

In this regard, it needs stressing again and again that no one is going to be happy with anyone else's budget priorities. I, for one, prefer a number of aspects of the President's education approach, am appalled by the Congress's refusal to fully fund the United Nations, and would be more sympathetic than the majority in my party to NPR and the Endowments on the arts and humanities. Yet, I am convinced America must come to grips with the budget and strongly support the faster Republican timeline for deficit reduction.

On process, let me stress that the Democrats have fairly criticized my party. The appropriations bills have not been completed on time. This is partly the case because of the heavy schedule earlier this year related to Republican efforts to fulfill a campaign pledge—the Contract With America. But, ironically perhaps, the primary reason for delay relates to the Republicans attempting to give the minority party expansive opportunity to amend bills brought to the floor under open rules. In a body of 435, extensive use of open rules assures a slow down of the legislative process.

Finally, let me stress that at issue are not only budget balancing and spending priorities but the question of whether a politically divided American Government can work and maintain the confidence of the American people.

As emotive as the issues are, we have a responsibility to see that on an orderly, fair, and timely basis they are resolved.

In this process we have an even larger responsibility not to divide America with inflammatory rhetoric or undercut the stature of this chamber with irresponsible choice making. The public's business requires decency of approach as well as purpose. Now is the time for personal pride and partisan ambition to be checked at the cloak room.

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#### LET US TALK ABOUT MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, earlier today in this Chamber we debated a bill that was sponsored by the gentlewoman from Nevada [Mrs. VUCANOVICH] and also the gentleman from southern California [Mr. WAXMAN]. It was a bill to make minor changes in the law regulating pacemaker safety to make sure that over the years that Congress has been very involved in that issue, to make sure that Medicare does not overpay for defective pacemakers, that pacemakers that are implanted in people are indeed safe. It was a simple bill, a non-controversial bill, a bill that had bipartisan support, and a bill ultimately that passed by voice vote or passed pretty much unanimously.

I have been a Member of this body for 3 years representing a district in northeast Ohio, and something happened during that debate that troubled me as we discussed this bill. Some of us wanted to talk about Medicare as a whole, about the Gingrich \$270 billion cut Medicare plan, about Medicaid and all that this pacemaker issue included in other issues that Medicare—that revolve around Medicare, and clearly when any of us goes home and goes to our district, it is pretty obvious that Medicare is on the minds not just of people that are Medicare beneficiaries, of actual beneficiaries today, but of their children. It is on the mind, Medicaid is on the mind, of people that have to place their parents or grandparents in nursing homes, Medicaid is on the minds of people that—whose families might have Alzheimer's. It is Medicaid and Medicare issues that people want to hear about, and want to talk about, and want to see Congress debate, and unfortunately today, Mr. Speaker, as a couple of us wanted to talk about Medicare, especially specifically, and also Medicaid, there were Members of the majority party that—who supported the Gingrich plan that did not even want us to discuss it, that continue to say, "You're out of order," and try to get—try to stop us from discussing Medicare as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, the reason we wanted to discuss Medicare is that in this Chamber during the day when we are actually debating legislation, not in the evening in these special orders when few Members sit in this Chamber, but during the day; we only had 1 hour of general debate on the whole Medicare bill, and even worse perhaps, in committee. I sit on the Committee on Commerce, others that sit on the Committee on Ways and Means, and saw Medicare and Medicaid pass through those two committees with only one hearing in the Committee on Ways and Means and no hearings in the Committee on Commerce. We passed legislation changing a \$200 billion or a \$180 billion Medicare bill program that is \$180 billion a year spent on Medicare, about \$80 billion a year spent on Medicaid; we changed those two programs in a big, big way, markedly, with no real committee hearings.

And what bothered me is today we try to talk about nursing home standards, how this Congress wants to roll back all Federal nursing home standards that have made a big difference in dealing with the problems of oversaturation in nursing homes, made a big difference with the problems of neglect in nursing homes, made a big difference with the problems that nursing home patients, the most defenseless people probably in society have faced in the Federal Government involvement 10 years ago. These nursing home standards that this Congress passed, signed by President Reagan at that time, made a big difference in these people's lives in the twilight of their years, yet this Congress and the Ging-

rich plan repealed all of those nursing home standards.

We also wanted to talk about the premium increases. Under the Gingrich plan, \$270 billion in Medicare cuts and \$180 billion in Medicaid cuts over the next 7 years will mean doubling of premiums from \$46 a month up to almost \$100, will mean an increase in deductibles from now \$100 perhaps up to \$150, to \$200, maybe \$250, and it will mean an increase in co-pays in some versions of this bill which will be voted on for a second time in the next month.

They also did not try to—tried to call us out of order when they talked about how Medicaid has written out the disabled, and again some of the most vulnerable people in society, and they also—we wanted to talk about the spousal protection where if an elderly man's wife ends up in a nursing home, and paid for by Medicaid, that the husband can still live in his modest home without spending, selling the home, and having all the money go to the nursing home.

All of those kinds of issues were so important, and perhaps what they objected to the most was when I quoted Speaker GINGRICH when he said the response to criticisms about this Medicare bill, about the \$270 billion in cuts and when he obviously wanted to go much further in Medicare. He made a statement to a bunch of insurance executives, most of whom, is not all of whom, will benefit mightily monetarily, their companies and they individually, from this \$270 billion Medicare cut bill. Speaker GINGRICH said, "Now we don't want to get rid of Medicare in round 1 because we don't think that's politically smart and we don't think it's the right way to go, but we believe that Medicare is going to wither on the vine."

Two hundred seventy billion dollars in cuts for a tax break of \$250 billion for the wealthiest people in society with the hope that Medicare is going to wither on the vine. Mr. Speaker, it is simply not right.

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#### BALANCING THE BUDGET

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 appreciate the opportunity to address the House this evening on some important issues, not least of which would be the balanced budget. The balanced budget will be the most important bill that we hope the President will eventually sign.

You heard on the House floor tonight about certain claimants that could not get their Social Security benefits. Frankly all recipients of Social Security will get their benefits, but those that may have applied today will not do so because the President did not sign the balanced budget last night. He vetoed it.