males. Quote another paragraph that I have not read before although I have entered this entire article into the RECORD:

Wages of white men are falling slightly faster than those of black men, and the young have been clobbered. Wages are down 25 percent for men 25 to 34 years of age. Median wages for women didn't start to fall until 1989, but are now falling for every group except college-educated women. The pace of decline seems to have doubled in 1994 and early 1995.

This is Lester Thurow, professor of economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a recognized expert in this area of manpower, the economy, technology, et cetera. He has testified innumerable times before Congress in various committees. Let me just quote two more paragraphs:

Thirty-two percent of all men between 25 and 34 years of age earn less than the amount necessary to keep a family of four above the poverty line. Thirty-two percent of all men between 25 and 34 years of age earn less than the amount necessary to keep a family of four above the poverty line.

Now he is not talking about black males, just black men. He is talking about American men, 34 percent of all American men, black and white. To continue quoting Lester Thurow:

Using the language of capitalism in today's economy children have shifted from being profit centers to being cost centers. To support them parents have to be willing to make large economic sacrifices.

Now listen closely. Men have a strong economic incentive to bail out of family responsibility since, when they do, their real standard of living

rises 73 percent, although that of the family left behind falls 42 percent.

Listen carefully. I will repeat it. He is not talking about black males or black men only. Men have a strong economic incentive to bail out of family responsibility since, when they do so, their real standard of living rises 73 percent, although that of the family left behind falls 42 percent.

To continue Lester Thurow, I quote: "Whether it is fathering a family without being willing to be a father, whether it is divorce and being unwilling to pay alimony or child support, or whether it is being an immigrant from the Third World and after a time failing to send payments to the family back home, men all around the world are opting out. The Japanese seems to be the only exception," quoting Lester Thurow. Men all over the world are opting out under the pressure of not having enough wages to take care of families.

Let me just repeat the last paragraph. Whether it is fathering a family without being willing to be a father, whether it is divorce and being unwilling to pay alimony or child support, whether it is being an immigrant from the Third World and after a time failing to send payment to the family back home, men all around the world are opting out. The Japanese seem to be the only exception.

The men who came here yesterday came, and it was advertised as a day of atonement. From the very first this march, called by Louis Farrakhan, it was Farrakhan's march, spoke of a day of atonement for the sins that have been committed against black women and families, a day of atonement for the sins that have been committed. The men came to deal with taking personal responsibility, and that is very important. That is very important. Nobody should minimize the importance of men and women, human beings, taking personal responsibility.

The problem is that in this world there is a government responsibility that is also very much tied to what happens to individuals and what happens to families, and to oversimplify, not understand, that you must change the way your government operates in order to be able to take care of your family, that it is child neglect not to be involved in the political process, it is child neglect and family neglect not to exercise your responsibilities as a citizen and try to change the policies of your government.

□ 2045

That has to be understood. Medicare and Medicaid are not individual responsibilities, except the way they utilized, and the way individuals pay taxes into a system which helps to support Medicare and Medicaid. But you cannot have your family taken care of properly, with respect to health care, by yourself, no matter how much you reform and change your own lifestyle, which is highly desirable in many

cases, and I am told that the men who came yesterday, the police have remarked that rarely have they seen such an orderly group, such a purposeful group, such a group that was intent on making a good impression, so great things will happen as a result of those individuals who came yesterday. I expect there will be personal changes that are very important.

However, to ignore the Medicare emergency, ignore the Medicaid emergency, to have the leaders not really focus more on the earned income tax credit, the job training, the summer youth employment, the title I cuts, the crime prevention cuts, the drug treatment cuts, to not understand that the economy is shaped by forces that are beyond the control of individuals and families, and to not address the fact that Government policies at this point are at the root of the problems being faced by families and their inability to cope, in many cases.

My evaluation of the Million Man March is mixed. Many people will wonder why I am going out in praise of the young men who came. I agree with the sensitivity expressed by the Daily News editorial, that their intent was magnificent and they came for good reasons. The overall impression is a good one, that made a Martin Luther King on the conscience of America.

I am one of the people who did not support the march. I did not endorse the march. I did not participate. Today, after proclaiming that it made a good impression on the conscience of America, I still have no apologies for not participating. The young men who came, came for various reasons. I know, because I have talked to dozens of them over and over again, over the past 3 months. They have told me.

I would summarize by saying the greatest percentage of them came in order to be a part of the positive energy of so many black males gathered in one place. They wanted to be a part of the positive energy. They wanted to bond with their black brothers. They did not have a political agenda, unfortunately. They also did not have an agenda to support Minister Louis Farrakhan in his endeavors. They were not interested in a philosophy of isolationism. They were not interested in a separatist philosophy. They were not interested in anti-Semitism. The great majority of them did not have that as an agenda.

As a member of the leadership, I could not participate because I knew very well the danger of supporting an activity which is led by a minister, Louis Farrakhan, who refuses, basically, to change his agenda. Let it be clearly understood that I am pleasantly surprised and quite happy and optimistic about the fact that there was a moderate statement made, a moderating statement, a conciliatory statement made, about moving toward unity, about sitting down with people that the Nation of Islam has had differences with, about sitting down with

the Jewish community. I think all of that should be applauded. I think it is a great step forward. Blessed are the peacemakers. All of us should look forward to wanting to move through those kinds of hurdles and get over bigotry, racism, and any kind of religious condemnation or anti-Semitism. We should all want to do that. I applaud that, and am happy that it happened.

We have to see, however, how it develops. I did not support the Million Man March, but I respect those leaders who did participate. I consider myself a follower of Martin Luther King, who has taken a totally opposite approach to Minister Louis Farrakhan. Martin Luther King preached integration, not isolation, not segregation. Martin Luther King preached love, Martin Luther King preached moving forward in a positive way to overcome the difficulties of this society. Yet, when he died, he was planning a poor people's march on Washington, so economics was also a concern of Martin Luther King.

That agenda that he had was awesome. Segregation was the major problem. He had gotten around, on to economics, and dealing with a change in the way America does business and the way it treats people, black people in particular, economically, only because he had had to go through such a rigorous agenda on segregation and the violation of civil rights, so it was not because Martin Luther King did not understand the need to address basic problems such as jobs, businesses, and sharing in the great American economy.

I am a follower of Martin Luther King, the way of Martin Luther King, not a way of isolationism or hate or bigotry. There were others who were also followers of Martin Luther King who chose to join the march and participate, other leaders. I certainly think all the young people who participated are not in one category, and there is no question about their choice.

I think the leaders who participated, there is a slight philosophical difference between me and them in terms of those who are followers of Martin Luther King and felt they had to participate and feel that there is a danger in following an isolationist leader, a leader who preaches hate, segregation, et cetera. I respect them, and I do not consider myself as having a monopoly on wisdom.

I went through several stages in reaching the decision that I should not participate in the Million Man March. The Congressional Black Caucus considered whether it should endorse the Million Man March. At that time I led the opposition. I was in favor of issuing a statement by the Caucus which said:

We welcome all marchers. We certainly want to encourage maximum participation in this political process. We welcome more letter writing to Congressmen, we welcome lobbying, we welcome more petitioning, and above all we welcome more demonstrations and marches.

The Caucus would issue that agenda. For that reason we developed an 11-

point program. I offered to the caucus an 11-point program which summarized what is going on here in Washington that all black people ought to be concerned about, which part of this war without blood affects them, which part of this effort to remake America impacts on black people. If you look at the list that I drew up, the 11 points, I think it is pretty well covered there.

I made that argument and I lost. The overwhelming percentage of Caucus Members voted to endorse the march. We do not deal with the numbers and that and so forth, but suffice it to say an overwhelming percentage endorsed the march, and I felt I had to respect that decision. I certainly was not going to go out and campaign against a decision in the Caucus when I had participated in the debate, in the process, but I did tell people that I was not going to participate.

When I was confronted with numerous young people who wanted to participate and other people who wanted to participate, I listened to their arguments and I came to the conclusion that the best recommendation was, to those people who wanted to participate and who had reasons for participating which had nothing to do with a day of atonement for the sins committed against black women and their children or families, they wanted to go for other reasons, of the dozens that I talked to, at least one-quarter of them wanted to go for religious reasons, and they identified with the Nation of Islam's religious agenda.

Another one-quarter did have some political agenda. They understood that Medicare was under attack, that Medicaid was under attack. They understood that programs which had benefited the black community for years were about to be destroyed. They wanted to be a part of the march in order to protest that. At least half of them had no agenda, politically or religious. They wanted to bond with the million men who came. They wanted to be a part of the positive energy.

Given that agenda, I respected it. I told everybody that if they go, they should go and carry their own banner, to say what they are in the march for, give out their own leaflets. I even offered leaflets to people which had the Congressional Black Caucus 11-point agenda. I came to that conclusion, and verbally made that statement to individuals who asked me. I made the same statement to many press people who called.

However, it became obvious that the march was too big, the issues were too great, to just make verbal statements. I prepared a draft of a written statement, and was about to issue that draft last Thursday when several new developments took place that made me revise the draft. My draft, first draft, said that I understood from talking to young black males in my community, I understood from talking to black males in general, that large numbers of people would come and large numbers

of people who could not come to the Million Man March yesterday wanted to come.

I understood their sentiments, and I hoped that with the momentum of the occasion, I hoped that having that many young black males who felt that strongly about their presence being important in Washington, would make Minister Farrakhan rise to the occasion. I said in that statement that I hoped that he would renounce all anti-Semitism, all isolationism and hostility toward the idea of one world, and the fact that the black community cannot exist alone.

I hoped that he would abandon the philosophy which endangers the black community, that philosophy which makes it appear that somehow blacks can exist alone; no other group has attempted to exist alone, but somehow blacks can go it alone and be hostile toward traditional allies. We do not need allies. History has clearly shown, a number of studies have shown, that minorities above all need allies. In order for minorities to survive, they must have allies.

Studies have shown that no matter how good a minority may be in terms of measuring up to the standards of the majority, the majority will inevitably, if the minority does not have some protection, turn on the minority. It is not a matter of how good you are and how you measure up to the standards that are set by the majority, the minority is always in danger. The Jews in Germany excelled in many fields, so envy took over and they were in danger, as they were in the inquisition in Spain. There were a number of occasions where the excelling and the measuring up to the standards of a given society did not please the majority. They found some other excuse.

There are blacks who think that what you have to do is measure up to the standards set by whites, get an education, raise your moral standards, do all the things that middle-class America says its values, and automatically the race problem will go away, automatically being a minority will no longer be a problem. That is not what history bears out. If you do that, you will be an object of envy, and the same racism will be there, because majorities behave in that way toward minorities, usually. Usually there is some demagogue who comes along and takes advantage of the fact that there is a minority, and they can use that minority and the persecution of that minority to galvanize the majority.

Minorities are always vulnerable, for that reason. Either you are condemned and treated with contempt and labeled as inferior, as the Bell Curve does, and a number of other respectable scientists and philosophers are attempting to do, and that is the excuse for the oppression of the minority, or you are too rich, too talented, and taking too much of the resources, and therefore, you must be persecuted, so minorities are always in danger.

Only a philosophy which says we are going to continually reach out for allies, we are going to continually try to be less of a minority, and continue to integrate into a larger society of what I call the caring majority. There are people in the world of all colors that we want to identify with, people in the world of all religions that we want to identify with. They label themselves. They become a kind of caring majority that must be joined.

I have used the word "barbarian" here many times, and I have had people here recently tell me "You are as hostile and militant and uncompromising as some of the people you criticize." I use the word "barbarian" and I have defined it every time I use it. I say there are high-technology barbarians running the majority here. They are in control. I have defined it, not as the Romans defined barbarian. The Romans defined barbarian as anybody who was not a Roman. I have not defined barbarians in that way. That is a racist definition.

I defined clearly, barbarians are people who have no compassion. They cannot empathize. They have no feeling for anyone except those in their immediate family or their immediate friends, but they cannot feel or have compassion for other people. That is a barbarian. I have defined high-technology barbarians as people who are very bright, people who know how to use communications, modern communications media, people who have computers and know how to use computers, people who have gone to the best colleges. Those are the people who I call the high-technology barbarians.

It has nothing to do with color. There are black high-technology barbarians, there are white high-technology barbarians, there are Jewish high-technology barbarians, there are Protestant, Catholic high-technology barbarians. I define people by conditions they have control over.

□ 2100

We are not born a barbarian. We can become a barbarian as a result of our own actions and our own attitudes or our own philosophy. Nobody is a barbarian because of the color of their skin or the religion they happen to have adopted. They are barbarians because of their attitudes. When they are public officials and in powerful places, they are dangerous barbarians.

So Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that my use of the term is not a racist definition of everybody who is not black, or everybody who is not a Baptist, a Protestant, a Christian. I clearly label barbarians as those who have no compassion, those who would sit and make policies which disenfranchise from health care millions of people and not have any feeling or any compassion in the process. Those are barbarians.

Let me just continue, Mr. Speaker. My first draft appealed to Minister Farrakhan to rise above his own preju-

ices, his own past agenda of isolationism, and segregationist strategies. I said in that draft that I hoped that he would do that. And then, 3 days before the reports began to come out about the charge of bloodsuckers; that Jews were called bloodsuckers. And when an explanation was sought, it was expanded to not only Jews but Koreans and Arabs and everybody in the black community who takes money out of the black community are bloodsuckers. It looked as if there would be no opportunity to have Minister Farrakhan on the podium rising above the occasion, so I rewrote my draft and did not make an appeal that would look stupid.

I want to enter the entire statement for the record, Mr. Speaker. The statement is labeled "Statement of Congressman Major Owens on the October 16 Million Man March sponsored by the Nation of Islam". The statement was issued on Monday morning, October 16, 1995. It has an attachment, which is called "The fight for the CBC and caring majority agenda".

The 11 points that I talked about before, in which I said the Congressional Black Caucus should put out as reasons to march, are attached, and I want to enter the statement in its entirety, but let me just read from the statement in a few areas to clarify what I have just said.

My statement on the Million Man March begins as follows:

In my activist bones there is something that makes me always yearn to support a demonstration or a march. Certainly, given the vicious unrelenting attack on public policies which benefit the majority of Blacks, there is an urge to applaud any non-violent action that makes the Gingrich hit-tech barbarians a target. As a manifestation of massive people empowerment a march on Washington by the Caring Majority could be very much in order and long overdue.

But the October 16th march is not a Caring Majority march. Is Minister Louis Farrakhan's march focused on the current outrages of the Washington Republican majority? Is the anger of this march targeted at the pending legislation which will eradicate the entitlement of all poor children, including Black children, to receive Aid For Families with Dependent Children? Are the voices of the organizers denouncing the proposals to eradicate the entitlement for Medicaid? Are the idealistic youth headed for Washington being told that they should vent their rage on those who have cut billions of dollars from low-income housing, job training, education and other vital programs? Unfortunately in most march organizing circles the answer to these questions is "No".

Despite my activist instincts I refuse to participate in the October 16th Million Man March because the agenda of the March is purposefully shrouded in contradictions and conflicting messages. As a leader and elected member of Congress I can not endorse and engage in an activity which has leaders who loudly call for ecumenical and united action, but who thrive on autocratic planning and decision-making. I can not agree to blind and unconditional unity with those slogans and platforms have consistently been reckless and divisive. I cannot support a major statement by a group whose continuing isolationist posture and separatist strategy pose a long-term threat to the survival of the African American community.

Those who want to participate should not be denounced or even discouraged. I have talked to several dozen young men who are planning to join the March. One quarter of them clearly see the March as a religious affirmation experience. Approximately one half see it as an opportunity to "bond" with males and be a part of a massive generation of "positive energy". One fourth state that they are going in order to personally protest the "political situation".

Given this obvious intense desire to participate, my advice to these young men has been: If you go carry your own banner and give out your own leaflets to state the reason you are there.

This March is a golden opportunity to send a powerful message to America. But this March is Minister Louis Farrakhan's March. His picture has been on every recruitment poster. Farrakhan will determine who speaks and for how long on the program in Washington. This assemblage in Washington could have been Farrakhan's golden opportunity.

It could have been a golden opportunity. I did not know at that time what would happen. Fortunately, nothing terrible happened in Farrakhan's speech, but nothing was done to eradicate some of the policies that have been clearly set forth in the past. I am optimistic. I am willing to wait. I hope that the few things that were said in the spirit of conciliation will go forward.

In another part of this statement I say that one problem that is a major problem relates to the fact that as the march progressed, I am quoting from the statement, "As the march progressed," and this happened at a church in Brooklyn. The speech was made by this gentleman. "As the march progressed, Khalid Muhammed continued to view the march as primarily a religious march with the date chosen to be as near the birthdate of the Honorable Elijah Muhammed as possible. For him this march is still primarily "a day of atonement for the sins of black men against black women and their families."

This was taken from a newspaper article which quoted a speech made by Mr. Khalid Muhammed in a church in Brooklyn.

Leadership by an unrepentant Khalid Muhammed emphasizing the presence of Black men in Washington for the purpose of "atonement" for their sins is the one certain way to guarantee a dangerous and harmful message from this massive March. Speaker Gingrich and his hi-tech barbarians will welcome such a "confession" by Black men. This "atonement" validates the repeated Republican attacks on the Black community.

If the sins of Black men are the problem, then 232 years of slavery and a hundred years of brutal oppression after slavery are not part of the problem. If the collective sins of Black men are the major problem, then government policies which have denied economic development to the great cities and generated long-term unemployment for Blacks are not a significant part of the problem.

If the collective sins of Black men are the primary problem, then there is no need to fight the eradication of the entitlement of public assistance for poor children. There is no need to fight the proposals to end the entitlement to health care through Medicaid. If sin is the primary problem then govern-

ment policies and actions have almost no role to play in the struggle to rebuild African American Communities. Sin is the province and responsibility of religions, ministers, churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other similar groupings. Government only causes confusion and division when it mixes with religion.

Not sin, but public policies, government laws, rules, regulations and actions must be the primary concerns of elected officials and other secular leaders. No one should ever underestimate the role of personal morality in human affairs. We know that individuals are ultimately the masters of their own fates. But it is the duty of government to facilitate human and family positive development. Government and public policies must always strive to remove as many obstacles to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" as possible. The Nation of Islam should not oversimplify the problems of our complex society and allow those in power to wash their hands and forget the problems they have created.

Instead of the Congressional Black Caucus endorsing a primarily religious march which had a planning process and an agenda which the Caucus could not influence, I urged the members of the CBC to issue its own agenda for action and invite all interested groups to march and fight for this Caring Majority Agenda.

In the final analysis time, intellect and energy spent denouncing the actions of others represent resources not being most effectively used. Let us leave the Nation of Islam to crusade with its religious focus on sin.

It is for us, the Caring Majority, to define ourselves not merely with words but the mass actions. From coast to coast, throughout this nation, Manifestations of Empowerment must be organized by the Caring Majority with high visibility, and a powerful focus. With representatives from both sexes, all races and ethnic groups, all religions and creeds; in unison with all who care about the expansion of freedom, jobs, justice, and health care, the Caring Majority must move beyond October 16th and seize the initiative. And, as a climactic statement to those in Washington who want to "remake America" for the convenience of an oppressive elite minority, the Caring Majority must convene its own assembly of one million persons on the mall in Washington. We shall overcome!

The important thing is now that almost a half million young black males were engaged. I hope they stay engaged. There were some positive things that were recommended by Minister Farrakhan. He told them to go back and join organizations, join churches, adopt one person in jail, register eight voters, pledge not to commit violence themselves against anyone, pledge not to strike women, pledge not to dishonor women.

Mr. Speaker, I think those were agendas for returning that are important. The most important agendas, however, have still to be supplied. Elected officials, whether Congressmen or city councilmen, assembly persons, State Senators must supply that agenda. We must enter the battle for the minds of our young males. They are engaged, we must guarantee that they remain engaged in a constructive way. We must guarantee they understand that a state of emergency exists. It is a political problem, and they must step forward to deal with that problem.

The full text of the statement is as follows:

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN MAJOR R. OWENS ON THE OCTOBER 16 MILLION MAN MARCH SPONSORED BY THE NATION OF ISLAM

In my activist bones there is something that makes me always yearn to support a demonstration or a march. Certainly, given the vicious unrelenting attack on public policies which benefit the majority of Blacks, there is an urge to applaud any non-violent action that makes the Gingrich hi-tech barbarians a target. As a manifestation of massive people empowerment a march on Washington by the Caring Majority could be very much in order and long overdue.

But the October 16th march is not a Caring Majority march. Is Minister Louis Farrakhan's march focused on the current outrages of the Washington Republican majority? Is the anger of this march targeted at the pending legislation which will eradicate the entitlement of all poor children, including Black children, to receive Aid For Families with Dependent Children? Are the voices of the organizers denouncing the proposals to eradicate the entitlement for Medicaid? Are the idealistic youth headed for Washington being told that they should vent their rage on those who have cut billions of dollars from low-income housing, job training, education and other vital programs? Unfortunately in most march organizing circles the answer to these questions is "NO".

Despite my activist instincts I refuse to participate in the October 16th Million Man March because the agenda of the March is purposefully shrouded in contradictions and conflicting messages. As a leader and elected member of Congress I can not endorse and engage in an activity which has leaders who loudly call for ecumenical and united action, but who thrive on autocratic planning and decision-making. I can not agree to blind and unconditional unity with those whose slogans and platforms have consistently been reckless and divisive. I cannot support a major statement by a group whose continuing isolationist posture and separatist strategy pose a long-term threat to the survival of the African American community.

Those who want to participate should not be denounced or even discouraged. I have talked to several dozen young men who are planning to join the March. One quarter of them clearly see the March as a religious affirmation experience. Approximately one half see it as an opportunity to "bond" with males and be a part of a massive generation of "positive energy". One fourth state that they are going in order to personally protest the "political situation".

Given this obvious intense desire to participate, my advice to these young men has been: If you go carry your own banner and give out your own leaflets to state the reason you are there.

This March is a golden opportunity to send a powerful message to America. But this March is Minister Louis Farrakhan's March. His picture has been on every recruitment poster. Farrakhan will determine who speaks and for how long on the program in Washington. This assemblage in Washington could have been Farrakhan's golden opportunity.

Minister Farrakhan could have used this platform to truly unify Black America by endorsing the ideals and principles which place the African American community on the very highest moral ground. Farrakhan could have wiped out the past and taken a great leap forward by following the example of Nelson Mandela and denouncing all racism, sexism, anti-semitism and other religious bigotry, homophobia, prejudice, immigrant bashing and oppression of the poor.

A pledge to cleanse anti-semitism from the Nation of Islam's literature, videos, radio and television scripts would have constituted

a dramatic first step toward the rising of a new sun of unity in the firmament of the Black community. The doors would have been opened wide for the full embracing of our allies among all ethnic, religious, national and economic groups. The Nation of Islam, in unison with the African American Community, would have been able to assume its rightful place as a critical part of the greater Caring Majority.

This March offered a golden opportunity for Minister Farrakhan. But the speeches within the last forty eight hours have indicated that he has chosen to trample on this option for conciliation. Basic steps to establish an environment which rejects bigotry and anti-semitism have been rejected. Farrakhan's speeches trumpeting the charge of "bloodsuckers" has grown more shrill. At the same time that Black college professors are working to prepare a more detailed political manifesto, Minister Khalid Muhammad, one of the nation's crudest and most notorious anti-semites, has been given the pivotal role of instructing the young Marchers.

As the march progressed, Khalid Muhammed continued to view this March as primarily a religious one with the date chosen to be as near the birthdate of the Honorable Elijah Muhammed as possible. For him the March is still primarily "a day of atonement for the sins of Black men against Black women and their families".

Leadership by an unrepentant Khalid Muhammed emphasizing the presence of Black men in Washington for the purpose of "atonement" for their sins is the one way to guarantee a dangerous and harmful message from this massive March. Speaker Gingrich and his hi-tech barbarians will welcome such a "confession" by Black men. This "atonement" validates the repeated Republican attacks on the Black community.

If the sins of Black men are the problem, then 232 years of slavery and a hundred years of brutal oppression after slavery are not part of the problem. If the collective sins of Black men are the major problem, then government policies which have denied economic development in the great cities and generated long-term unemployment for Blacks are not a significant part of the problem.

If the collective sins of Black men are the primary problem, then there is no need to fight the eradication of the entitlement to public assistance for poor children. There is no need to fight the proposals to end the entitlement to health care through medicaid. If sin is the primary problem then government policies and actions have almost no role to play in the struggle to rebuild African American Communities. Sin is the province and responsibility of religions, ministers, churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other similar groupings. Government only causes confusion and division when it mixes with religion.

Not sin, but public policies, government laws, rules, regulations and actions must be the primary concerns of elected officials and other secular leaders. No one should ever underestimate the role of personal morality in human affairs. We know that individuals are ultimately the masters of their own fates. But it is the duty of government to facilitate human and family positive development. Government and public policies must always strive to remove as many obstacles to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" as possible. The Nation of Islam should not oversimplify the problems of our complex society and allow those in power to wash their hands and forget the problems they have created.

Instead of the Congressional Black Caucus endorsing a primarily religious march which had a planning process and an agenda which the Caucus could not influence, I urged the

members of the CBC to issue its own agenda for action and invite all interested groups to march and fight for this Caring Majority Agenda. (See Attached) For the sake of our families and our communities we must never engage in actions that are wasteful and counterproductive. But all Americans must understand that these are desperate times. The oppressive forces in control of the Congress have created a political state of emergency. In support of a Caring Majority Agenda all concerned groups must lobby, write letters, petition, demonstrate, and march!

In the final analysis time, intellect and energy spent denouncing the actions of others represent resources not being most effectively used. Let us leave the Nation of Islam to crusade with its religious focus on sin.

It is for us, the Caring Majority, to define ourselves not merely with words but with mass actions. From coast to coast, throughout this nation, Manifestations of Empowerment must be organized by the Caring Majority with high visibility, and a powerful focus. With representatives from both sexes, all races and ethnic groups, all religions and creeds; in unison with all who care about the expansion of freedom, jobs, justice, and health care, the Caring Majority must move beyond October 16th and seize the initiative. And, as a climactic statement to those in Washington who want to "remake America" for the convenience of an oppressive elite minority, the Caring Majority, in the Spring of 1996, must convene its own "Tianamen Square" assembly of one million persons on the mall in Washington. We shall overcome!

ATTACHMENT CONGRESSMAN MAJOR R. OWENS'
STATEMENT ON THE MILLION MAN MARCH
FIGHT FOR THE CBC AND CARING MAJORITY
AGENDA

In support of the Congressional Black Caucus and Caring Majority Agenda we strongly urge all concerned groups to lobby, demonstrate, petition, write letters and march in these critical days ahead when the President will be negotiating with the Republican controlled Congress to save the nation from devastating budget cuts.

Fight Aggressive Racist Attacks in All Forms: the attacks on affirmative action, school desegregation, set asides and the voting rights act. Fight government and unofficial acts which encourage sexism, anti-semitism, homophobia, immigrant persecution or denial of basic rights to any group.

Fight for Education as a national priority. The CBC Alternative Budget demands a 25 per cent increase in funding for education. President Clinton is also proposing a large increase for education. The Summer Youth Employment Program must also be funded. The Republicans have voted zero for next years Summer Youth Employment Programs.

Fight to stop all cuts in Medicaid as well as Medicare. This nation still needs a National Health Insurance Program with universal coverage.

Fight to end the monstrous cuts in HUD programs for low income housing. More than seven billion dollars have already been cut. That is already too much taken from the poorest families in the nation and the homeless.

Fight to support the retention of adequate wages and pensions for the military, federal workers and other public service workers.

Fight to increase the minimum wage, to guarantee the right to organize unions, to end striker replacement and to maintain safe and healthy conditions in the workplace.

Fight to balance the nation's tax burden lowering taxes on families and individuals while forcing corporations to pay their fair share. At present corporations cover only 11

per cent of the tax burden while individuals and families shoulder 44 per cent of the tax load.

Fight for cuts in defense which downsize the CIA, the overseas bases and wasteful weapons.

Fight for an increase in foreign aid to Africa, the Caribbean, Haiti and other third world nations to assist with vital health and education needs.

Fight for increase in funding for youth crime prevention programs and for a decrease in the billions being voted to build prisons.

Fight and unite with the Caring Majority for the retention of Social Security as it is now. Stop moving the age requirement back and stop tampering with the COLAS.

Fight for ourselves—fight for America

Mr. Speaker, I want to close with a quote from the New York Times again. Columnist Russell Baker, a white man, felt very strongly about what happened yesterday. Columnist Russell Baker spoke his mind and I want to quote. I am going to enter the entire article in the RECORD, but I want to quote columnist Russell Baker from the New York Times' October 17 issue in the RECORD.

So it was left to Louis Farrakhan to act. It is hard to say why without speaking realistically of the state of American politics, which has less and less to do with anything of consequence.

Surely somebody of stature, Democrat or Republican, ought to have felt obliged to act long ago. It is hardly a secret that one of the country's most dangerous problems is the increasingly desperate situation of its young black male citizens.

The portrait of a nation in trouble is etched in the statistics on black unemployment rates, black school dropouts, rising imprisonment of young blacks and killings of black youngsters by black youngsters.

When a large portion of a nation's youth is being thrown away, or hustled into prisons, or lowered into graves, it takes a remarkable capacity for indifference to say that, well, it's a pity, but it's not our problem, it's a problem for the black community, black churches, black neighborhood leaders.

It is hard to see how a multiracial nation can avoid damage if its leaders refuse to deal with its gravest problems on ground that they are distinctively problems of race.

□ 2115

I am quoting from Russell Baker's article in the New York Times today.

Everybody now knows about the problem of the young black male, and nobody with power has done anything about it. To be sure, President Clinton has gone into the occasional black church and made the correct sounds, but where is the highpowered, bipartisan, interracial Presidential commission empowered to recommend executive and legislative action?

Have the leaders of the black community put pressure on White House and Congress to wake up? If so, the pressure has been as that of a feather pillow on the pyramid of Cheops.

Who are the leaders of this black community, anyhow? Are there any, or are they just fictional creations of the media? Maybe the "black community" is fictional, too. Why shouldn't it be? After all, there is no such thing as a "white community," no group who can sensibly be called "white leaders."

Maybe it is tired old racist thinking to keep talking about a "black community" complete with "black leaders." Maybe it makes more sense nowadays to drop all that

separatist language and say, "There's nobody here but us Americans."

The Clinton administration was not the first to do nothing about the desperate situation of the young black American. Doing nothing about it has been the unswerving policy of Presidents back as far as Richard Nixon.

Not incidentally, it was Mr. Nixon's so-called southern strategy that rebuilt the Republican party on white hostility to the Democratic record on civil rights. Nor are the dynamic Newt Gingrich conservatives engaged with the problem. The Contract With America may ask us to assume this its blessings will lead one of these days to more secure childhoods, better schooling, better jobs, and a full dinner pail for young black men. But in the meantime, the Contract With America is explicit about the need to cut welfare.

If a single Republican presidential candidate has spoken on the matter that produced the Million Man March, it has been a pianissimo performance. Let's not forget, either, that some kind of action is overdue. Some kind of action was overdue. There was a vacuum to be filled. Politics has declined into a game for overgrown boys and their high-tech toys. You win by finessing reality.

So, finally it was left for Louis Farrakhan to act. It made a lot of people so mad they could spit. That often happens when good people have done nothing.

End of quote by columnist Russell Baker, a white man commenting on the Million Man March.

The full text of the article is as follows:

[The New York Times, Oct. 17, 1995]
HE FILLED A VACUUM
(By Russell Baker)

So it was left to Louis Farrakhan to act. It is hard to say why without speaking realistically of the state of American politics, which has less and less to do with anything of consequence.

Surely somebody of stature, Democrat or Republican, ought to have felt obliged to act long ago. It is hardly a secret that one of the country's most dangerous problems is the increasingly desperate situation of its young black male citizens.

The portrait of a nation in trouble is etched in the statistics on black unemployment rates, black school dropouts, rising imprisonment of young blacks and killings of black youngsters by black youngsters.

When a large portion of a nation's youth is being thrown away, or hustled into prisons, or lowered into graves, it takes a remarkable capacity for indifference to say that, well, it's a pity, but it's not our problem, it's a problem for the black community, black churches, black neighborhood leaders.

It is hard to see how a multiracial nation can avoid damage if its leaders refuse to deal with its gravest problems on ground that they are distinctively problems of race.

This mistake was made by President Eisenhower 40 years ago and swiftly regretted, for Eisenhower was a serious man, serious about government's duties. He tried to avoid the multiracial reality of America in the Arkansas school desegregation crisis by arguing that race passions resided in the human heart, which could not be changed by government action.

When Arkansas's white Governor Faubus proposed to let the white human heart express itself by defying a court desegregation order, however, Eisenhower used the Army to preserve government by law.

Everybody now knows about the problem of the young black male, and nobody with power has done anything about it. To be

sure, President Clinton has gone into the occasional black church and made the correct sounds, but where is the high-powered, bipartisan, interracial Presidential commission empowered to recommend executive and legislative action?

Have the leaders of the black community put pressure on White House and Congress to wake up? If so, the pressure has been as that of a feather pillow on the pyramid of Cheops.

Who are the leaders of this black community, anyhow? Are there any, or are they just fictional creations of the media? Maybe the "black community" is fictional, too. Why shouldn't it be? After all, there is no such thing as a "white community," no group who can sensibly be called "white leaders."

Maybe it is tired old racist thinking to keep talking about a "black community" complete with "black leaders." Maybe it makes more sense nowadays to drop all that separatist language and say, "There's nobody here but us Americans."

The Clinton Administration is not the first to do nothing about the desperate situation of the young black American. Doing nothing about it has been the unswerving policy of Presidents back as far as Richard Nixon. Not incidentally, it was Mr. Nixon's so-called "Southern strategy" that rebuilt the Republican Party on white hostility to the Democratic record on civil rights.

Nor are the dynamic new Gingrich conservatives engaged with the problem. The Contract With America may ask us to assume that its blessings will lead, one of these days, to more secure childhoods, better schooling, better jobs and a full dinner pail for young black men, but in the meantime it is explicit about the need to cut welfare.

If a single Republican Presidential candidate has spoken of the matter that produced the Million Man March, it has been a pianissimo performance.

Let's not forget, either, the fierce and forbidding tetchiness of many black people, which discourages whites from discussing the problem. It is understandable that a politician might ignore the subject entirely when he fears that getting involved may earn him the epithet of "racist."

Some kind of action was overdue. There was a vacuum to be filled. Politics has declined into a game for overgrown boys and their high-tech toys. You win by finessing reality. So finally it was left for Louis Farrakhan to act. It made a lot of people so mad they could spit. That often happens when good people have done nothing.

MEDICARE AND VA HEALTH BENEFITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to address the House this evening to address a couple of major issues, not the least of which is the bill we passed today, H.R. 2353, which I was a cosponsor of with the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON] to extend certain VA health and medical care benefits.

We extended the priority care for Persian Gulf veterans, the alcohol and drug abuse care, nursing home care alternatives, health scholarships, and we have also included within that legislation, which received bipartisan support, almost unanimous vote of the House, residential care for homeless

and chronically mentally ill veterans, compensated work therapy and therapeutic transitional housing demonstration grants, and homeless veterans pilot programs, along with a displaying of the POW/MIA flag at all of our VA medical health centers, until the President has confirmed to the House and Senate that all the POW's and MIA's are accounted for.

This legislation was part of our committee work and we are happy to see that it was adopted today in the House and now moves on to the Senate.

One of the areas in which the general public has great interest, and especially the seniors who we are trying to protect with Medicare, we have this legislation coming before the House this week. And for those in the House who have been working on this issue for a long time, many others may ask why are you discussing it this year and why are you trying to reform it?

It was only in April that the President's trustees came back to the House and Senate and said that in 7 years, if we do nothing with Medicare, we will actually run out of money to have a Medicare health care system for our seniors.

Medicare is the Nation's primary medical assistance program for seniors and the disabled. It is composed of two parts: Part A, for which an individual automatically qualifies for at age 65. It provides hospital, home health, and skilled nursing facility coverage, and is paid for by payroll taxes. Those taxes go into the hospital trust fund which, by law, serves as the exclusive source of part A funding.

Part B, a voluntary system in which individuals who qualify for part A may choose to enroll, pays for doctor and outpatient service as well as medical equipment costs. It is paid for out of the general fund of our Government and from premiums paid by beneficiaries.

At this point, health care costs in the country, Mr. Speaker, are rising about 4 percent a year. But Medicare has been rising at the rate of 10 to 11 percent a year. Anyone can say: How is there such a disparate difference? Why is it that health care is a 4-percent increase and Medicare is going up at 10 percent?

A large part of that is the fraud, abuse, and waste which exists in the Medicare system, unfortunately.

Mr. Speaker, \$30 billion a year goes to pay for fraud, abuse, and waste.

Under legislation that is before the House this week that legislation will address for the first time the enforcement, the speeding up of the prosecution of, investigation of fraud abuse and waste that we have in the Medicare system. It will establish through legislation that I cosponsored with the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. SHAYS] and the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SCHIFF], this legislation will in fact increase the penalties and create for the first time the crime of Medicare fraud.