health care plans the way everyone else does.

What can be wrong with that?

VOTE TO SAVE MEDICARE

(Mr. GUTIERREZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, you just cannot run from the truth.

As the Republicans try to hide that they want to take health care from our seniors for a tax giveaway to the wealthy, their justifications are becoming laughable.

I think the silliest one is this:

This isn't a cut in Medicare. We are only slowing the growth.

Let me explain the Republican definition of slowing growth:

Say I own a cruise ship, and it seats 100 passengers. It only makes sense that I would have 100 life preservers.

Now, say I build a bigger boat. One that seats 150 people.

If I say to my passengers I am only going to have 125 life preservers, but don't worry—that's not a cut, I'm only slowing the growth of life preservers—I do not think that is going to help the 25 people who drown when my boat crashes.

Well, my friends, Medicare is a life preserver for our seniors.

One that protects them when they are sick, one that saves them when they are ill. One they have paid for and earned and deserve.

This week, we have a chance to keep all the life preservers on board.

Vote to save Medicare.

FACTS ABOUT MEDICARE REFORM

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of wild accusations and some very interesting and creative, if not altogether truthful, analogies. My dear friend from Illinois brought up perhaps the strangest I have heard today.

Let us get away from this, and let us talk fact. Let us get away from the mythical mathematics of Washington, DC.

Fact No. 1: Medicare spending per beneficiary increases from $4,800 this year to $6,700 in the year 2002. That is an increase of almost $2,000. That is reality. That is real math.

Fact No. 2: We provide choice to seniors through Medicare Plus. Only the guardians of the old order who put their trust not on individual initiative but an overgrown, gigantic Federal bureaucracy dictating to the American people would say otherwise. The fact is we provide choice, even if seniors want to keep the program they have intact and make no change. That is why it is Medicare Plus. That is why it is good for the American Nation. That is why it will pass in this body later this week.

MEDICARE: DO NOT SURRENDER OUR COMMITMENT

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is ironic I follow my colleague from Arizona.

I rise today to present 5,000 signatures from people in the congressional district that I represent and the surrounding community in Texas. On Monday I visited a senior citizens center and was presented these petitions and signatures from senior citizens and working families. They signed their names to these petitions because they are concerned about the broad cut and the extreme reversal of Medicare that is going to be voted on tomorrow in this House.

In the 30 years since enactment of Medicare, we transformed what it means to be old in this country. We have lifted our senior citizens out of poverty and restored their health and their dignity. Never again will seniors have to choose between food on the table and Medicare or health care, until tomorrow, because what we see today from the Speaker and the Republican majority is the surrender of that commitment between our Government and our seniors, because the majority feels it is so important to fulfill their campaign promise to provide a $245-billion tax cut and cut Medicare $270 billion.

These petitions are from 5,000 hard-working Texans, and I hope we remember that tomorrow.

SAVE MEDICARE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, through the years, the cost to seniors has increased as the costs of the program has increased—but the Medicare benefit package still reflects 1965-style medicine. And seniors simply are not getting the options that other Americans are receiving. Seniors are now spending, on average, 21 percent of their annual income on health care-related expenses.

Our Medicare plan provides health security for today's and tomorrow's seniors. Medicare Plus will allow seniors to choose from several plans. Basically, seniors can stay in the traditional fee-for-service Medicare, or they can exercise the right to choose a plan that better serves their needs—everything from eyeglasses to dental care.

Each plan must offer as good a benefit package as Medicare currently offers. The proposal attacks waste and fraud through an incentive program for seniors. This plan is necessary.

We must do something to equate the system for seniors while ensuring its stability for future generations.

MAKE MEDICARE THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I believe the Republican plan on Medicare goes too far. But I do not agree with the political strategy of the Democratic Party. I do not believe the Republicans are two-headed monsters that want to destroy Medicare.

Medicare is broken. It needs fixing. The sad fact is the Democrats, we the Democrats, had control, and we did not fix it.

Making NEWT GINGRICH and the Republican Party into Darth Vaders may be good Democrat strategy, but it is bad public policy for America. It is divisive. It is irresponsible in an America that is already divided.

Let us get beyond the spin to win. Let us fix Medicare so it, in fact, can be a gift that keeps on giving for our parents and grandparents, and let us get off the politics.

PRESIDENT THINKS TAXES WERE RAISED TOO MUCH

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President said in Houston at a fundraiser that, ''A lot of people in the audience are still mad about my budget,'' that he pushed through in 1993, ''and they think I raised their taxes too much.''

Now, listen carefully to this: The President said, ''It might surprise you to know that I think I raised taxes too much,'' the President of the United States making an admission that he raised taxes too much.

Think about that, Democrats, those that voted for it. That is why we have a new Republican majority in Congress. That is why our new majority promised the American people that we would roll back some of these taxes, these huge tax increases that the President pushed in 1993 that he now thinks are a mistake.

This fall we will give every middle-class family a $500-per-child tax credit, provide tax relief for seniors and help create more jobs and more opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the President may say his tax increases were a mistake. The Republican Congress is going to do something about it.

BACK DOOR DEALS ON MEDICARE

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)