

what they are supposed to take. These are tough calls for a lot of senior citizens.

When we take a look at the issue of prescription drugs, it is not just a question of whether a senior under Medicare would have accessibility to these drugs; it is a question of the price of these drugs. Consider this for a minute. The pharmaceutical companies are spending a lot of money—you see it everywhere you turn—advertising their industry and their product. They advertise their industry by saying: We put good research into new drugs and we find cures.

They are right. Thank goodness they do, and we want to encourage that.

Then they go on, of course, to advertise specific drugs.

Take this drug and you will be able to hop through a field of flowers without sneezing.

Take this drug and you will not be depressed.

Take this drug and it will deal with osteoarthritis.

Take this drug and it will deal with pulmonary seizures.

Take this little purple pill and go to our Web site and you'll feel better already.

Take this Viagra—

And so on and so on.

How much are these drug companies spending when it comes to advertising? They are spending two to three times as much as they do on research. They are spending more money on advertising their drugs than on research on finding new drugs.

To put it in comparison, do you remember Claritin, the drug for allergies? Schering-Plough spent more money in 1 year advertising for Claritin than Pepsi-Cola spent advertising Pepsi the same year; or Anheuser-Busch spent advertising Budweiser. Merck did the same thing with Vioxx.

So when the drug costs keep going up and up, it is reasonable for us to ask the question whether these companies are putting too much money into advertising and not putting enough into research; whether the costs are out of control.

I think it is something we have to address. We have to address the accessibility of drugs and their affordability as part of a prescription drug program. We certainly cannot go the route of the House Republicans of raiding Medicare in order to pay for a prescription drug program. That is what they have suggested.

These are challenges we face. They are challenges which we are going to have to live up to, to make certain we keep our contract with seniors and others who are counting on Social Security and Medicare to be there when they need it.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TAX RELIEF AND SPENDING

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, in the remaining minutes over which we have control, I wish to respond to a couple of things my friend from Illinois indicated.

One was his being very critical of tax relief and tax reduction. It seems to me in a time when one of the real issues before us is the economy, what could you be doing better to help the economy than to reduce taxes? I think that is why the President has pushed that. That is why more conservatives have pushed that. But to be critical of that when we are trying to do something with the economy seems to be a little out of context.

It also is difficult to wonder why the folks who are the big spenders here are worried about the deficit. We passed a bill that was almost \$85 billion more than the previous in agriculture. We did not have any concern about that. So we have people over here who think Government ought to be involved in everything and everyone's lives, and dollars ought to be spent for everything in terms of any program you can think of—and then to hear some concern about the deficit?

I point out, as we talk about problems, there are two sides to these issues and you have to take a little look at what it is you want. If you want a better economy, then you probably need to do something about having taxes be too high. If you don't want to spend so much, you probably ought to take a look at some of the spending bills that you are pushing.

There is a conflict here, but to get up on the floor and complain about reducing taxes yet wanting our economy to be stronger, to get up here and talk about a deficit and then be a great supporter of all the big spending bills—there is a certain conflict there and I think we ought to measure a little bit what we want in terms of what we do in the interim.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORZINE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CLINTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the time until 10:30 a.m. shall be under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. CORZINE. Thank you, Madam President.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND WOMEN

Mr. CORZINE. Madam President, this morning I rise to speak on perhaps the most important long-term domestic issue facing our Nation—the future health and security of our Social Security system. Today, I want to focus on proposals to privatize Social Security and the special threat privatization poses to women in America.

Last December, late on a Friday afternoon, before Christmas, President Bush's Social Security Commission released its recommendations for changes in the Social Security system. The Commission's report did not get much media coverage because of the timing of its release, and I think that was obviously by design, if you read the report.

The recommendations of the Bush Commission are dramatic and damaging, if implemented, for the future of all Social Security beneficiaries but particularly for women. They involve deep cuts in guaranteed Social Security benefits—cuts of 25 percent or so for those currently working and up to 45 percent for future workers. Undoubtedly, these proposals would force millions of Americans to delay their retirement so that they would have the ability to live their senior years with economic security.

Few members of the public actually have even heard of the Bush Commission, and they certainly have not talked or debated the recommendations. And fewer have any idea that the Commission is calling for drastic cuts in guaranteed benefits, the type that I outlined.

Americans need to know about these plans, and they need to consider them and debate them in a serious way, making sure they know the implications of taking these recommendations to fruition.

Unfortunately, so far, the administration says it wants to put off any discussion of these proposals until after the election. That is unfortunate and, frankly, it is wrong. We should be debating this issue openly and publicly before the American people, on the Senate floor and certainly before the voters in this November's elections.

To that end, I intend to continue to raise this subject and its implications for the American people as much as I can to make sure that the American people understand what the Bush Commission is recommending to the American public. This Senator thinks it is too important to be decided among closeted policy wonks and politicians in the dark of the night.

Today, I specifically want to raise those aspects of privatization that are damaging to women. I know this is an issue that is near and dear to the Presiding Officer.

Women have a reason to be especially concerned about privatization proposals because they would be among the biggest losers if Social Security is privatized and benefits are cut.

As Joan Bernstein, president of the organization known as OWL, notes in