## FIXING MEDICARE

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

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, the Medicare trustees have just issued their annual report and the news in that report is not good. Medicare is now losing money for the first time ever. We are actually taking in less than we are spending. It is going to be completely broke by 2001, according to the trustees, unless prompt, effective, and decisive action is taken to control costs.

I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, to understand that the trustees are not a partisan group. They include three members of the Clinton Cabinet. Last year those trustees projected that Medicare would not run out of money until 2002. This year they are saying that under the middle scenario, because the way that they do their projections, they have to come up with three different scenarios, best case, worst case, and middle case. They are saying that under the middle scenario, it is going to run out of money in 2001 and that under the worst scenario it could be 1999 when the trust fund runs out of money.

So as bad as the news is, what the American people need to know is that regardless of who wins in November, Medicare's financial crisis is going to be solved, because letting Medicare go bankrupt is simply not an option. It is not an option for the responsible legislators of this Congress and it is not an option that exists for the President or anybody who is elected to be President.

Both Congress and the White House have offered plans that limit the rate of growth in Medicare spending by strikingly similar amounts. The White House would increase spending 7.2 percent annually. Congress would increase spending 7.0 percent annually. To put this in perspective, bear in mind that right now the annual growth rate in private sector health care spending is less than 3 percent annually.

What I have just said will no doubt, Mr. Speaker, come as a great surprise to those who already have suffered from overexposure to the semihysterical, patently, false, and politically motivated mantra of cuts, cuts, cuts. President Clinton himself put it well when he said, ''When you hear all this business about cuts, let me caution you that that is not what is going on. We are going to have increases in Medicare.''

While the sides are essentially in agreement with respect to how much to restrict the rate of growth in Medicare, or how much to let it grow—7.0 percent, 7.2 percent—in fact there are very significant differences as to how to do that.

The President and those who believe that Washington knows best are committed to a top-down, bureaucratic solution that would increase the Government's role in the health care of our seniors. It is essentially identical to the plan that Mrs. Clinton was the chief architect of in 1994 and which we defeated in this House in 1994. That is, a plan that depends almost exclusively on forcing senior citizens into managed care. That is the President's notion of the way to get control of the Medicare crisis. But the far better solution is to modernize Medicare and give seniors the same kinds of options, including medical savings accounts, that are now available in some of the very best private sector plans while preserving their right to stay with traditional Medicare if that is what they choose.

In addition, we must mount the first ever attack on waste and fraud and the waste and fraud that has helped bring Medicare to the very brink of bankruptcy. I remember when Bob Reischauer was still the director of CBO, he testified before the Budget Committee that I serve on. He stated very clearly that somewhere between 15 and 20 percent of the money that is spent on Medicare goes down the drain in waste and fraud. Think about that—20 percent of $180 billion is $36 billion hard-earned taxpayer dollars thrown away.

Unfortunately, some folks, including politicians, Washington special-interest groups, even the President himself, have indulged their partisan ambitions by intentionally trying to scare seniors into believing that Congress might like their Medicare benefits away from them. Helping to spread that poison are the big labor bosses in Washington who have spent literally millions of dollars confiscated from their own rank-and-file membership on advertisements pursuing that same big lie. Yet when you cut through all the political grandstanding, one thing becomes crystal clear. The longer a Medicare solution is put off, the harder and more unplatatable the choices become. We need all sides working together now, not as Republicans and as Democrats but as Americans, to solve this problem.

So the next time that you hear someone attack Congress for killing Medicare, ask them to show you their plan to save it. The chances are they will not have one. That is because they are thinking more about the next election than they are about the next generation.

## HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. SALMON] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Speaker, tonight I would like to talk about a very crucial issue that I think probably most of us campaigned on the last election cycle, the issue of health care and the health care dilemma in our country.

Most estimate that there are probably about 40 million to 50 million Americans out there that have a lack of health insurance to take care of the needs of their family. As the father of 4 children, my heart goes out to those people, because frankly when your child is sick, there is nothing in the world that you would not do, nothing that you would not give up on the planet to pursue an effective remedy for that child's health malady. Or if a parent were sick or a wife or a husband, you would give up everything that you had to pursue the most state-of-the-art medical technologies available to try to rescue that individual.

I have some friends back home in Arizona that have a child with cystic fibrosis. Let me just tell a little about their story. They are both self-employed, have had health insurance for years and then they had a child with a serious health malady, cystic fibrosis. I think as most know, cystic fibrosis is a disorder that can be very, very debilitating, requires a lot of medical care, a lot of money to be expended, a lot of time, love, and patience, and most people with cystic fibrosis do not live past their teenage years. If you have a child with cystic fibrosis that lives on into their twenties, you count yourself lucky to have had that time available to spend with them.

My own child, Jacob, when he was a young boy, had several health problems and there was a fear that he might have cystic fibrosis. They did a little medical test on him and they determined that he did not have it, but I remember in the 3 days that we were waiting for that diagnosis to come about after they had done the testing, I remember the agony that we went through, the fear that we went through as parents wondering whether or not our child had this debilitating illness. But, then, this is not about my problem, it is back to my friends in Arizona and their child. Because after their child was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis, their insurance rates skyrocketed. In fact, they went up about 5 or 6 times. The premiums went up exorbitantly. They could not afford it anymore. And so they had to drop their insurance.

The answer in today's society under our current administrative policies and State governments and Federal Government, at least in the State of Arizona, is they have to spend down all of their assets to qualify for Medicaid so that that child could get the kind of care that she needed to preserve her frail young life.

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That is not right. We ought to be addressing the issue of preexisting conditions. We ought to be addressing the issue of portability. These things are not just campaign slogans, they are not rhetoric. They are real-life situations with people, with situations that would tug at your heart strings. Most of us that have children and recognize again that you would do anything for a child that was in harm's way, such as this child is, you would do anything,

you would give up everything. There is no price too great to pay.

But why should they have to? Should we not hear, as representatives of our Nation's Government, the people that sent us back here to carve solutions? Should we not address the problem? Well, about 57 days ago, the House passed a measure, a health care reform bill that would do just that. It addressed the issue of preexisting conditions. For those people that are not self-employed, like my friends, but they work for a larger employer, they are not necessarily canceled from their insurance but they are job locked. They cannot ever change or go into a different job because they know that if they have to get another job that the likelihood that the insurance company from the new employer will pick them up is slim to none.

So for years and years and years, people have been locked into these jobs because they have no alternative if they want that kind of care for their little one, or for their mom and dad, or for their spouse, or whatever the case may be. But we passed a measure that would deal with that 57 days ago, but it is still stuck because the President has an aversion to one of the components in the bill that he says he cannot support.

So, thus, it has been held hostage for 56, 57 days, and the clock keeps ticking while these Americans keep waiting for health care reform. They keep waiting for us to cross partisan boundaries and be Americans first and do what is right by the American people, and it languishes because the President cannot support a particular component which I will get to later.

Mr. Speaker, up to 25 million Americans would benefit from preexisting conditions reform, which eliminates the preexisting conditions exclusions for people with prior health coverage. That helps America's roughly 4 million job-locked workers by freeing them to job hunt since companies will be required by law to accept persons who had prior health insurance coverage, a very, very substantial reform. Instead of making these changes happen, this President holds the reform package hostage.

This bill, this medical reform bill, also establishes a fraud and abuse hotline and, obviously, I think most of us know why we need that. There are those in the health care industry that would profit off of human misery and suffering. I think that probably the numbers of those people are probably relatively small, but just like any aspect of our society, lawyers, doctors, politicians, teachers, you name it, you will find fraud and abuse in virtually every aspect of our society. That is not to say all people are rotten. That is to say that fraud and abuse are two bad by-products of our society and things that we need to keep a lid on.

Most of us see the problems when we go to the hospital. We see the $10 aspirin and we see the wooden throat stick that they use that we are charged $15 for, and we know that there is a major problem where we have been in for surgery and we know that possibly we have been charged for things that never happened to us or services that were never rendered. So there needs to be a fraud hotline and the laws need to be tightened up, and this bill does that, but it languishes. We cannot get by the filibuster rule in the Senate because the President holds it hostage because there are things in it that he says that he cannot stomach.

Mr. Speaker, it increases access and it increases affordability. Our plan fights the discrimination that has been applied to small business for years. Why is it that a large company that employs thousands or maybe even tens of thousands of people, why is it that they can get full tax deductibility as a legitimate business expense for health care coverage that they provide to their employees, but yet a small employer that employs 50 or fewer or 100 or fewer, why is it that they do not enjoy the same kind of tax favorability that the large, big corporations do? Is it not known that in this country 80 percent to maybe 85 percent of all of the people that are employed in this country work in small business? Then we scratch our heads and we wonder aloud, I wonder why it is that these small businesses are not providing health care?

Well, when you have a discriminatory tax policy which favors the big corporations that yield the tremendous profits but yet you won't give the same kind of a tax break to small businesses, you understand part and parcel the dilemma and the problem that we are now faced with in the health care arena. Yet our bill addresses that problem. Right now they only enjoy a 30 percent deduction, and that, again, only happened after the Republicans took Congress a year and a half ago.

We are proposing to take it up to 80 percent. We would like to take it to 100, but the President has a problem with that, too. He does not want the people in small business to enjoy the same kind of tax favorability on their health care deductions as the large business people get, and yet it languishes because the President holds it hostage.

Seniors and the terminally ill, two Contract With America provisions, are provided in our plan. The first allows tax deductions for long-term health care needs, such as nursing homes and home care; home care, something that has not been provided ever by this body. The second allows terminally ill patients and their families to receive tax-free accelerated death benefits from their insurance companies. These provisions will provide greater financial security to families struggling with terminal and catastrophic illnesses, but yet that is also included in our health care reform plan. It is still languishing, day 57. It is held hostage by the President.

On cutting red tape, now, how many people out there think that we do not need to cut red tape when it comes to the health care bureaucracy? I think most people that have ever dealt with any kind of health care provider understand that probably 40 percent of a doctor or hospital's time is spent pushing paper, satisfying regulations of a State and Federal bureaucracy, as well as a big insurance company bureaucracy, and yet our plan has a measure that would cut through this red tape. In fact, it is one of the biggest measures, and this is the one that we want to talk about tonight, the thing that the President is so adamantly opposed to, and that is the concept of medical savings accounts.

He would tell you that this is just another way that we are rewarding our rich friends. Well, let me talk to you about this commonsense solution, and you decide for yourselves if this is something that would help people or it would hurt people. The concept is easy. It is like an IRA fund where people can set aside or your employer can set aside for you pre-tax dollars with no taxation whatsoever, and it would be in your own account for you to spend on your medical needs. Now, coupled with that, the employer, or if the individual purchases the medical savings account or establishes a medical savings account for themselves, would then also purchase a higher deductible policy. Let us say they have in their medical savings account $2,000, so then they would purchase a policy with a deductible of $2,000.

Now, the actuaries will tell you and common sense will also tell you that the higher the deductible, the lower the premium coverage. So for pennies on the dollar, you can get a policy that covers your needs but has a higher deductible. Then you pay cash out of your medical savings account when you go to see whatever provider you want to see, whether that is a DO, or a chiropractor, or a naturopath or your own allopathic physician, your gynecologist, your OB/GYN, your orthopedic doctor, whatever health care provider you choose for yourself to meet your needs, and not have some bureaucrat dictate to you what your needs are and how your needs should be resolved or addressed, you decide. It puts ultimate freedom in the hands of the patient, and it puts it back to the free market solution that has worked so well for other aspects of our economy.

Let me tell you some of the reasons that medical savings account will work. When you are spending your own money, you are a little bit more cost conscious and probably a little bit better at detecting fraud and abuse than some of these big bureaucracies are. When you spend your own cash, you are going to be very frugal and you are going to be very cost conscious and you are going to shop around and get the best deal you can.

Mr. Speaker, let me illustrate from my life. When our last child was born,

Matthew, the cost paid for his delivery by my insurance company to the hospital and the doctor was $3,500. Two months later, my sister-in-law had a baby, but she did not have insurance, so she paid cash, $1,500; $2,000 difference by paying cash. The same thing will happen for all individuals out there, we who are able to shop around and get the best deal they possibly can.

Also, when you do not have to worry about going through this big monstrous bureaucracy, be it an insurance bureaucracy or be it a Federal, local or State bureaucracy, you do not have all the paperwork to go through. So obviously you are going to get a better price, and the cost will come down. It puts ultimate freedom in the patient's hand. It cuts costs.

At the end of the year, the other wonderful thing is that what you do you spend is yours. It does not revert to some insurance company's profits bottom line, and it does not go back to some wasteful bureaucracy in Washington, DC. It is your money to do with as you need to do. If you spent it on something other than health coverage, it will be taxed at the normal rate. But if you decide to roll it over the next year to grow the value of your medical savings account, then there is no taxation whatsoever. And a relatively healthy person of my age that started a medical savings account, kept rolling it over and did not have any serious health concerns to pay out of the medical savings account would be able to have a real healthy nest egg by the time they retire to deal with their own long-term care.

Mr. Speaker, this is a wonderful plan. I cannot understand why the President would hold it hostage. He says that it is a benefit to the rich people. Well, common sense would tell you again that, if you gave a medical savings account to some individual, they would be able to make just as smart decisions as a rich person could if they did not have money.

Common sense would also tell you that, when a person gets first-dollar coverage right out of their medical savings account provided to them by their employer in lieu of the traditional kind of health care coverage or forcing people into managed care, and giving them the ultimate freedom, that these individuals can make good decisions for themselves.

The real answer for why I think some of the liberal people hate medical savings accounts is that they fundamentally believe that people, that the American people are too stupid to take care of their own health care needs, and they have more faith in bureaucrats and bureaucratic systems than they do a father or a mother taking care of the health care needs of their child, or a spouse taking care of the health care needs of his or her spouse.

Well, we Republicans in Congress have a different idea. We agree with our Founding Fathers that the free market system indeed works. It works in the sale of cars. It works in the sale of food. It works in the sale of commodities. It also works in health care. It keeps everybody honest. It gets back to the idea that people are in charge, not bureaucrats. People are in charge of their health care destiny, and they can best determine what their needs are.

Let me read just real quickly a couple of letters that were written that show the real hypocrisy in this debate. One is dated September 8, 1992, and it says: dear colleague, and it was sent to all the colleagues in the Senate at the time:

> The United States is faced with a crisis in health care on two fronts: access and cost control. So far most of the proposals before Congress attempt to deal with access but do not adequately address the more important factor, cost control. We have introduced legislation that will begin to get medical spending under control by giving individual consumers a larger stake in spending decisions.

I do not need to keep reading the letter. I think you get the gist of it. But later on it says, in order to protect employees and their families from catastrophic health care expenses above the amount in medical care savings accounts, an employer could be required to purchase a high deductible catastrophic insurance policy, exactly the plan we are offering. In fact this is probably one of the most ringing endorsements for the concept of medical savings accounts coupled with the catastrophic care policy as I have ever seen or heard of.

Do you know who signed this ringing endorsement of medical savings account? Senators TOM DASCHLE, of all people, and JOHN BREAUX, two of the voices now that are echoing the President's concerns that this is only again tax breaks for the rich or medical care for the rich. Back then in 1992, when they were in control and when they were trying to approach it from a bipartisan instead of an extremely partisan approach, they said that medical savings accounts was an idea whose time had come and one of the best ways to control costs and provide ultimate freedom to people to make the health care decisions for their lives. But, oh, what a difference a day makes. Just a few years later right in the heat of a campaign for the Presidency, now they are taking the President's side and they are opposing medical savings accounts.

Mr. Speaker, could it be that they do not want the Republican Congress to get credit for such a wonderful idea and so they want to stall it for that reason? Or could it be that some of the managed care institutions who have lobbied them so hard because they fear that they will substantially lose market share when we do not force people into managed care have lobbied them so hard and heavy that they are afraid of losing those friends who have helped them get into office?

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One last letter I would like to read to you and then I am going to yield the balance of my time to the distinguished majority whip in the House of Representatives. Just so you know that this is not a Republican approach, this is an idea whose time has come.

By the way, there are about 25,000 companies out there who are offering medical savings accounts to their employees with phenomenal success. In fact, almost every one of them, to the company, have realized a decrease in their health care costs, happier and healthier employees controlling their own health care destiny and not having it mandated to them from either assurance bureaucracy or a Federal or State bureaucracy.

Who else has realized this? There are some, I think, very, very reasonable folks on the other side who have recognized this is the way it goes. This is a letter to President Clinton.

> Dear President Clinton: As original cosponsors of medical savings account legislation in the House of Representatives, we urge your review of and your public support for this wonderfully innovative idea.
>
> The recent vote on the House Republican plan should not be used to judge the Democratic Party's position on medical savings accounts. As you know, medical savings accounts have been a major plank in Congressman TORRICELLI's health care platform in his Senate race.
>
> We cannot think of a more Democratic idea than MSA's. In fact, it was originally our idea. We want Democrats to get credit for it. In the Senate, Democrats JOHN BREAUX, TOM DASCHLE, SAM NUNN, and DAVID BOREN initiated the idea, an idea they are now saying is such a rotten terrible idea.
>
> DICK GEPHARDT included MSA's in the House Democratic Leadership bill in 1994, just 2 short years ago. It was a great idea to DICK GEPHARDT.
>
> There were 28 House Democrats who cosponsored our initial MSA legislation. There are currently three Democratic U.S. Senate candidates who have supported MSA legislation.
>
> You also should know that the current contract of the United Mine Workers provides its members with MSA's. We do not believe the UMW qualifies as healthier and wealthier than the general population—a charge leveled by uninformed MSA opponents.

I could go on. Again, they are extolling the virtues of medical savings accounts. It is an idea whose time has come. Let us stop holding health care, innovative, life saving health care reform, hostage, because we owe some special interest a favor or because we do not want Republicans to get credit for a wonderful idea whose time has come. Let us do the right thing by the American people.

President Clinton, I urge you, with every fiber of my being, to sign this into law, to stop holding this legislation hostage. If you really feel our pain, as I know you say you do, then realize that there are millions of people out there who would benefit dramatically. My friends back in Arizona who have the child with cystic fibrosis, they are counting on you, President Clinton, to not only talk the talk, but to begin to walk the walk.

REPUBLICAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY] is recognized for 38 minutes as a designee of the majority leader.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. SALMON] for his wonderful words, trying to straighten out exactly what is going on in this Congress, and particularly as it pertains to all the political rhetoric that gets thrown around out here.

People's memories seem to be rather short when it comes to remembering, one, that six Senators, six Democrat Senators on the Senate side campaigned on the notion that they wanted a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, and yet they are the very ones who stopped us from being able to pass that amendment to the Constitution and send it to the States.

The gentleman from Arizona [Mr. SALMON] was very eloquent in pointing out the fact that leaders of both the House and the Senate supported medical savings accounts when they controlled the House, but when it came time to actually vote for them and work for them and actually put them into place, they were nowhere to be found and in fact worked very hard against it.

The same thing happened last week. Last week the House Democrat leadership issued a report regarding the efforts of the Republican Congress to bring change to the Federal Government. Now, not surprising, the Democrats had very few kind words to say about the Republican Congress. Coming from the guardians of gridlock, the masters of disaster, the stalwarts of the status quo, their words of disapproval should be seen by the American people as affirmation of all of our efforts over the last 16 months.

To the Democrat leadership, any change that makes the Government work better, that brings power back to the people, that cuts wasteful Washington spending, is mean and extreme. But my colleagues, who is the extremist? The one who fights to change Washington, or the one who battles that change? Let us go through 10 legislative issues, just 10 issues, that the Congress considered this last year to find out who really is extreme.

First, a balanced budget. Now, do you support a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution? Should the Congress actually balance the Nation's books like families are forced to balance their own books?

Eighty-three percent of the American people support a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. The Democrat Congress, the 103d Congress, failed to pass a balanced budget and rejected a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. But in the Republican Congress, the House passed a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. It also passed a budget which balanced in 7 years, without raising taxes, the first balanced budget in a generation.

Second, taxes. Do you think the American people should be taxed more, like many Democrats think, or do you feel that cutting taxes is the right thing to do, both fiscally and morally, like many Republicans believe? Do you get tired of giving more and more of your money to Washington, or do you think that you need to give more of your fair share?

Two out of every three Americans think they pay too much in taxes. The Democrat Congress, I might point out on this chart, the Democrat Congress increased taxes by $241 billion, the largest tax increase in history. But the Republican Congress cut taxes by $223 billion, tax cuts that would have given families needed relief and would have spurred economic growth.

Sadly, the President vetoed these tax cuts. Just look: These are the facts. Under Clinton's tax increases, they imposed in 1994 $115 billion on the so-called rich. To them the rich is anyone that makes over $90,000.

Gasoline tax, they put a gasoline tax on the so-called rich, $4.3 cents a gallon, that amounted to $31 billion. They raised the Medicare payroll tax by $29 billion. They raised the Social Security benefit tax. They taxed senior citizens in this country by $25 billion. They put a tax on corporate and business by $32 billion. They did expand the EITC that saved $2 billion, and then raised another $11 billion, for a total of $240 billion.

Now, that did the Republican Congress do, that was vetoed by the President? We cut taxes on 30 percent health insurance deduction by $5 billion. We raised the earnings limit test. The earnings limit is where when senior citizens make over $11,520, then they are penalized by higher taxes. We raised that limit to $30,000, and we hope next year to repeal it altogether. That saved senior citizens $6 billion.

We had a $500 per child tax credit, that was $150 billion, vetoed by the President. We had a medical savings account that saved $2 billion, vetoed by the President. We had a capital gains tax cut. Now, this is the so-called tax cut for the rich. But you tell a small farmer that just sold their farm, or you tell your parents who are trying to sell their house in order to take care of themselves in their retirement years, they have to pay huge capital gains taxes. We cut it by $35 billion. Vetoed by the President.

We expanded the use of investment retirement accounts by $12 billion, vetoed by the President. We even gave estate tax relief, that is inheritance tax relief, so you could pass on what you worked for all your life to your children, we cut it by $12 billion, vetoed by the President. This comes to a total tax cut package of $223 billion.

The third issue is wasteful Washington spending. Do you think we need more wasteful Washington spending programs? Or do you think that Washington should spend less of your hard-earned money?

Do you support questionable Washington spending on pork-barrel projects inserted by Washington insiders? Well, 71 percent of the American people support reducing funding for all Government agencies.

The Democrat Congress, I might say, on Government spending and under the line-item veto, the Democrat Congress passed spending bills that increased spending by $8 billion. It also tried to pass a pork-laden spending package, which they mistakenly named an economic stimulus package, a package that paid for efficient atlases or building swimming pools, to the tune of $3.2 billion. Have you ever heard of midnight basketball? That was in their stimulus package. they also gave the IRS $148 million more to get involved in your personal life. They even gave $800,000 to whitewater canoeing teams.

The Republican Congress though, the Republican Congress cut $43 billion in real wasteful Washington spending. The Republican Congress also passed a line-item veto to get rid of these pork-barrel spending projects, which the President did sign into law. We give him credit for that.

The next President of the United States, starting in January of next year, will be able to use for the first time in the history of the United States, the line-item veto.

The fourth issue is Congressional reform. Are you concerned that the Congress is out of touch, that special interests and lobbyists have too much power over what happens in Washington, that Members of Congress should live under the same laws as everyone else?

Ninety-two percent of the American people are concerned that special interests and lobbyists have too much power over what happens in Congress.

The Democrat Congress failed to pass any, any, Congressional reform. They failed to pass a law that required Congress to live under the laws it passes on everyone else. It also failed to pass any reform regarding ethics or lobbyist influence.

The Republican Congress succeeded in passing all kinds of reforms. It passed a Congressional compliance law, making it certain that Members of Congress live under the laws it passes on everyone else. I guarantee you, Members of Congress' eyes are growing bigger and bigger when they have the notion of an OSHA inspector coming in and inspecting their offices, they get an EOC complaint filed against them, or many other ways. Right now we have labor unions on the Hill trying to organize our employees. It has a lot of Members thinking about living in the real world, and it has changed their thinking about what this body does in imposing regulations on the rest of the country.

We also ban the gifts that Members can accept from lobbyists and require greater disclosure of lobbyist activities. We cut our committee staff by one-third. We eliminated ghost voting.

Now, in committee, in order for a Member's vote to count he has got to be sitting in that chair and raise his hand and vote. No more ghost voting.

We have gone on and on with all kinds of reforms and opening this House up and giving it back to the people. These are real reforms desired by the American people.

The fifth legislative issue, welfare reform. Now, do you support a complete overhaul of the welfare system? Should we create a system where able-bodied Americans must work? That ends the cycle of dependency and despair? That limits the time people can spend collecting welfare without working?

Well, 71 percent of the American people support a mandatory 2-year cutoff for welfare without work. The Democrat Congress under welfare reform produced nothing, nothing, to end welfare as we know it. Not one proposal in the 103d Democrat Congress even passed out of the full committee. And this is when they controlled both houses and they had the President of the United States at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, who promised the American people in 1992 that he would end welfare as we know it.

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Not one proposal got out of a full committee. But the Republican Congress produced far-reaching welfare reform that placed time limits, work requirements, and other incentives that give poor people a hand up, not a handout.

The President vetoed this plan twice. Now, we are going to send it to him again. Maybe he will wake up and honor his promises and will not veto it, because we are going to send him another welfare reform package.

The sixth legislative issue: Health care reform. Now, do you think we need government-run health care, where your family's health care decisions are made by bureaucrats based in Washington? Or should we have commonsense health care reform that allows families to make their own health care decisions, allows people who change jobs to take their health care with them, and weeds out waste, fraud, and abuse from the health care system?

The gentleman from Arizona, who spoke right before me, laid this out perfectly and eloquently. By the time the Democrat Congress gave up on the Clinton health care plan, a majority of Americans thought it would hurt health care quality and drive up health care costs. The Democrat Congress tried but failed to pass out of either House the President's huge government-run health care proposal.

The Republican Congress has passed a health care reform which will guarantee portability with no preexisting conditions. It creates medical savings accounts, it cuts down on frivolous lawsuits, and cuts out waste, fraud, and abuse in the health care system. We expect this measure to get to the President's desk in the next few days and we hope the President will sign it.

Part of the health care debate includes saving Medicare. Do you think that Congress should take responsible steps to rescue Medicare for the next generation, or do you prefer that the Congress put off until later any commonsense changes to the Medicare system, despite the overwhelming evidence that the system is going broke faster than previously anticipated? Should Congress pass Medicare reforms that will weed out waste, fraud, and abuse, as the Republicans want; or should it increase payroll taxes on working Americans to keep the current system in place, as the Democrats prefer?

The Medicare trustees, which include members of the President's own Cabinet, have concluded that Medicare is going broke faster than previously anticipated.

The Democrat Congress failed to enact any of these reforms of the Medicare system that will save it for the next generation, but the Republican Congress, this Congress, passed Medicare reforms which will maintain a growth rate of 7.2 percent in the program. A growth rate.

Now, a lot of Americans around the country are watching these commercials, millions of dollars spent buying commercials that claim that we cut Medicare, that we have slashed Medicare, that we are going to throw seniors out on the street. But in our plan we allow Medicare to grow faster than health care in the private sector, at the same time we are trying to weed out the waste and fraud and promoting greater choices in health care for seniors, which raises the quality of care for senior citizens.

The seventh legislative issue: Legal reform. Do you support commonsense legal reforms? Do you think trial lawyers make too much money filing frivolous lawsuits in this country? Do you think trial lawyers have too much influence on the White House? Two-thirds of southern California voters are afraid that either they or a loved one will someday be a victim of lawsuit abuse.

The Democrat Congress failed to even try to enact any significant reforms of our legal system, but the Republican Congress enacted, over the President's veto, securities litigation reform which will make it more difficult for trial lawyers to file frivolous lawsuits, and we also passed a product liability reform. Unfortunately, the President vetoed that, and we are working right now to try to get the votes to overturn his veto.

The eighth legislative issue: Immigration reform. Now, do you support giving illegal immigrants welfare benefits available to American citizens; or do you think that we need to make some commonsense changes to make it more difficult for illegal immigrants to get welfare? Do you believe that illegal immigration is becoming one of the biggest problems in America today; or do you think that it is all blown out of proportion by the media? Well, 83 percent of the American people favor a lower level of immigration.

Now, the Democrat Congress failed to pass any significant reform of immigration policies when they controlled the Congress and the White House. The Republican Congress has passed significant immigration reform that would make it more difficult for illegal immigrants to get welfare, while making it more difficult for illegal immigrants to enter the country.

And, finally, the legislation that is so important to all of us, and that is crime. Do you think anticrime initiatives should fund more social welfare programs; or should it make the death penalty more effective? Seventy-nine percent of the American people support the death penalty for murderers.

The Democrat Congress, in fighting crime, passed a crime bill, signed by the President, which would increase spending on prevention programs for things like midnight basketball.

The Republican Congress passed a crime bill, a real crime bill. It was signed by the President, and we got to give him credit for that, which would reform the death penalty procedure to end all these endless appeals, a process that has frustrated the American people, all these endless appeals by death row inmates.

Of course, there are other issues that are not reflected on this chart, issues such as regulatory reform, an issue very close to my heart as a former small businessowner. But do you think we need more Washington power, more crazy Washington regulations, more Washington mandates? Eighty-two percent of the American people believe that the Government is intruding more and more on their personal rights and freedom.

The Democrat Congress expanded on the regulatory state of earlier Congresses, putting more and more regulations on small- and medium-sized firms, costing jobs. The Republican Congress worked to clean up the regulatory environment, bringing commonsense, sound science, and cost-benefit analysis to regulations that come from the executive branch, to make regulations work better, to make regulations work more efficiently, to make regulations actually do some good.

Mr. Speaker, this Republican Congress can best be described as remarkable. We are doing the people's business the way that they want it done. Democrats have taken to calling the Republicans extremists. I say that defending the status quo is extreme. Defending the disastrous Democrat Congress is extreme. Defending a broken welfare system is extreme. Defending wasteful Washington spending is extreme. Defending the largest tax increase in the history of this country is extreme.

Make no mistake about it, when the Democrats ran the Congress, they did an extremely bad job. So, I urge my colleagues to remember this very simple point. Extremism in the defense of

status quo is no virtue. And, sadly, that is all the liberal left has to offer these days.

## WHAT APPROACH SHOULD WE TAKE TO THE TEACHING OF CURRENT EVENTS AND AMERICAN HISTORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, today we passed the Church Arson Prevention Act, and I think practically every Member present voted for that act. It is to the credit of this Congress that this is a bipartisan effort to deal with a heinous set of crimes and to let the message go forth from the leadership of this Nation that we will not tolerate such acts.

There is a disease out there that every now and then manifests itself, and the leadership of the Government has the duty and obligation to let it be known that we will not encourage it, we will not condone it, and we will do everything possible to make certain that those who are guilty are punished.

I want to talk a little bit about the burning of black churches in the south, but I want to talk about four other things that also relate to it, although it is not obvious how closely related they are on the surface.

I want to talk about the recent controversy surrounding the standardization of a national curriculum for history, especially for American history.

I also want to talk about the controversy surrounding the invitation to Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas to speak at a Prince George's County school and what happened as a result of that controversy.

I want to talk about a man named Kenneth Johnson, who objected to Justice Thomas speaking there. Mr. Johnson is a school board member, and he felt that there was some problems there, and I think Mr. Johnson's allegations and his concerns deserve to be looked at more closely.

I also want to talk about the recent Supreme Court decision on the Voting Rights Act.

And, finally, I want to talk about the extremist budget cuts of the Republican majority, and I want to insist that all of these things are related and show how they are related.

I think the overall theme of what I am trying to say relates to a bigger issue of what approach should we take to the teaching of current events and of American history. What approach should we take to the teaching of current events and American history?

What was the controversy in Prince George's County all about? Why did Kenneth Johnson object as a school board member to Justice Clarence Thomas speaking at the school in a ceremony where people would not have a chance to question Justice Thomas; in a situation where children would be left with the impression that Justice Thomas was being offered as a role model and that they should pattern their lives after him?

Prince George's County is predominantly a county made up, the schools are predominantly African-American children. The school where Justice Thomas was speaking was composed primarily of African-American children. Kenneth Johnson, the school board member, was saying that African-American children should not be led to believe that Justice Thomas was a role model; that that would be really a slap in the face, considering the kinds of rulings that Justice Thomas has made, the kind of record Justice Thomas made before he became a Supreme Court justice, and the controversy which presently surrounds Justice Thomas and the decisions that he is making.

What does this have to do with church burnings and what does it have to do with Supreme Court decisions? Well, Supreme Court decisions relating to the Voting Rights Act are probably Justice Thomas's most controversial decisions.

The Voting Rights Act is an act which probably makes more sense than any other effort ever undertaken to remedy the situation caused by 232 years of American slavery. Two hundred thirty-two years of American slavery was a most criminal enterprise. Probably nowhere in the history of the world have we had a situation like those 232 years of American slavery.

We are very critical of Germany in that the current practices of Germany seek to minimize what happened in the Nazi era; that Germans do not rush to discuss what happened in the Nazi era. They do not rush to discuss the holocaust and what happened to 6 million Jews. They do not rush to discuss what happened to people with disabilities and what they did to gypsies and other people they labeled as political undesirables. They do not rush to talk about that and they do not rush to teach about that.

They have been criticized, and yet American slavery is far more ancient than the recent history of the Nazi era. The Third Reich took place in the 1930's and 1940's.

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Hitler was defeated in 1945. But the Civil War ended in 1865, and the Civil War was a war to end slavery. A lot of people call it different things. One of the problems they are trying to teach history nowadays is the fact that people do not want to face up to the fact that the Civil War was a war to end slavery.

The Civil War ended a cruel and inhuman set of circumstances. It ended 235 years of forced labor. It ended 235 years of the destruction of human beings. All of that is part of what we wrestle with when we try to set a new curriculum for the teaching of history. We had a lot of controversy in trying to establish a new curriculum for the teaching of history, especially American history. I sit on the Committee on Economic and Education Opportunities. I know that for some time now that the effort has been going forward to develop standardized curricula in various areas that were almost standardized so that you could compare the teaching from one State to another and then we could have a curriculum where we have a body of knowledge and we can expect all Americans to know.

Immediately there was agreement on a curriculum, a national standardized curriculum for the teaching of science. Math also, there was no great controversy over the teaching the math. I even think the arts came up with a curriculum that was pretty much accepted across the country, although it was not part of the official process. But when it came to the teaching of history, a great deal of controversy has resulted.

One of the reasons is that history has to deal with what is right and what is wrong. History has to deal with treading on people's holy ground in terms of what it is that they certify as being legitimate actions taken by their ancestors. So American history with its controversial problems with the Native Americans and what happened to them, American history with its very controversial problems related to 235 years of slavery presents us with a problem.

The problem manifests itself immediately in a current event related to how shall you handle current events as related to decisions of the Supreme Court. How should you handle current events as related to a controversial Supreme Court Justice who is making decisions which directly impact in a negative way on African American people. How should you handle the invitation to that Supreme Court Justice to come to speak to an African American school when he has made several decisions since he arrived on the court which directly move African American people in this country backwards from the forward progress that was being made over the last 10 years. How shall you handle a betrayal of Justice Thomas.

What does it have to do with burning black churches? There is an atmosphere that has been established in the last 5 or 6 years, it has been growing, escalating, an atmosphere of hate, an atmosphere of racism, coming in many different forms and directions. Some of that racism has come directly from the Supreme Court. Nobody has stepped forward to point a finger at the Supreme Court and said that this is a racist majority, that these decisions are racist. It is difficult to say that, when a black man is sitting there, when Clarence Thomas is sitting there, it is difficult to call it the way it is, that these decisions are racist with respect to affirmative action, setasides, school integration, and with respect to the Voting Rights Act.