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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. EVERETT].

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 5, 1995.

I hereby designate the Honorable TERRY EVERETT to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING BUSINESS

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of May 12, 1995, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority and minority leaders limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] for 3 minutes.

DIFFICULTIES IN HAITI

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I come to the well today to speak about the prospects for democracy in Haiti, an area where we have a great deal of investment. I am sorry to report that the news is even more dismal, there is more deterioration in the signs that we are getting toward democracy. We are not, and there are some four particular disturbing areas we need to have more information from the executive branch on.

First, we apparently are going to have elections on December 17 for the new President in the country of Haiti. It is very important that we do that, but, of course, the elections have to be full, fair, free, democratic elections. There is no indication that the elections are indeed going to be full, fair, or free. In fact, most of the opposition parties are boycotting the election.

There is virtually no campaigning going on, with the exception of one party, which is the chosen party of the present President, and it is impossible to underestimate, in my view, the damage done by the parliamentary elections that basically caused the loyal opposition to lose faith in the system and refuse to participate in it.

The second disturbing area has to do with these elections, and that is, it appears that some of our taxpayers' dollars that are being financed as aid to Haiti are indeed going into the chosen campaign of the party of the President there. There appear to be some unaccounted moneys in significant amounts, and there is only one campaign in evidence, and it is a very well funded, lavishly orchestrated campaign. The indications are, certainly the rumors are strong and we have had no denials, that those are U.S. tax dollars that are running that campaign and providing for all those banners and T-shirts that are springing up around the country that is so poor that many people do not have T-shirts or food or medicine or other things they need. But these campaign shirts seem to be getting out there.

It appears also as we read reports in Miami that some of our tax dollars are being used to lobby ourselves. I suspect we will be hearing more on that as others look into those allegations that are being made about tax dollars that are going to lawyers and lobbyists in our own country.

The third area of concern is we have a new chief of the national police, which is the group supposed to provide the stability in Haiti once our troops leave in February. It turns out Colonel Solastine is an old Aristide friend, sort of a political hack, and has been head of the palace guard, and it is not expected that he is going to be able to bring either professionalism or independence to the national police.

The final problem that I point to this morning is we just have had a cancellation of a business delegation from Haiti. Haiti desperately needs more investment and business. The Haitians who were coming here on a mission this week to talk to American legislators and businessmen about how to do that have canceled their trip because of the heightened tensions between the United States and Haitian Governments and because of the situation in Haiti, which they describe as ''inopportune.'' Inopportune is a euphemism for we are scared to death, we are closing our business, there is no security, there is a lot of corruption, and there is much to be done. These are problems we need to look more into before we spend more tax dollars. I thank you. I look for a report from the White House on this.

DRACONIAN IMPACTS OF PROPOSED BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, as we know, negotiations continue, or at least we hope they are going to continue, over the budget, with this Republican budget that has passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, which President Clinton wisely says he cannot accept, and so negotiations are going on to try to see if the President can come to an agreement with the Republican leadership in the Congress.

I just wanted to spend a little time today putting what I call a human face

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.
Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

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on some of the numbers. We talk about the budget, and I have said over and over again we need to make sure that whatever is resolved with the budget, that Medicare is preserved, that Medicaid is preserved, that those programs are not cut in order to finance tax breaks for the wealthy, and also that we are concerned with environmental priorities and education priorities.

I just wanted to give some information about numbers and how some of those priorities transfer into real terms and into the effects on the average American, particularly with regard to Medicare and Medicaid.

The Republican-proposed budget cuts Medicare by $270 billion and increases costs on beneficiaries. In effect, these cuts increase direct and indirect costs on Medicare beneficiaries, on our senior citizens, placing a huge financial burden on seniors and people with disabilities.

If you look at it, the cuts in the Medicare Program alone basically are $1,700 per beneficiary, per senior citizen, by the year 2002, and premiums for those seniors increase to $89 per month in 2002, an annual increase of about $440 per couple.

If you also look at the amount of money that is going to be available to Medicare by reference to the amount of money that would be available for someone who is getting health care in the private sector, the $270 billion Medicare cut would limit spending per Medicare beneficiary to a rate that is more than 20 percent below the projected private insurance per person growth rate over the next 7 years. So Medicare now will not be keeping up with the amount of money that is available for those who are paying for their health insurance privately.

Even more important, right now Medicaid pays for the Medicare premiums, coinsurance, and deductibles for people who are below 100 percent poverty. In other words, a lot of low-income senior citizens have their part B premium covered by Medicaid. They do not have to pay coinsurance and they do not have to pay deductibles.

Well, all that is gone under the Republican proposal. So all those people now would have to take that money out of their pocket. Of course, they cannot afford to do so, because they are in fact low income.

What we are going to see happen under these Republican Medicare cuts is essentially quality and access for a lot of senior citizens will suffer. When you get to Medicaid, it is even worse, because Medicaid right now is an entitlement program for low-income people, whether they be seniors, children, pregnant women, the disabled, whatever.

Under this Republican proposal, there no longer is any guaranteed health car for those low-income people under Medicaid. Instead, a block grant goes to the States and we estimate that about a 28-percent cut will be available. The amount of money that will be available will be about 28-percent less under this Republican proposal block granted to the States than what is available now under Medicaid.

What that means is a lot of States simply will not cover people under Medicaid. They will make no categorizations of who is covered and who is not, and that means a lot of low-income people will not have access to health care.

We also estimate that about 330,000 people could be denied nursing home coverage, because right now Medicaid pays for most nursing home care and essentially guarantees nursing home coverage for those seniors who cannot afford to pay for nursing home care privately. That is all gone. There is no guarantee of nursing home care anymore, because, again if the States decide they do not want to provide for certain categories of people, they simply will not.

If you look at where the tax breaks are going under the Republican proposal at the same time, the tax breaks are mostly going for the well-to-do. Nearly half of the benefits under the Republican tax package, about 48 percent, go to the top 12 percent of families, those of incomes of $100,000 or more. If you are actually making less than $30,000 a year, you are probably going to end up paying more in taxes because the earned income tax credit that goes to a lot of working low-income people is cut severely. So a lot of people who are making less than $30,000 a year and who are working essentially are going to be paying more taxes instead of less.

Last, I wanted to talk about the impact of this Republican budget on the environment. It funds enforcement of public health and environmental safeguards 25-percent less than what we have now.

So, again, the environmental priorities are essentially downgraded, and we hope that the President is able to negotiate a better budget bill to preserve these priorities.

MAKING ENGLISH THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. ROTH] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Mr. ROTH. Mr. Speaker, the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee prepares to hold hearings tomorrow on the issue of making English our official language. One of the issues that heavily dominates that debate is this issue of bilingual education, which was started as part of the Great Society Program back in 1968 and has grown and mushroomed to the juggernaut that it is today. I wish to put this problem into a proper perspective.

Mr. Speaker, a quick look at some startling facts will tell us all we need to know. Today, 32 million Americans don't speak English. In just 5 years, that number will increase to 40 million. English is a foreign language for one in seven Americans.

For most of our Nation's history, America gave the children of immigrants a precious gift—an education in the English language. As each new wave of immigrants arrived on these shores, our public school system taught their sons and daughters English, so they could claim their place in the American dream.

What are we doing for these new Americans today? Instead of a first-rate education in English, our bilingual education programs are consigning an entire generation of new Americans—unable to speak, understand, and use English effectively—to a second-class future.

This tragedy has human faces. Let me tell you about two people's experiences which will illustrate the impact of our failed bilingual education programs. I've never heard the problems with bilingual education more poignantly put than in the words of Ernesto Ortiz, a foreman on a south Texas ranch who said: ''My children learn Spanish in school so they can become busboys and waiters. I teach them English at home so they can become doctors and lawyers.'' Ernesto understands that English is the language of opportunity in the country. He understands that denying his children a good education in English will doom them to a limited—as opposed to limitless—future.

Bilga Abramova also understands this simple truth. Bilga is a 35-year-old Russian refugee who has entered a church lottery three times in an attempt to win 1 of 50 coveted spaces in a free, intensive English class offered by her local parish. Her pleas in Russian speak volumes about the plight of all too many immigrants: ''I need to win,'' she said. ''Without English, I cannot begin a new life.''

The ultimate paradox about our commitment to bilingual education in this country is that Bilga and others like her all across the country are on waiting lists for intensive English classes while we spend $8 billion a year teaching children in their native language.

You've heard from parents like Ernesto Ortiz and how they feel about bilingual education. Even teachers oppose these programs. A recent survey of 1,000 elementary and secondary teachers found that 64 percent of these teachers disapproved of bilingual education programs and favored intensive English instruction instead.

Even longtime defenders of these programs are starting to change their tune. The California Board of Education approved a new policy last month in which they abandoned their preference for bilingual education programs.

This year marks the 27th year of bilingual education programs. For more and more people, that is 27 years too long. It is time to take a fresh look at