

Medicare system solvent. They may say that, but again, do not let them fool you, and do not buy it, the way you did not buy it in the last go-round.

The money that is being cut is not going to be put back into the Medicare trust fund. Once again, it is going to pay for tax breaks. The President proposed extending the solvency of Medicare for the same amount of time without making the same deep cuts in the Medicare system.

They are using the money from these Medicare cuts to fund \$176 billion in unnecessary tax breaks.

If you want to know the real agenda of the Republican leadership on Medicare, all you need to do is to recall the words of House Speaker NEWT GINGRICH on Medicare not too many months ago. Not years ago, but not too many months ago. The Speaker said, "Now we don't get rid of it in round one, because we don't think that is the politically smart thing to do, and we do not think that is the right way to go through a transition. But we believe it is going to wither on the vine, because we think people are voluntarily going to leave it."

The majority leader of the other body said that he was proud to have voted in 1965 against Medicare because "it is a system that does not work." These people truly believe that Medicare is a wrong system, a bad system, and that it needs to be destroyed. Do not let them kid you in the direction they want to take the Medicare system. That is what the Republicans really want to do to Medicare. They want it to wither on the vine.

The Republican assault on health care for seniors does not stop with Medicare. In their budget they also propose cutting Medicaid by \$72 billion. That cut, combined with the block grant approach, will jeopardize the guarantee of coverage for folks who are in nursing homes. Most people do not understand what Medicaid is about. It is seniors who are in nursing homes that Medicaid covers.

In addition to cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, they propose including risky medical savings accounts in the Medicare system, a system that would allow wealthy seniors to operate out of the Medicare system, thereby weakening the program, allowing those who are most ill, most frail, to stay in traditional insurance programs, driving those premiums up, and not allowing people to be able to get health care.

To sum up, what this new Republican budget amounts to is yet another assault on the health care system for our Nation's seniors. Unless they withdraw this budget and rework their proposals, I expect that they will ignite, and I certainly hope they do, the same firestorm that forced their retreat last year. Their proposal is wrong and irresponsible.

ALASKAN OIL SALES RESPONSIBLE FOR GASOLINE PRICE HIKES

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

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, last week the President of the United States ordered oil to be pumped from the strategic petroleum reserve in an effort to counter rising gasoline prices. What is behind all this? Why are gasoline prices soaring, and why now? Why are price increases most dramatic on the West Coast?

Many factors can impact the price of oil. In this case, two Government actions are pushing up the price of gasoline. First, of course, the President's gas tax is making a bad situation worse. The gas tax hits the low-income working families the hardest and should be repealed immediately.

But just last week, at the same time that he ordered additional oil out of our strategic reserves, the President authorized the export of Alaskan oil to Asia. At a time when gas prices are soaring, he chose to send United States gasoline to Asian nations instead of to American consumers.

We had a ban on exporting Alaskan oil. The ban was part of an agreement that allowed the building of the pipeline in the first place. In fact, the pipeline would not have been built without that agreement. This agreement should never have been broken. As we face soaring oil prices at home, we are preparing to reduce domestic supplies of oil by shipping it overseas.

I saw it coming. Everyone should have seen this coming. During congressional consideration of that legislation to end the ban on export of Alaskan oil, I vigorously warned of higher gasoline prices, opposing even members of my own party. The majority of Congress argued that if we allow this oil to be exported, higher prices will be charged, with the result of revenue increase to the Treasury. But higher oil prices mean higher gasoline prices. That is not very complicated. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure that out. Legislation was then passed allowing the President to export the oil at his discretion.

Did not the Congress and the President realize that reducing the oil supply from Alaska would dramatically raise gas prices, especially on the West Coast? Of course price increases in the United States were sure to follow, as markets reacted in anticipation of falling supply and increasing demand.

The President's decisions contradict each other. He is opening the strategic petroleum reserve to lower the price of oil. At the same time this President allows shipments of American oil to Asian consumers. He is making the problem worse than it needs to be, and, as usual, working people and their families are paying the price.

It makes no sense to release our strategic reserves at the same time we are

exporting needed Alaskan oil. Mr. President, please be consistent and stop playing politics with the price of gasoline.

TRIBUTE TO THOSE INVOLVED IN THE SEARCH FOR WILLIAM E. COLBY

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, all of Washington and the Nation watched over some 7 days as America wondered what happened to the former Director of the CIA, William Colby. William Colby served his country in war and in peace. He served it with integrity and with commitment.

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Tragically, his body was found 7 days after his canoe was discovered. He had drowned.

I had the opportunity of talking to his widow, Sally Shelton Colby, and when I talked to her, she was thankful for the volunteers and paid personnel of so many agencies who had throughout her vigil exercised their skill and their judgment in the search for an answer to why he was missing.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the efforts of more than 100 individuals, both paid and volunteer, who spent many hours in the cold waters and on the shoreline of the Wicomico River searching for the late William Colby.

The search ended early Monday morning after his body was discovered near the shoreline, ending, Mr. Speaker, an intense search that began on the 28th of April. There were many agencies and organizations involved in the search, as is always the case when neighbors get in trouble. That search was headed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Police. They did an outstanding job, and I want to recognize not only them but all the participants in this search, including the sheriff of Charles County, MD, Fred Davis, and the men and women of the Charles County Sheriff's Department who handled press inquiries, protected the Colby residence, and facilitated in the search.

The search involved countless volunteer hours and assistance from the Maryland State Police, aviation division; the Charles County dive team, who were the first divers in the search; the Cobb Island Volunteer Fire Department and emergency medical team; the 7th District Volunteer Fire Department, Boat 5 from the home county of myself, St. Mary's County; the Marbury Volunteer Fire Department, using their rescue boat and dive team; the Bel Alton Volunteer Fire Department; the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Department dive team, led by Sheriff Voorhaar; the Calvert County dive team; the U.S. Coast Guard; the Prince George's County dive team, Companies