

Indeed, we even saw a previous speaker who had an ad up, or an editorial up that headlined, Bribes for Doctors. I happen to be the only person in this room tonight that was actually in the room when that discussion was held.

Doctors are given back, over 7 years in prospective revenue to doctors, \$26.1 billion. The original conversion factor that the House provided for them which I believe is \$24.60 was changed to the Senate conversion factor of \$35.42, and that difference is \$300 million. The House decided to agree with the Senate in terms of the conversion factor.

That is what they call a bribe. That is hardly what the National Council of Senior Citizens would argue that they got, those very seniors who came seeking information, which was 70-some million dollars.

Ninety percent of their entire operating budget comes from the taxpayer to come and lobby the taxpayer. In point of fact, the Republican proposal for saving Medicare has no cuts to beneficiaries. None. Every single beneficiary can choose to stay in the same system at the same service, at their same doctors.

Mr. Speaker, we do reduce revenues to providers, both hospitals and physicians, although we reduce it less than the Clinton proposal and the Democrat proposal. We do provide major, major fraud, bribery, kickback, false filing, false swearing, major fraud provisions, and we believe that between the provider reductions, the hospital reductions and the fraud provisions, plus those seniors who choose to opt out of current Medicare and into a Medisave account, into a high deductible and private insurance account with a medical savings account, we think, and the Congressional Budget Office believes, that 25 percent will opt out.

The Congressional Budget Office tells us that with those opting out and the savings to providers and fraud, we will save \$270 billion. We are delighted with that. None of that constitutes a reduction of a single dime in terms of a provider benefit.

On part B there are some things that are slightly different. Part B is the doctor portion to pay for doctor visits. Currently the law says they pay \$46 per month. It is a tax, really, off their Social Security benefit of \$46 a month for part B. That constitutes them paying, our seniors paying roughly 31.5 percent of the cost of their part B. We propose to keep it there.

Most of the seniors that I talk to are not proud of the fact that their grandchildren are paying 68.5 percent of their benefit, but that is something that has been established here over the last year in the formula. The Republicans intend to keep it there, at 68.5 percent subsidy of seniors part B. We know that costs go up with increasing seniors and with inflation, and so the typical senior is going to expect to raise their part B contribution, that 31.5 percent that they choose to pay is

going to raise about \$7 a month over 7 years. In fact, the Democrat plan goes up nearly as fast, but from a lower base.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to understand that most of America now agrees with us that Medicare is going to be bankrupt in 7 years if we do not make changes. This year, this year, for the first time, we will be giving to you to spend more money on part A than we bring in.

Now, it is true, it is true that Medicare has been said to be running out of money in the past, several times in the past, and sometimes in the past running out of money in shorter than 7 years. The Democrats' proposal was to raise taxes on our children and grandchildren 23 times in 27 years. We propose not to do that.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. MALONEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

REPUBLICAN MEDICARE PLAN WILL DESTROY MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. NADLER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, before a Democratic Congress against almost total Republican opposition enacted Medicare into law in 1965, one out of every two senior citizens has no health care coverage at all. Today, with Medicare, 99 percent of senior citizens have health security. The drastic cuts the Republicans propose in Medicare, \$270 billion, would savage the Medicare Program.

The Republican Medicare bill will make older Americans pay more and get less, not to prevent Medicare from going bankrupt as they falsely claim, but to finance a huge tax cut, \$245 billion, for the very wealthiest Americans.

The Republican plan will, among other things, according to the Washington Times, so increase the Government's burden of proof in prosecuting Medicare fraud that the Government would lose about one-quarter of what it recovers from the crooks and the cheats today.

The Republican plan will increase out-of-pocket costs for all seniors. It will double premiums and increase deductibles. It will drastically reduce reimbursement rates to doctors and other health care providers so much so as to drive many doctors out of the Medicare system and endanger the quality of care provided to seniors. Altogether, the Republican bill would cost the average beneficiary at least \$2,825 in premium and co-payment increases over 7 years, and the average couple at least \$5,650.

Americans must know the truth, that the Republican Medicare cuts will go straight into the Republican's tax cut for the wealthiest Americans.

The Medicare trustees tell us Medicare needs \$90 billion, not \$270 billion, to remain solvent. The Republicans tell us we have ample funds to balance the budget in 7 years, and still pay for a \$245 billion tax cut. If the Republicans are not lying to the American people, if their purpose is, as they say, to save Medicare, why not simply reduce the size of their tax cut for the wealthy by \$90 billion and place the revenues saved in the Medicare Trust Fund? There is no need to force seniors to leave the doctors they know and to join unfamiliar managed care plans. There is no need to double part B premiums. There is no need to increase copayments and deductibles by thousands of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, to our Republican colleagues we say, simply take \$950 billion from your tax cut for the wealthy and put it into the Medicare Trust Fund. You will still have a \$155 billion tax cut for your wealthy friends and contributors, or is that not enough? Or is the full \$245 billion gift to the very rich so important that you must destroy Medicare in order to save it?

The New York Times recently published an article detailing some individual cases, where even with the help of Medicare, medical costs are already devastating the financial stability of many seniors. Take, for example, Susie Meade, a 78-year-old woman from Florida. The Times reports, "Out of the \$6,600 she gets in Social Security a year, she pays \$1,116 for supplemental insurance, \$553 for Medicare, and \$1,000 for prescriptions. She is left with \$328 a month to pay her rent and to live on."

How can the thousands of seniors like Mrs. Meade be free to finance a tax break for the very wealthiest Americans?

Here are just some of the many thousands of letters I have received from my constituents opposing these cuts, and there are very many stories of people who cannot possibly imagine them.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is a sneak attack on Medicare. The Republicans did not campaign last year on a platform of savaging Medicare. They did not tell the voters they would double Medicare premiums and increase copayments and cut Medicare by \$270 billion. Then they kept their bill secret until last week, in the hope that the American people will not find all of the jokers hidden in the fine print until it is too late, until the bill is passed, the deed is done, the money for the \$20,000 tax cut for people making \$300,000 a year is provided.

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Mr. Speaker, the American people know how to react and deal with sneak attacks. We have endured sneak attacks before. Admiral Yamamoto is reported to have said on December 7, 1941, after he received the congratulations of his subordinates for the successful sneak attack on Pearl Harbor,

"Gentlemen, I fear we have awakened a sleeping giant and filled him with a terrible resolve."

If this sneak attack on Medicare passes tomorrow, the American people will again be filled with a terrible resolve and they will know how to repay the attackers.

RENEWING MEDICARE COMMITMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BUNN of Oregon). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oklahoma [Mr. WATTS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. KINGSTON. We are trying to elevate this debate and I just heard that the Republican Medicare plan is the same as the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. I really believe you owe my father, a World War II veteran, and most Medicare recipients an apology for such a statement. I am offended by it. I think the veterans of America are offended by that.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. No, I will not yield, Mr. Speaker. I have only got 5 minutes and I have got to get up in the morning, so I want to get my 5 minutes out of the way.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the people of the Fourth District of Oklahoma sent me here to Washington to work for what I believe in and talk about what I believe and since coming to Washington in January, I think that I have been doing just that. But tonight I would like to change pace and talk for a moment about what I do not believe.

First I do not believe that there is a single Member of this body who does not understand how important Medicare is to his or her older constituents.

Second, I do not believe there is a single Member of this body who does not understand that the Medicare system is going to run out of money if serious reforms are not enacted.

Finally, I do not believe there is a single Member of this body who would craft a bill to cast a vote that places the health care of America's senior citizens in jeopardy.

In 1965, the 89th Congress made a commitment to older Americans when it enacted the Medicare Program. At that time, health care for the elderly became part of our Nation's basic social contract with her citizens.

Today with Medicare facing bankruptcy, that commitment is in serious jeopardy. Tomorrow we have the opportunity to do something about that. We have the opportunity to renew our commitment to older Americans and an opportunity to revive a Medicare Program that is seriously in danger of default.

The plan to save Medicare that will be considered on the floor of the House

tomorrow is a responsible and desperately needed measure that addresses the serious financial problems facing the Medicare Program.

The rhetoric has run high here in the Chamber on the subject of Medicare but I ask the American people to stop and think for a moment. Every single Member who has worked on drafting these reforms and every single Member who supports these reforms has constituents, family, and friends who will be affected by the actions that we take.

I have heard Members in this Chamber say the reforms that we are proposing will be cataclysmic for our constituents. I have heard these reforms will be a monumental failure. I have heard these reforms will destroy the medical care system that we have put in place for our Nation's senior citizens.

I do not believe it, Mr. Speaker. I do not believe it, because it simply is not true. The Members who support these much needed reforms represent tens of millions of senior citizens who vote, who work on our campaigns, who trust us to do what is right. More than that, many of these golden-agers are our parents. Each of us takes that trust very seriously. That is why we have crafted a bill that guarantees that older Americans will have a viable and secure Medicare Program now and in the future.

Furthermore, we also have to work to preserve Medicare to the next generation, those baby boomers who are currently watching this debate and will fund this program until their retirement. It makes no sense to do otherwise.

I urge my colleagues to support the plan to save Medicare and maintain the contract we signed 30 years ago with America's senior citizens.

VOTE AGAINST REPUBLICAN MEDICARE BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mrs. MEEK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote against the Medicare bill tomorrow.

I am a senior citizen. I understand the issues in this bill, and I want to say to you, much of it is mendacity, in that what has happened here is that the senior citizens of this country are being sold a bill of goods and it is not right. Do not think that they are crazy. They are sophisticated. They understand that they are not getting full treatment here. They understand that they will not be able to get the high quality of care that they are getting now.

We could not bring a chart in front of every one of them here and prove to them that they are going to get the same quality of care when this bill passes, if it does, that they are getting now. So they know better.

The so-called Medicare Preservation Act of 1995 raises more questions than

it answers. The Republican plan is really not tough on waste, fraud and abuse because first of all it fails to really criminalize waste and fraud in the bill, and it does not give the high quality of care that I just talked about.

The burden of proof should not be placed on the Government, but it is in this bill. In terms of knowing why the Republican leadership raises premiums for the elderly at the same time that it makes it easier to rip off the Medicare system, I cannot understand.

One of their own Members here in this article from the Washington Times, a Republican ex-prosecutor upset by handling of the program's abuse, and I quote, he said here that I support the GOP Medicare reform generally but the fraud and abuse provisions are woefully inadequate. It fails to criminalize Medicare fraud, it raises the threshold of proof necessary to convict a doctor, hospital or other care providers under Federal anti-kickback statutes.

It is important that we know, that seniors know what is going on, they are aware of these things and we must be sure to keep saying it.

My constituents want to know why the Republican leadership bill will cut Medicare payments to hospitals that serve the poor. For years and years I worked in the Florida legislature to be sure that a proportionate share was given to those hospitals who serve the poor.

My constituents want to know why the Republican leadership is cutting Medicare by \$270 billion so that there can be a \$245 billion tax cut. Let me tell you how the Republican leadership plans to increase Medicare premiums will affect a constituent who wrote to me last month. She is 69 years old and her husband is 67. Their monthly income is \$811 from Social Security. She pays a rent of \$475, utilities of \$150, and insurance of \$98. That leaves the couple \$88 a month in cash along with \$96 in food stamps for everything else, for food, for clothing and for all medical expenses that they have to pay out of their own pocket. She has cancer and her husband has diabetes and cancer. The Republican leadership bill says that the part B Medicare premium which under current law would be \$43 per month next year will rise to \$54 a month next year and continue to rise until it reaches \$87 a month 7 years from now.

How is my constituent going to pay that? An extra \$11 a month next year may not seem like a lot of money to the people getting those big tax cuts but let me tell you, it is a lot of money to an elderly person. If you do not believe it, just talk to them, that has only \$88 a month for food, clothing, and prescription drugs.

Why does the Republican leadership want to raise Medicare premiums at the same time it is retreating in the war against Medicare fraud and abuse? That is what my constituents want to know. One of them called my attention