

leaders at the National Rifle Association.

I am grateful that we may get good health care, but I am saddened that we will not have a secure Nation for all of our citizens. Why have we not had hearings on terrorism, domestic and international? Why? Because the Republicans have not set it on the agenda.

I hope America will rise up and determine that we must have, yes, good health care for all of our citizens, but we must also have a safe, secure Nation. We must give law enforcement the tools to fight terrorism and hold hearings on terrorism in America.

PEOPLE NEED HEALTH CARE SECURITY

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

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce to the American people and to this body that the score is not exactly an Olympic score, but it is big Government, big obtrusive Government, 0, the American people, 2.

That is a good trend, and we hope to raise and make that score even spread, but with the passage of welfare reform and, today, health care reform, we have given the American people something on a bipartisan basis, mainly because some people in this Congress have stood up and said there is a principle, there are some things we could do.

People need to have health care security. We need to make health care portable so a mother who loses her job, with an asthmatic child, can go and get health care at the next stop, at the next job she picks up; that a father who is locked into a job that he has and a wife with a heart condition will move on to a better job because there is portability.

And, yes, we do give American families choice, choice through the medical savings account to choose the doctor they want, to choose the health care they want, and if they do not spend that money they get to keep it.

MEDICARE

(Ms. MCKINNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, gripped by the fear of losing control over the first Republican Congress in 40 years, NEWT GINGRICH and his legions are trying to convince the public that they did not cut Medicare to pay for tax breaks to the wealthy.

On October 26, however, Speaker GINGRICH boasted about Republican efforts to weaken fee-for-service Medicare to the point where it would, quote, "Wither on the vine."

And in an attempt to back away from that statement, Speaker GINGRICH said that he meant the health care financing administration would wither on the

vine. The Los Angeles Times, however, reported that Speaker GINGRICH's spokesman, Tony Blankley, said that, quote, "GINGRICH's comments were consistent with the Republican belief that most seniors would voluntarily choose to leave the traditional Medicare fee-for-service system in favor of HMO's."

Now that's the real scoop on NEWT GINGRICH and Medicare.

Think about it, when have you known the Speaker to not say what he means and mean what he says.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. CHRYSLER. Mr. Speaker, when Republicans took over the Congress, we proved to the Washington liberal establishment that politicians can come here and keep their word. We proved that we could make a difference in the lives of the American people.

The events of this week are proof that this Congress has been one of the most productive in a generation.

Yesterday, Bill Clinton said that he would sign our commonsense welfare reform bill that we will send him later this week. It is a good bill. It is genuine reform of the broken welfare system.

Today, the House will consider the conference report on health care reform. This bill will give health care security to working Americans. It establishes medical savings accounts, which I have had for 3 years, fights fraud and abuse, and ends job lock.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress is making a difference. We are providing the commonsense changes that the American people have demanded for years.

DEMOCRATIC AGENDA ALIVE AND WELL

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

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, good morning. Despite my GOP friends' spin, I have to tell you the Democratic agenda is alive and well in America and American citizens are better for it, because it is the Democrats who have pushed for health care reform and for the minimum wage.

On health care reform, the Kennedy-Kassebaum health insurance reform bill will be on the floor today, and we will be able to provide Americans with health insurance when they change jobs. We will be able to ensure that Americans will not be prohibited from getting health insurance because of preexisting conditions, such as the fact that your child may have asthma or someone has a longstanding hip injury who is an older member of your family.

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That is important and that was a Democratic initiative. We are also

going to take up tomorrow the minimum wage. Republicans have said they would fight it with every fiber of their being. The fact is the Democrats stood for decent wages and decent working conditions. Forty percent of the people who earn the minimum wage are bread winners for their family. Fifty-eight percent of the people who earn the minimum wage are women. We need decent wages in America.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic agenda is alive and well.

CHECKING ON NAFTA

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

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the debate over the success of NAFTA continues. Two years after this legislation became law, we look back and see whether or not it has been successful, and there is still disagreement.

Tomorrow I will introduce bipartisan legislation, Mr. Speaker, however, that all of us can join together on. My legislation, the NAFTA check bill, will require the President of the United States to certify each year to the Congress whether or not those side agreements that he told us would raise up the workers standards in Mexico and would enforce tough environmental laws in Mexico are actually working.

Mr. Speaker, I ask our colleagues to join with us to allow this President each year to certify to us as to whether or not what he told us to get our votes for NAFTA has in fact been occurring for the past 2 years. That is an annual certification as to environmental protection and as to worker standards in the state of Mexico as parties to the NAFTA agreement.

I urge our colleagues to sign as co-sponsors when this bill is dropped tomorrow. We can move it quickly in September to get passage in this body and the other body.

TESTING SINCERITY ON WELFARE REFORM

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a historic day. The passage of welfare reform is long overdue. If we listen to the speeches on this floor, we heard Member after Member stand up and say we need to put people to work. The first test of sincerity on those speeches will come today or tomorrow on the question of whether we raise the minimum wage in America.

Think about how many millions of Americans are struggling today at a minimum wage job trying to stay off welfare. The Republican leadership, Mr. GINGRICH and Mr. Dole, have both resisted our efforts to raise the minimum wage so people who are doing the personally responsible thing for their