

North Carolina (Mr. HAYES), and I will support him and work on with him on this. I want to tell him a small, quick story.

We have the President of the United States, a fine young man, courageous young President, Commander in Chief of our Army, Navy, Marine Corps and all of that; but he was also Governor of Texas at one time. And as Governor of Texas, he headed up the Texas Rangers. Texas Rangers are known for the fact that one Ranger can handle one riot.

My suggestion is that this President work with our present Governor and get some Texas Rangers, go down to Laredo, Texas, and cross the Rio Grande, go into Mexico and go to the first drug store they get to and go in there and ask that pharmacist to come out in the middle of the street and let that Ranger talk to him and let that Ranger ask him, How do you sell prescription drugs down here for 10 percent of what our people can buy them for in the United States when you buy yours from the United States?

If we can solve that riddle, we are on page one.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HAYES). I admire him. I am one of his great admirers in this body. I thank him for caring enough and taking the time to bring the prescription drug debate to a head on this very floor. God bless him.

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this vitally important issue.

Mr. Speaker, as other Members of the body, I have just returned from a district work period. The major part of that district work period was spent listening very carefully to constituents in the eighth district of North Carolina. Not only about their concerns but asking them for their advice, their common sense, using their own experience to help us here in Washington make policy that solves problems back home.

As I traveled the district from east to west, one of the most consistent areas of comment, one of the most consistent problems that I faced that people unanimously talked about in the same tone and the same content was the need for a prescription drug benefit under Medicare.

Beside me is a list, a petition if you will, signed by senior citizens in Concord, Kannapolis, Charlotte, Raeford in Hoke County, Laurinburg in Scotland County, Troy and Mount Gilead in Montgomery County, Wadesboro in Anson County, Fayetteville in Cumberland County. Each one of the people that signed this petition said very clearly to me, we need a prescription drug benefit under Medicare.

On June 30 of this year we celebrated the 37th birthday of Medicare. In that period of 37 years many people in this country have been properly helped by Medicare. During that period of time, Mr. Speaker, a number of dramatic changes have taken place in the practice of medicine. Many diseases, many

conditions that required treatment previously by extensive hospitalization or invasive surgical procedures are now able to be treated with medications. Given that and a number of other reasons, it is all the more appropriate that we provide a prescription drug benefit for our seniors, given not only the necessity for prescription drugs to improve the quality of life for our seniors and to give them the support that they so richly deserve for supporting us for many years, but the point is it is appropriate from a factual standpoint to upgrade our treatment of Medicare to reflect the modern-day miracles of the practice of medicine.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention and the body the following information from the Constitution. The House of Representatives has passed a prescription drug plan under Medicare in a bipartisan manner. The U.S. Constitution, article 1, section 7, clause 2 says: "Every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives must also pass the Senate before it becomes law."

As I said, the House has passed a bipartisan prescription drug plan under Medicare for our seniors. There have been a number of bills debated in the Senate. A number of bills have been voted on in the Senate. They have not passed a prescription drug plan in the Senate which is controlled by Democrats. The Constitution is very clear. In order to become law, a prescription drug benefit must be passed by the House. We have done that. The Senate must pass a bill. The two bills will be combined in a conference committee and then the President can sign that bill into law.

Our seniors need and deserve the prescription drug benefit plan; and that is the only way, rightfully so, under our Constitution that we can get that done. And, again, I refer to the names, and I have many others on sheets of paper, who have looked at and are simply saying we need to follow the Constitution. We need to provide this for our seniors.

Medicare is a good program. It has been helping millions of older Americans meet their needs since that first day back in 1965, but we can and should strengthen Medicare to make it even better for our seniors. Again, we need to follow the Constitution. There is a bipartisan plan that we have passed here in the House. And let me give you some of the details of how it provides an affordable, immediate, and permanent prescription drug benefit.

Under the plan passed by the House, these are some of the things that would happen: it is a voluntary drug benefit available to all Medicare beneficiaries. All Medicare beneficiaries are covered. Those who want to stay with their current coverage will not be forced into a government plan. Extra assistance for lower-income seniors, fully subsidized premium and cost sharing for couples earning up to \$16,000.

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Partial premium subsidy, for couples earning up to \$19,000.

This plan would provide immediate discounts on drug purchases. Seniors would benefit immediately from discounts, approximately 15 percent or more on their purchases through a Medicare-endorsed discount card program. Beneficiaries choose the plan that is best for them. A choice of at least two plans is included in the House package. It guarantees competition, and competition helps hold down costs.

Quality improvements: to improve health care for seniors; protection against adverse drug interactions; electronic prescribing to minimize potential medical errors; pharmacy therapy management for chronic conditions; mechanic modernizations; a rural relief package for underpaid rural hospitals. Again, vitally important pieces for the plan; and yes, this plan provides catastrophic coverage for those seniors most in need of financial assistance.

No senior should ever be forced to choose between buying their prescription drugs or purchasing food and other necessities. Our seniors have been promised prescription drug coverage. They deserve no less than immediate action.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would refer to article I, section 7, clause 2, and ask that we do our job. We have done it in the House. We would ask the Senate to pass a plan, any of the ones they have discussed, at which time the President can sign that into law and provide a badly needed and well-deserved benefit for seniors for prescription drugs under Medicare.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JEFF MILLER of Florida). The Chair would remind Members not to urge a particular action or inaction by the other body.

THE PRICE OF WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, Thomas Jefferson spoke for the founders and all our early Presidents when he stated, "Peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none, which is one of the essential principles of our government."

The question is, whatever happened to this principle and should it be restored? We find the 20th century was wracked with war; peace was turned asunder and our liberties steadily eroded. Foreign alliances and meddling in the internal affairs of other nations became commonplace. On many occasions, involvement in military action occurred through U.N. resolutions or a Presidential executive order, despite