

Environmental groups oppose this bill. The National Parks and Conservation Association, the Wilderness Society, the American Hiking Society, Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Action Foundation, Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth and the Izaak Walton League of America. Editorials against H.R. 260 have appeared in newspapers around the country, the New York Times, the Salt Lake Tribune, the Miami Herald, the Philadelphia Enquirer, the St. Louis Post Dispatch, the Las Vegas Sun, and the Wichita Eagle.

The administration has issued a strongly worded condemnation of this bill. National Park Service Director Roger Kennedy has been direct and straightforward with Congress in enumerating the reasons to oppose this bill.

Mr. Speaker, all I am asking is that this bill be returned to the Rules Committee. Let it come up next week under a closed rule where amendments offering alternatives, which I would offer with several other colleagues on a bipartisan basis that would deal with financing the parks through a changed fee system, a trust fund, and a change in the concessions policy is a far more Democratic way to deal with this issue.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on H.R. 260 today.

PRESERVING AND PROTECTING MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. TIAHRT] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to spend a few minutes this morning talking about a very important issue of preserving and protecting Medicare. I want to quote from the Los Angeles Times who printed just a week ago, "the House GOP plan to save Medicare is a sensible start toward fixing a program whose costs are out of control." The Democrats are wrong to balk at the restraining of soaring costs of the popular Medicare Program. The current path doubles the program's budget every 7 years. It is not sustainable and they know it.

Mr. Speaker, I am not an expert on Medicare, and so I went back into my district during the August district work period and I got together 33 members of the health care industry, of people who were concerned about preserving and protecting Medicare, of people who were involved in taxpayer groups, the AARP, United Seniors Associates, and we got together and we met all morning at Wichita State University about what problems we were facing with Medicare and how we could best preserve and protect it, and today I have with me a copy of the draft report that we submitted and that I also used to testify before members of the Committee on Commerce; it is the subcommittee for the Committee on Ways

and Means, in coming up with some solutions for preserving and protecting Medicare.

Some of the ideas that we had that came out of the Fourth District of Kansas are now being implemented into the legislation. These members of this task force came to this meeting with three methods of preserving and protecting Medicare. We went around the room and we discussed each one of these solutions in depth.

Mr. Speaker, I was expecting them to come scared because a lot of the rhetoric that has been said right here on the floor of the House, a lot that has been printed across through the elite media, and so I was somewhat anxious about the meeting, but when I got there, the people of America were not scared about losing Medicare. They were concerned, but they came with excellent ideas. They wanted to give the best ideas of Kansas to have them brought here, and some of the ideas came right out of the work force.

A gentleman named Zim Zimmerman, who works for Evcon industries in Wichita, KS, one of the leading air-conditioner suppliers across the Nation. He was just 90 days away from retirement and he said, if I could just take my health care insurance as provided at Evcon and carry it on into retirement, I would be completely satisfied. Other seniors wanted to have the same system that is available to them now, Medicare. Some wanted a type of system that is a managed care system because it provided more alternatives to them, and some wanted medical savings accounts.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation that is currently being drafted does keep our Nation's commitment to Medicare and it remains as an option to seniors, with no increase to copayments or deductibles. We also, in the legislation that we are right now pushing forward, allowing seniors the same health care choices that are available to others like Zim Zimmerman and other seniors in the Fourth District, and we came up with some good ideas on how to root out waste and fraud and abuse so that we can maximize the health care dollars that we are spending.

We also have in this legislation ways of placing financial responsibility on those who can best afford it and try to provide the benefits to those who are truly in need without great demands on their financial responsibility. We also want to set up a guaranteed solvency through a budgetary fail-safe provision.

As the task force discussed some of these problems, particularly in waste, fraud, and abuse, it was very apparent that fear has been used all across the Nation. In our report that was given to us by a gentleman who is administering a hospital in Halstead, KS, his name is Jeffrey Feeney, he used to work in a Florida hospital, and a physician came to him and said, I would like to use a room to talk with some of the seniors. And he says, well, what were

you going to use the room for? He explained that the doctor was talking to the seniors about an autologous blood process by which he was paralyzing the fear of seniors, the fear of contracting AIDS or other social STD or HIV infected blood through the process when they had surgery. They have to use others' bloods, so this autologous blood process, they would take their own blood, he would store it for them at no cost to them, and then in the future, in the event they needed blood, it would be available to them.

Many of them would never need this blood. They would never have surgery, but yet he was being paid by Medicare on a daily basis for storing this blood. So he parlayed this fear into bilking the system out of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, when I think about what has happened here recently, even for my own parents, when people try to come in and try to use scare tactics, in Kansas we call that scams, and this is not Mediscam. We are talking about preserving and protecting Medicare.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we submit this report and as we proceed with Medicare legislation, I hope that the American public will see that the loss of credibility for using scare tactics is more and more apparent and that the plans that we have forwarded as represented by the Los Angeles Times are going to be effective in preserving and protecting Medicare.

MEDICARE SAVINGS DOUBTED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DOGGETT] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, as this House was concluding its business last night, I was discussing the concerns that every senior across this country should have about what is about to occur on Medicare, and indeed, listening to the remarks of my colleague from Kansas just now, I would say that if seniors are not scared, they ought to at least be very concerned about what is happening on Medicare, and I would think that any senior who has been observing closely what is occurring with reference to Medicare would be very near scared at the consequences that are about to befall them.

You know, we have awaited a Republican plan and now another day has passed. It is September 19, and we have yet to have any member of the Republican Party come to the floor of this House and spell out the details of their plan. All that American seniors know about this Republican plan is that it boils down to: Pay more, get less. That is what the Republican plan is, the pay more, get less plan.

Mr. Speaker, it was curious that the gentleman from Kansas just now would refer to the Washington Times because yesterday's Washington Times, the banner first page story was: Republican