

with the people of the United States of America and explain what that situation is. Right now he has got the cover of Medicare, he has got the cover of budget. While all this is going on, the Pentagon is buzzing away down there preparing to send these troops over to a country that is not a threat to this country.

I think the test, the ultimate test that each and every one of us in these chambers should employ, is the test that came across to me when I sat at a graduation speech this last spring. An 18 year old young man just got his degree and walked by. The person next to me leaned over and said, "We are very proud. That young man is going into the United States Marines."

At that very instant I thought to myself, could I look at his parents if we lose this young man in Bosnia? Could I look at his parents eye-to-eye and tell them that the loss of their son was necessary for the national security of the United States of America? Could I look them in the eye and tell them that it was necessary to send their son over to Bosnia? Were we able to look them in the eye when we were over in Lebanon or Somalia? I venture to say before we give our support to this President to send those troops into Bosnia, we ought to consider what our response is going to be to those parents.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MCINNIS. I yield to the gentleman from Mississippi.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying I just returned from that part of the world this weekend. I had a chance to meet with all of our top NATO officials and to go to observation posts on the Serbian border.

I am not going to disagree with anything the gentleman said. What I would say as a member of the minority party talking to a member of the majority party is I would ask that the gentleman ask the Speaker of the House that we be allowed to vote on this. It is our constitutional duty.

Everything the gentleman said I agree with. Congress ought to vote on it. The gentleman and I and the other 400 Members ought to decide this issue, not the President of the United States.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I absolutely agree with the gentleman. This should not be the decision of the President of the United States. The President of the United States should come to the U.S. Congress and ask us for our permission. Frankly, I am going to be leading the charge against it, because while I have not been to Bosnia, I have an 18-year-old son.

#### THE NEED FOR AN INDEPENDENT, CONSOLIDATED STATISTICAL AGENCY

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

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, today on behalf of myself, Mr. CLINGER, Mr. PETRI, Mrs. JOHNSON, Mr. CHRYSLER, Mr. DAVIS, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. HOBSON, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mr. LEACH, and Mr. ROGERS, I introduced the Statistical Consolidation Act of 1995. It would create a Federal Statistical Service which would combine the functions of the Bureau of the Census and Labor Statistics, one in Commerce, one in Labor, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

A core principle of the Republican majority is that government is too big and costs too much, and that we should seek economies wherever we might. The new Federal Statistical Service would streamline and improve the quality and efficiency of key data production, which affects not only the apportionment of Congress, the State legislatures, the boards of supervisors and city councils, but also business, the allocation of Federal and State programs, and many industry functions across the country.

Duplication of effort hampers the collection of statistical data. Both the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Bureau of the Census collect data on the Nation's small businesses. The results are not only a wasted effort, but inconsistent and even contradictory findings. Public and private sector planning relies heavily on the accuracy of these statistics, which are collected through an assortment of sources.

The Nation needs better coordination and planning among its statistical agencies, to make Federal programs more responsive to the needs of our citizens. Lack of coordination has limited the usefulness of the data.

Senator Abraham Ribicoff, Democrat of Connecticut, a number of years ago saw the same need for change. He introduced the Statistical Policy Act of 1980. This Statistical Consolidation Act of 1995 takes many provisions from Senator Ribicoff's very far-reaching legislation. It is designed to remove duplication, harness information and technology, and streamline the collection and utilization of statistical data.

Some of you may ask, why not consolidate all statistical agencies, as Canada did with its Statistics Canada. After all, if Canada can do it, so can the United States. Canada, however, is not an example of complete consolidation. In fact, many of Canada's statistics come from sources other than Statistics Canada. In addition, the United States has nine times as many people and more complex statistical tasks than does the Government of Canada.

The new Federal Statistical Service would be headed by an Administrator nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Other officials to be nominated by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate are the Deputy Administrator, general counsel, and inspector general.

Also established is a Federal Council on Statistical Policy to advise the Administrator and the President. On the

Council would be statistics and survey professional experts from outside the Government, who would make policy recommendations to both the President and the Administrator.

The bill, when enacted, would trigger several events. Not later than 12 months after enactment, the new Federal Council would report to Congress on the consolidation of Census and Bureau of Labor Statistics field offices and on the savings possible from the merger. At the same time, the Council would provide a report on the feasibility of separating the decennial census mission from the rest of the Census Bureau. That action is in the bill to help Congress and the Nation grasp the cost of the decennial census.

Finally, within 18 months after enactment, the Council would recommend to Congress any changes in the procedure for releasing major social and economic indicators.

A well-informed electorate with access to knowledge of the state of the society is the cornerstone of a proper working democracy. Decisions based on the output of the Federal statistical system affects every citizen. That system is called upon to serve the voters of today and tomorrow. It is on their intelligent choices that the success of our democracy ultimately depends.

There must be better coordination and planning among these statistical agencies so that programs are more responsive to the needs of the Federal Government. It is my hope this bill will be passed as a bipartisan effort. The passage of this measure will not only mean better coordination, but it will also ensure independence from partisan influences, which are more probable when these functions are located in a Cabinet department.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to carefully consider my proposal and hopefully adopt it during this session.

#### MAKE NEEDED CHANGES IN MEDICARE LEGISLATION

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

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak tonight on something we did last week and we are probably going to do again on Thursday, and that is to pass a bill that basically eliminates Medicare in this country. We will pass it again as part of the reconciliation bill on Thursday, and it will go over to the Senate.

The reason I am speaking about it is with the faint hope that my colleagues on the majority side will try to make some changes. I just doubt that will happen between now and Thursday, but the good news is it is a bicameral legislature, and the Senate will have the possibility to deal with this, and ultimately this is a piece of legislation that will go in front of the President. The President has issued a statement he will veto this legislation. I urge him

and I think all Americans need to urge him to follow through on that veto.

I think it is worth it to really focus on the facts on this issue. I am going to talk about three facts and just go through them very clearly, very specifically, because this is a case that the more that the American people know about what the Republican majority is doing to Medicare, the more disturbing, the more distressing that it is.

It is truly as bad as people's worst nightmare in this country. The first thing is this whole debate has started because my Republican colleagues say Medicare is going bankrupt in 7 years. We have to do something to save Medicare. It is going bankrupt in 7 years.

Well, one of the things that this chart points out, and this I think really says it in black and white, is if you look at the 30 years that Medicare has existed, 12 of those 30 years Medicare had an actuarial life less than what it has today. In fact, in several years it had only a 2-year actuarial life. What Congress has done is made adjustments to the Medicare system like any health care insurance program, which is what Medicare is, and has made adjustments to correct those actuarial deficiencies.

So the first big flat out lie that my Republican colleagues have made in this legislation is this is unprecedented. That is just not the case.

The second flat out lie that they have made is that it requires \$270 billion to correct. Where did the \$270 billion number come from? There are actuarial, nonpolitical, technical people whom evaluate the solvency of the Medicare program. No one has come up with any numbers anywhere near \$270 billion. Where did that number come from?

Where it came from, it was a derived number from the budget process. The Republicans, as they were drawing up their budget, came up with a hole of \$270 billion. And the only place that they went to, they could have gone to Social Security, but they were a little bit more fearful of that, they went to Medicare for a \$270 billion gap to fill the hole.

What is in that hole? Well, there is a variety of things in that hole, including a military budget above what the President has requested and what the Joint Chiefs of Staff and divisions of different branches of the military has requested. But they are also including tax breaks of the worst kind that are outrageous from this government's and from the people of this country's perspective.

Special interests at the worst level; it is a list that gets longer and longer. Who did what for who? College football coaches, convenience stores, certain specific companies get tax breaks in this legislation, on the backs of 36 million Medicare recipients, who worked hard and played by the rules, and yet if this legislation passes and is not vetoed, would in fact occur.

So that is the second big lie, which is a \$270 billion number. And the third

and final big lie that I will mention is this whole idea of choice. My Republican colleagues consistently say that the Medicare proposal that they pass, and they will pass again this week, provides choice. They continuously say it provides choice for Medicare recipients.

What it provides is a false choice. It provides a false choice, because what will inevitably happen, and this legislation is set up to make this happen, is that for anyone who remains in traditional Medicare, the out-of-pocket costs will be astronomical, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,000 a year for seniors. To put it in perspective, 75 percent of the seniors in this country, their income is less than \$25,000 a year, so we are talking about \$4,000 out-of-pocket for someone in that category. It just does not work.

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So what will end up inevitably happening is that 90-plus percent of seniors will be forced into substandard HMO's. I urge everyone to both write their Senators and urge the President to veto this legislation.

#### AN INCREASE TO MINIMUM WAGE WILL LIST WORKERS OUT OF POVERTY AND OFF WELFARE

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. GENE GREEN, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in support of the minimum wage increase, and later this evening the gentleman from New York, MAJOR OWENS, has organized a special order in support of the minimum wage. I join my colleagues from the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities in my support for an increase in the minimum wage. Fifty seven years ago today the Congress first approved a minimum wage of 25 cents.

This anniversary finds us with mixed emotions. On the one hand, we are thankful that the Congress recognized the need to guarantee a livable wage. On the other hand, we recognize that millions of people earn at or below the minimum wage and that the last increase in the minimum wage occurred on April 1, 1991. As if this was not enough, the real value of the minimum wage has been on a fairly steady decline for the past 15 years. Today, the minimum wage has fallen 45 cents in real value since its 1991 increase. I am afraid that if the majority party has its way, we may never see an increase in the minimum wage.

Many people, writing or speaking on either side of this issue, quote from 57 years of studies on how the increase of the minimum wage affects employment, wages and the economy. There are studies on both sides.

My contention is we should base the argument on the facts and not theory. Based on my experience, real life is never constant nor completely equal.

First, the idea that an increase in the minimum wage could lead to increased numbers of welfare recipients is simply not correct. In fact, the opposite is true. Today, a full-time minimum wage worker is paid \$8,800 a year.

The U.S. Census reports that the average family in my Houston district is 3.2 people. According to the census guidelines published in the Federal Register [February 9, 1995], the 1995 Federal poverty level for a family of three is \$12,590. Using these facts, the math is simple. A full-time minimum wage worker supporting a family of three will make almost \$4,000 less than the Federal poverty level.

However, with an increase in the minimum wage to \$5.15, and figuring in their maximum earned income tax credit, which was passed by the Democratic Congress, this same family would be \$1,500 above the poverty rate and off welfare. Let me repeat that. Off welfare.

It is also argued that the minimum wage is a wage for lower- to middle-class teenagers and is, therefore, an entry level wage. While this may have been so in years past, the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that more than 4 million Americans earn at or below the minimum wage. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, current minimum-wage earners are two-thirds adult, with over 50 percent being 26 or older, while 62 percent are women. The minimum wage is no longer just for teenagers.

Finally, the argument is made that raising the minimum wage would lead many employers to use more efficient machines, to relocate their factories, or to use part-time and temporary workers. Statistics show that minimum-wage earners, due to their lack of skills, work harder and longer hours to compensate for that shortcoming. I am not advocating the position that employers are unfeeling, but we must all face the fact that most employers, with some exceptions, are driven by the bottom line and not the betterment of society.

One recent study between New Jersey, which raised their minimum wage, and Pennsylvania, which did not, showed no job loss and only a very slight increase in the cost of a fast food meal. I find it very confusing when the majority argues the minimum wage increase will cause job loss by increasing or continuing farm subsidies is never given to the same rhetoric. Both the farm subsidies and the minimum wage provide a level at which the producer, either farm produce or labor, can earn a profit.

Americans need an increase in the minimum wage, because it will lift them out of poverty, it will give them a living wage, but more importantly, it will get them off of welfare. Instead of concentrating all of their efforts on tax-cuts for the wealthy, the majority should act to provide a minimum wage that will lift workers out of poverty and off the welfare rolls.