

of us who knew Gusty were not surprised by her positive attitude and fighting approach toward the disease. We had seen her tackle every aspect of her life the same way. While the disease finally took Gusty from us, her legendary advocacy continues to reap benefits for people throughout her district, our State and our Nation.

We will always think fondly of Gusty Hornblower.

HEROES ALWAYS STEP FORWARD

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, in the face of tragedies in America, heroes always step forward. America has faced its share of tragedies lately. The destruction of TWA flight 800, the criminal bombing of Centennial Park at the Atlanta Olympic games, the bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma City, and the explosion at the World Trade Center in New York are among just a few.

While the Nation reacts in shock and mourns for the victim, a few put aside their grief to do a job they have been trained well to do. They move quickly and efficiently among the chaos to tend to the needs of victims, like phantoms among the smoke and debris in an effort to find a cause. They are emergency personnel, and they have never failed to bring order, provide comfort and extend needed care during our Nation's darkest hours. America's emergency personnel, Federal officers, police, firefighters and emergency medical personnel are all too familiar with crisis management, and in our anger and grief they are easily overlooked.

As I recently watched the events unfold off the coast of Long Island and in Atlanta, I was struck by the fact that there are always great Americans willing to help others in need, and at no small cost. No one can provide adequate comfort to those who have lost loved ones in the explosion of the TWA jumbo jet, but these men and women are there to try.

It is difficult to recapture the spirit of peace and joy which the Olympics are supposed to represent after a terrorist act, but these people helping others may represent the good in humanity just as surely as the young competitors do, as well.

In my own home area, we have seen in Montgomery County, PA, our volunteer firefighters, police, local police, rescue squad operators, emergency medical personnel and ambulance service professionals, how often we turn to them for assistance. How many of us have turned to a police officer for help? How many people stranded during the blizzard of 1996 turned to others for help? When the floods came to our community, our home-grown heroes responded.

Nobody knows what makes an individual respond in the face of tragedy,

often without regard to his or her own safety. But that is the American spirit. Perhaps catastrophe sparks the flame, Mr. Speaker, of human compassion in them. Maybe the fires of disaster temper the steel of their resolve.

Whatever the reason, we must remember that they too are affected by such calamities, and we must do everything possible to address their needs when the work is done. Studies indicate that the emergency personnel and law enforcement officers often suffer long after the crisis is over.

Many people who assisted the victims in Oklahoma City are now trying themselves to recover from the horror that they witnessed. Many will never forget the faces of those they could not help, especially the children. Perhaps their long-term suffering is due to the fact that they put their own emotions aside at the time of crisis to help others in greater need. Whatever the reason, it is important to remember that these individuals often represent hope in a sea of despair, and we must be there for them when the crisis is past.

Americans are defiant in the face of terrorism, we are resolved in the wake of natural disasters, and these American heroes ignite the flame of the human spirit and strengthen our will in the face of all adversity. God bless our volunteers, and God bless America.

STATUS OF MEDICARE ON ITS 31ST ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, today is the 31st anniversary of the creation of Medicare. On July 30, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson traveled to Independence, MO to sign Medicare into law at the home of President Harry Truman who had been fighting for Medicare for 20 years.

The Democrats today had a birthday celebration for Medicare with senior citizens and Vice President GORE. Basically, what we are celebrating is the 31st anniversary of Medicare because it has been such a success in terms of a Government program that may very well be the most successful Government program. We want to renew our commitment to protecting Medicare from deep cuts and work to continue its solvency for many years to come. That is why the families first agenda that the Democrats have put forward includes the protection of Medicare as a key element of a balanced budget proposal.

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This followed the lead of President Clinton, who proved this winter that the budget can be balanced while still extending Medicare solvency into the next century.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to reiterate that the creation of Medicare did not

happen overnight. On the contrary, it took 13 years to finally make Medicare a reality for our Nation's seniors. Against staunch Republican opposition, Medicare passed the House and the Senate in 1965.

Since the Republicans took over Congress in 1996, 30 years later, and for the first time since before the creation of Medicare, one of their first acts was to basically make significant changes or suggest significant changes in Medicare so that it would not be Medicare as we know it. A lot of this was done without hearings, without any real input, in my opinion, from the American people, and I think it was the wrong way to go.

Fortunately, Democrats spent most of 1995 and also a good part of 1996 fighting against these Republican proposals, which would have significantly changed Medicare and I think made it into a program that we would not have recognized.

I wanted to stress today, on the 31st anniversary, that prior to Medicare less than 50 percent of all seniors had any health insurance at all. Today, on the other hand, over 99 percent of America's seniors can rely on Medicare's services.

So the reason Medicare was established was primarily because many senior citizens did not have health insurance. It was a need that was very much felt back in 1965.

Prior to Medicare many seniors were faced with the dilemma of choosing between food, shelter, or health care. Now America's seniors are living longer and can be assured they will have quality health care services.

In 1965 there were Republicans in Congress, including most notably then Congressman Bob Dole, who ardently fought the creation of Medicare. In 1965, 93 percent of the House Republicans, including Bob Dole, voted for a substitute that would have killed Medicare as we know it. In 1995, 30 years later, Senator Bob Dole and Speaker GINGRICH attempted to change Medicare as we know it by cutting \$270 billion for tax breaks for the wealthy.

Last October, Senator Dole stated, "I was there fighting the fight, voting against Medicare," referring to his opposition to the program in 1965. It is no wonder, then, that many Democrats doubt the Republican leadership when they say that they care about Medicare or they want to fix it. We know that many of them, most of them in fact, in 1965 opposed it, including then Representative Dole, who is of course now the Republican Presidential candidate.

We also quote, and I have quoted many times on this floor, Speaker NEWT GINGRICH, who last year stated, "We don't get rid of it," that is Medicare, "in round one because we don't think that's politically smart, but we think it's going to wither on the vine."

Again I would point out that although Speaker GINGRICH has recently said that perhaps he did not mean what he said in terms of Medicare withering