

Twenty-five percent of my students have lost a parent to unnatural causes. Twelve percent have been homeless. Most have survived on rice or beans or cereal for extended periods. All have lost friends to violence, and all have been outcasts most of their lives.

Do they understand the politics of this (or any) war? No. But they understand what it means to be orphaned, to be vagrant, to be hungry, to mourn, and to be hated. They fully understand what it means to be a refugee.

So they collect clothes to help others—and end up helping themselves in the process. In the process, they are working cooperatively with adults (employees in the building, their parents, community members) they normally consider adversaries. They are earning respect for a job well-planned and efficiently executed: In just two weeks a mere dozen students have collected enough clothing, shoes, socks, and undergarments for about 3600 refugees. Remarkably, these students who anticipate failure and disapproval at every turn are succeeding at something meaningful.

While they may never compose a thesis comparing and contrasting the present conflict with events in the Balkans leading up to WWII, they have learned to advertise a campaign, schedule and share tasks, meet deadlines, calculate weight and cubic yard measurements, arrange transportation and more.

I'm glad you inquired about the project. We appreciate your knowledge and support as you debate the merit of alternative education programs. We need critical resources to raise citizens as well as test scores.

Sincerely,

REBECCA R. ROADY,  
*Teacher.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks

#### EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. BERRY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the special order time of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUG FAIRNESS ACT FOR SENIORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERRY. Madam Speaker, I would like to speak this evening about the Prescription Drug Fairness Act for Seniors. This legislation will help the problem that our Nation's seniors have had to deal with for years, and that is the outrageous prices of prescription drugs in this country.

The district that I represent has the highest number of senior citizens that live only on Social Security of any district in the country. When I hold meet-

ings in the First Congressional District of Arkansas, I hear about two issues, and that is the agriculture crisis and the high cost of prescription drugs, especially for seniors.

I also get letters from Arkansas seniors who tell me every day that they cannot afford to pay for all their needs; specifically, all their medicine and all their food.

I also get letters from Arkansas seniors who tell me that their drug bills are massive. Seniors are not following their doctors' orders. Some of them have been given prescriptions which they cannot afford to fill. Others have filled prescriptions which they cannot afford to take as directed.

Because they cannot pay the rent, pay the electrical bills, buy food and take very expensive prescription drugs, they either stop taking them or they take less than is prescribed by their doctor. They are doing things that in the long run are harmful to their health. I find it amazing that we tell our seniors that they can live longer if they take this pill or that pill but then if they cannot afford the medication that keeps them alive we do not do anything about it.

The Prescription Drug Fairness for Seniors Act of 1999 is a chance for us to do something about it. It is a chance to step forward and show our seniors that we care about their well-being.

Madam Speaker, this legislation allows seniors, Medicare beneficiaries, to purchase prescription drugs at reduced prices. It allows pharmacies to purchase prescription drugs at the best price available to the Federal Government. It is estimated to reduce prescription drug prices for seniors by over 40 percent.

The average American over 65 takes only four prescriptions a year. The average senior citizen over 65 takes an average of 14 prescriptions a year. Our seniors suffer from more than one chronic condition: hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, glaucoma, circulatory problems, and many others. Medicare beneficiaries spend over \$700 per year on average for prescription drugs and many seniors spend much more than that, some as much as \$700 a month.

Are the pharmaceutical companies hurting for profits? Certainly not. They are the most profitable businesses in existence. Last year they had a net profit of \$24.5 billion, or 17 percent of their revenues.

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Certainly we have no objection to the drug companies being profitable, and hope they continue doing so. Here is a letter that a senior in my district sent to me about this very problem.

She said, "I want to thank you for introducing a bill to investigate the extreme cost of prescription drugs. As I attempt to control blood pressure, cholesterol, treat a thyroid deficiency, and restless leg syndrome, it costs me over \$100 a month. I have had to cut out my arthritis medicine that costs \$125 a

month that the doctor prescribed, and I have had to return to aspirin, which my doctor insists I should not take with these other medications.

"Please do what you can to get the cost of prescriptions back down to a reasonable level. I have had numerous people tell me that they cannot afford the medicines that are prescribed for them."

Madam Speaker, sadly enough, this letter is not something that should surprise anyone here, because I am sure that if we talk to most of the constituents in Members' districts, they will tell us they have received similar letters and they have talked to many seniors that have the same problem.

What do we do? Do we continue to stand by and allow our seniors to be taken advantage of, robbed, by the pharmaceutical manufacturing companies? Fortunately, we have a bill that has 108 cosponsors that will help those seniors who find themselves choosing between food and medicine.

I call on all my colleagues to stand up for our seniors and sign on to this bill. It is a good bill. It is a step in the right direction. It does the right thing as it concerns the senior citizens of this country.

#### EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to use the special order time of the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. NORTHUP). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

#### TRUE BIPARTISANSHIP NEEDED TO SAVE MEDICARE AND HELP AMERICA'S NEEDIEST SENIORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my friend, the gentleman from Arkansas, detail a genuine problem. And as the citizen honored to represent the Sixth Congressional District of Arizona, home to many of America's seniors who endured a Great Depression, who took part in World War II, who built our American economy into the envy of the world, and who now, in their golden years, have time to enjoy a quality of life unparalleled, I still understand that for many there are genuine problems.

How unfortunate it is, then, Madam Speaker, that when those of us in our commonsense, conservative majority move in a bipartisan manner to offer real choices to help the neediest seniors in our society, to offer alternative plans out from the auspices and away from the auspices of big government and bureaucratic solutions, how unfortunate it is that those who claim to