

band trying to dismantle Medicare yet one more time.

The new Republican budget calls for over \$168 billion cuts, reductions, or whatever you want to call them, in the Medicare Program. Basically, the Republican leadership is proposing to take money out of the Medicare Program for their \$176 billion tax break for wealthy individuals.

Although the amount of money being taken from Medicare is significant, the devil is really in the details, because the Republican leadership is proposing a major overhaul of Medicare to make it less efficient and more costly for seniors. Their proposed calls for coopting senior citizens into managed care. I do not have a problem with managed care per se, but I do not believe in Speaker GINGRICH's attempts to force seniors into managed care and call it "Medicare Choices."

The only choice that the Republican leadership is giving to seniors under this radical Medicare plan is the choice to receive substandard health care.

Where Medicare historically offered patients their own choice of doctor, protected against high out-of-pocket costs, and offered a guaranteed level of coverage, the Republican leadership's proposal would take it all away.

In addition, the Republicans are again proposed to incorporate medical savings accounts—or healthy wealthy tax breaks—into the Medicare overhaul. Last year, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office stated that these tax breaks would actually cost Medicare several billion dollars. This proposal is largely untested and very controversial.

Unfortunately, this is all a repeat of the failed Republican attempts to overhaul Medicare last year. I would urge my colleagues to vote against this impractical budget proposal on Thursday and urge senior citizens to call on Congress to protect Medicare from further raids by Speaker GINGRICH.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL DOES NOT PROMISE REAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Oregon [Ms. FURSE] is recognized during morning business for 4 minutes.

Ms. FURSE. Mr. Speaker, I have brought here a chart that shows what we do with the money that the Congress has discretion over and over half the red part is Pentagon spending. The other part is everything else, education, income security, health, environment.

The House Committee on National Security has increased defense spending this year by \$12.9 billion more than the President requested and more than the Pentagon even asked for. Republican and Democrat Members went to the Rules Committee with 5 different amendments to cut some Pentagon spending, from \$1 to \$13 billion, in be-

tween. We were not allowed to bring those to the floor and the leadership refused to allow us to discuss this most vital issue.

What does it mean when we increase Pentagon spending by \$13 billion? It means that we have to cut everything else, all these other things. Cuts, cuts, cuts, cuts.

What does that mean to the American people? It means that we are putting our citizens' security in jeopardy. How? For instance, in the State of Oregon that I represent a district in, last year 38 children died from child abuse or neglect. One of the reasons they died was there were no shelters there for their mother to bring those children into a safe, secure home. Why is there no money for shelters? Because we are spending all our additional money on huge weapons systems that we really do not need now that the cold war is over.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the time has finally come when we must put common sense back in the U.S. budget, when we must say what is real security? Is it having police in our streets? Is it having places where our children can go to be safe? Is it a whole security? Or are we only putting our security into cold-war weaponry?

Mr. Speaker, I ask the leadership to allow us to vote on amendments that would cut some of this additional \$13 billion that the President did not ask for and, most significantly, that the Pentagon did not ask for.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12, rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 14 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. COMBEST] at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

May the beauty of the day remind us, O God, of the beauty of Your blessings to us; may the majesty of Your creation remind us of the majesty of Your power; may the growth of the blossoms that surround us remind us of the nurture we receive by Your hand; may the splendor of the Sun remind us of the warmth of Your presence in our lives and may the opportunities of this new day remind us that we should serve others with grace, with dignity, and with justice. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the

last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. TRAFICANT] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TRAFICANT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

THE COMMUNITY RENEWAL ACT

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, today, under the leadership of my good friends, the gentleman from Oklahoma [Mr. WATTS] and the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. TALENT], a bipartisan coalition will introduce the American Community Renewal Act of 1996.

The bill reflects a critically important understanding that government must stop being the enemy of the family. Nowhere has the destructive power of the arrogant Federal bureaucracy caused greater harm than in our heavily urban areas, such as my district in Cincinnati.

The Federal Government cannot be a substitute for strong families and vibrant neighborhoods. Instead, we must work to unleash the creative energies and the talents of all Americans, including especially those Americans least equipped to overcome government-erected barriers to economic success. The Community Renewal Act will provide parents of needy children greater choice in education. It will recognize that religious groups can be valuable colleagues in arms in the war against drugs, and it will help to promote individual entrepreneurship in areas where government heretofore has smothered it.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the introduction of the legislation and encourage its adoption.

RICHARD SPECK'S EASY TIME IN PRISON FOR MURDERING EIGHT NURSES

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago Richard Speck killed eight nurses in Chicago. Opponents of the death penalty said Richard Speck should get life in prison. That is much harder time and much more punishment.

Well, check this out. News reports now confirm that while in the Illinois State Prison, Richard Speck had total

freedom, all the cocaine and marijuana he wanted, and sex parties. In fact, it was such a hard time, Richard Speck, with two other inmates, made a 2-hour video, a porno video, in the prison TV studio. Two hours. And listen to what Speck says on the tape. He says, "If those squares knew what a good time I was having, they would actually turn me loose."

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker. Eight nurses are rolling over in their graves. The only free thing that Richard Speck should have gotten was 50,000 volts. Is it any wonder America has more murder than any other country on the planet?

All the politicians down here are worried about the rights of criminals. I think they better start being concerned about the rights of the American people.

DEMOCRAT PARTY THE PARTY OF HIGHER TAXES AND BIG GOVERNMENT

(Mr. FUNDERBURK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FUNDERBURK. Mr. Speaker, no matter how hard they try, no matter how much help they get from the liberal media to convince people otherwise, the Democrat Party is and remains the party of higher taxes and bigger government.

Just look at Bill Clinton's 1997 budget. This budget has tax increases and creates more Government programs. Surprise, surprise.

Mr. Speaker, it is almost reflexive that the Democrats want to raise taxes and spend more money in Washington. Bill Clinton creates 14 new Government programs in his budget and does not even begin to cut domestic spending until 1998. In fact, 76 percent of his spending cuts come after the year 2000.

Mr. Speaker, this budget gives the American people more of what they do not want: Higher taxes, higher spending, and bigger Government. It also provides that liberal Democrats are unwilling to do what it takes to balance the budget and do the right thing for America's children.

LET THOSE WHO PAID BE REPAID

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, much has been said about the on-going gasoline price crisis and the proposed repeal of the 4.3-cent gas tax.

I would like to offer my three-point plan for this repeal.

First, we must guarantee that this repeal is directly returned to the consumer in the form of lower prices at the gas pump. We must not simply feed the profit margin of big oil companies. We cannot repeal this fee and naively assume that gas prices will decline ac-

cordingly. Let those who paid be repaid.

Second, we must pay for this repeal. I have a bill, H.R. 1497, the Insurance Tax Fairness and Small Company Economic Growth Act, that will collect almost \$2 billion every year, simply by closing a tax loophole that only benefits the 18 largest mutual life insurance companies.

Third, this Congress must provide answers for the American people about the cause of these price increases. Congress must hold hearings and conduct an investigation. The American people deserve answers from their elected officials and it is our duty to provide those answers.

Mr. Speaker, I say again, the consumer must benefit from our actions—let those who paid be repaid.

MINIMUM WAGE QUOTES

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, now the President wants to "make work pay" by raising the minimum wage. Yet just 2 years ago he said that raising the minimum wage is "the wrong way to raise the income of low-wage earners."

President Clinton knows that upgrading worker skills results in an increase in wages. He has said that "what you earn depends on what you learn; the most effective way to help is to make workers more productive because wages reflect the value of what people produce."

"After all, most minimum wage workers are not poor." That is Secretary Reich to President Clinton.

"An increased minimum wage often takes from the poor to help the middle class." That is economist Robert Shapiro, friend of Bill Clinton's.

UNDERSTAND THE DEBATE ON MEDICARE

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, the House is expected to consider another budget resolution this time around. It would seem to me my Republican colleagues would have learned a lesson from the last budget experience. At that time the American public said "no" to severe cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, in education, in the environment.

Although we fought that battle and staved off those cuts, the congressional majority is back here again to cut Medicare. We are looking at a \$168 billion cut in Medicare. Cuts of this magnitude force rural hospitals to close and will limit the ability of senior citizens to choose their own doctor.

What are our priorities? What are our values in this Nation? We now have 99 percent of our seniors covered for

health care through the Medicare system. Why would we want to dismantle Medicare?

It was the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. GINGRICH] who said not too long ago that what he wanted to see with Medicare was to have it wither on the vine.

The money they cut from Medicare does not go into the Medicare trust fund. Do not let them kid you with that argument. What they will do is one more time pay for tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans. The tax break package is \$180 billion, and the cut in Medicare is \$168 billion. Understand the debate.

PASS THE CLINTON GAS TAX REPEAL ACT

(Mrs. SEASTRAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, in AL GORE's book, "Earth in the Balance," the Vice President peers into his crystal ball and cheerfully foresees the end of the automobile as America's primary transportation. If he and his Democrat colleagues are attempting to force the automobile out of existence through excessive gas tax hikes, Americans had better fasten their seatbelt, we are in for a wild ride.

While the rest of the Nation averaged just over a 1 cent increase in gas prices, the families on California's central coast witnessed some prices closing in on the \$2 mark for a gallon of gas. The American people are tired of unnecessary burdensome taxes to feed the coffers of Washington benefactors. Last week, I introduced H.R. 3415, the Clinton Gas Tax Repeal Act, which will stop this mindless taxation.

The Republican prescription for gas relief is to put money back into the pockets of every working American family. The Democrats prescription for gas relief is a Gas-X tablet and an election year nap. Americans deserve better. Pass H.R. 3415.

TREAT ALL SIDES FAIRLY WITH BUDGET CUTS

(Mrs. SCHROEDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, as we listen to the Republicans talk about budget, budget, balance the budget, balance the budget, well, we will get a chance today to see how serious they are, because we are taking up the defense bill.

I want to tell you, as I said earlier, the British may be having trouble with mad cow disease, but the Republicans are having trouble with sacred cow disease. This is the biggest scared cow you have ever seen, this defense budget. Everybody else is downsizing. Not us. They had to add more than the President asked for. In my entire time of being here, I have never seen that.