

Now, unfortunately, I could not win that debate. In January of this year, as I was pushing my bill, I was the only one willing to say that. I pleaded with the White House to add that kind of language in their Patients' Bill of Rights. I pleaded with the White House to add that to the State of the Union. I actually found out that the Democrat leadership was against that. The original Kennedy-Dingell bill didn't have that in it. In fact, one of my good friends in Congress on the other side of the aisle would not cosponsor my bill because it had it in it.

I find it very curious that today, that is the very thing that the Democrats decided to fall on their sword about and keep those in the Senate from putting out a good piece of legislation.

The other part of our bill, the task force bill, and my bill, PARC, that is extremely important, in my opinion, is to allow people to choose their own doctor. This is America, is it not? Why should we not have as much freedom as they do in England?

Now, our bill, for the first time, had what is known as a point of service provision in it that opened the door to allow the American people to choose their own doctor. But maybe even more importantly in this task force bill, that was not in mine, I wish it had been, was improving on medical savings accounts.

That is the greatest freedom there is in health care. I am very proud to be part of a task force that made possible medical savings accounts for those all over the country.

In conclusion, let me just say that what we hear today in the political ads is exactly what has killed health care reform in the 105th Congress. It is people who were more willing and more wishful of having votes than they were of protecting patients. That is exactly what the Democratic Senate did. They wanted to win votes on this issue, rather than opening the door and for the first time having some national public policy regarding health care.

I am going to join with my friend the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. TALENT) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. FAWELL), who will not be here, but the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and others, and we are going to start again and keep on, and we are going to keep on and keep on until we give the patients of this country what they deserve, and that is the right to choose their own doctor and ask people who make decisions about your health care and tell people that you have to be responsible.

Mr. TALENT. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

I know I am close to being out of time, Mr. Speaker. I will just repeat again, we had a good bill. It would have provided the people the care they need, when they need it, when their physician recommends it, without big government and a lot of lawyers' fees.

As the gentleman from Georgia said, we will be back with it. I am confident

we will have success. It is what the American people want. It is the best thing we could have done in the 30 years since the Congress passed Medicare.

□ 1730

THE OMNIBUS BILL: WHERE IS IT, WHAT DOES IT CONTAIN, WHO IS WRITING IT, AND WHEN WILL MEMBERS GET A CHANCE TO SEE IT?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, do we remember the movie *Roger and Me*, where producer Roger Moore attempted to find Roger Smith, the President of General Motors? He looked everywhere for him. He looked in Detroit, he looked in Boca Raton. He could not find him, as Roger dutifully avoided the camera lens.

In Congress this month and last, we are producing a sequel to *Roger and Me*. It is called the Omnibus and Me. Let me ask, where is the omnibus bill? We know it is a large bill. We know we cannot find it. We know it is looking more and more like one of those dreaded congressional Christmas tree bills. No one seems to know in which room it is being written. No one knows exactly who is writing it. In fact, we are told three or four staffers are actually in charge. So who exactly are these unselected people? Where can Members go to read the bill?

Most importantly, Members do not know what is in the bill. We are told one-third of \$1 billion is being slipped in to bail out poultry traders, get this, in Russia. That issue never came up during House consideration of the agricultural appropriation bill, which passed here overwhelmingly. It never came up in the Senate, either.

According to Sect. 201(f) of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978; "The Commodity Credit Corporation may not make export sales financing authorized under this section available in connection with sales of an agricultural commodity to any country that the Secretary determines cannot adequately service the debt associated with such sale." Currently, Russia is ineligible for the program.

So why is regular order being violated for certain special interests who can gain access to the corridors of this Congress very late in the year?

In fact, every piece of legislative business not completed during this Congress, now famous as the do-nothing Congress, the 105th Congress, is now being put on the table as bargaining chips among a very few players. Why? Because this Chamber and the other have not completed their business on time. The fiscal year began October 1. Everything happening here in Congress is being played actually in overtime, simply because every single congressional deadline under regular

order has been missed by the group in charge.

What about the budget? There is no approved budget resolution for 1999, the fiscal year. We are already into that year. Some Committee on the Budget Members in leadership positions here in the House want to run for president, but they have not even completed the responsibilities of their committee work here in the House.

Look at the appropriation bills. A majority of them, eight of 13, have not been completed on time. Now they are being picked apart by a very few folks around here, without the sunlight of regular order and regular committee oversight.

Why is Congress here in October, at the end of a fiscal year? There is no budget. A majority of appropriation bills for fiscal year 1999, which has already begun, are not completed, a majority. Congress is operating in a stop-start knee-jerk operation actually not worthy of those that we represent.

For the record, let me point out again, there is no completed budget for the fiscal year we are already in because Congress did not finish its legislative business by passing its 13 appropriation bills by September 30.

On September 25 the first continuing resolution was offered that extended the congressional session 14 days overtime, as a handful of Members began drafting the omnibus bill that I have been looking for for several days. They are doing so in secret. Members, find the room and tell me where all this is being done.

Then, when they still did not finish after 2 more weeks, a second continuing resolution passed the House on October 9. They said they needed 4 more days to add more to the Christmas tree bill. That did not work, so then a third continuing resolution was offered on October 12, Columbus Day, somewhat historic, I suppose, for 2 more days, until October 14. Now today, a fourth overtime resolution was offered for 3 more days until Friday, the end of this week, October 16.

I sure would not put those manipulating this hit and miss scheduling in charge of anything after this Congress is over.

So I ask, where is the omnibus Christmas tree appropriation bill? Where can Members read it? Where, more importantly, can the public read it? Is it going to be put on the Internet, so the American people can read it before we have to vote on it, whenever that is?

I would say to Members, and I have been here a few years, I can tell Members with absolute certainty, if Members are not able to read this bill before it comes to the floor, Members have only one choice: Vote no.

TRIBUTE AND A THANK YOU TO KEITH PUTNAM, A HERO FROM HANAHAN, SOUTH CAROLINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MYRICK). Under a previous order of the