then to turn around and give a major tax cut, taking the money from Medicare, and giving a major tax cut to the wealthiest people in sight. Does that sound familiar? That is what they are basically doing today, giving tax cuts to the wealthiest 1 percent. In this case, the tax cut for millionaires is $90,000.

Speaker Gingrich also made a statement. He said, ''We can't get rid of Medicare''; this was back in 1995. He said, ''We can't get rid of Medicare in round one because we don't think that is politically smart, but we believe it is going to wither on the vine.''

Bob Dole that same year bragged to a conservative group, a group of conservative politicians who do not like Medicare; sort of the Republican line. He said, Bob Dole said, I was there 30 years ago fighting the fight, voting against Medicare, trying to stop it from ever being created.

So it is pretty clear, Mr. Speaker, that it may not be just the fact that Republicans raise a ton of money from the drug companies and a ton of money from the insurance companies, and that is why they are for Medicare privatization and that is why they want to turn Medicare over to the drug and insurance industries. It may not be that; it may be that they have an honest, philosophical difference with us and with 90 percent of the American public. They just do not like Medicare. They voted against creating it. They bragged about voting against creating it. Speaker Gingrich voted to cut it on several occasions.

And now in 2003, with a Republican President, a Republican Senate and a Republican House, this is their golden opportunity to privatize Medicare. That is what this vote is all about this week. The Republicans, at the behest of the insurance companies and the drug companies, want to privatize the health care system that has worked for America's seniors.

The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), the new Republican star in their efforts to privatize Medicare, in their efforts to dismantle Medicare, has said, and I will end with this, Mr. Speaker, he said, to those who would say the bill would end Medicare as we know it, our answer is, from the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), Republican chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, we certainly hope so. Old fashioned Medicare is not very good. We want to end it.

Mr. Speaker, we need to vote ''no'' on the Republican plan, vote ''yes'' on the Democratic plan that will preserve Medicare and provide a solid prescription drug benefit for our seniors.

THE SONS OF COLVILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in honor of Minnesota's 135th Infantry.

It is hard for us to imagine what it must have been like in the spring of 1861 when cannons announced the first battle of the Civil War by firing on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. Minnesota's first Governor, Alexander Ramsey, happened to be in Washington on other business. Upon learning the news, he raced to the White House to become the first Governor to volunteer troops for the Union Army.

A few nights later, in Red Wing, Minnesota, William Colvill used his considerable size and agility, as he stood almost 5 feet, 5 inches tall, to elbow his way to the front of the line to become the first volunteer in the first regiment of the first State that volunteered troops to preserve the Union.

Minnesota's First Regiment fought with distinction in many of the bloodiest battles in the Civil War, including Fredericksburg, Bull Run, and Antietam. American history has a special footnote, however, to commemorate their actions on July 2, 1863 in that most famous of Civil War contests, the Battle of Gettysburg.

General Winfield Scott Hancock, commander of the Union forces, saw the vulnerability of General Sickles' New Yorkers, who had moved forward, leaving a huge gap in the Union line. Hancock noticed that the First was positioned somewhat south of the middle of the long Union line on Cemetery Ridge. He nervously rode up and asked, Colonel Colvill, how long can you hold your position? Colvill, who spoke in short, crisp sentences firmly answered, ''General, to the last man.''

Now, this was no idle boast. By the end of that day, the regiment would suffer 82 percent casualties.

That single phrase, ''to the last man,'' survives today as the motto of the Minnesota National Guard detachment that traces its heritage to the Minnesota First Regiment.

When the regiment headed off to war from Fort Snelling in 1861, they were 1,023 strong. After Pickett's charge at Gettysburg had been repelled only 2 years later, just 67 men could answer the call.

The Minnesota First went on to see action in the Spanish American War and served with distinction in the Philippine Insurrection. During World War I it was mustered into service, but did not see action as a unit.

That changed in 1941 when war clouds gathered far across the sea. The 135th Infantry became the first division to be activated and shipped out. Advance units of the 135th sailed to Africa to take on the famed Africa Corps of Field Marshal Rommel. Despite being outmanned and underequipped, the 135th turned back the Desert Fox and his Army.

After World War II, the 135th once again saw action in Korea.

Today, the 135th is a battalion; no longer a regiment. It has five companies compared with 20 years past. It is concentrated in southeastern Minnesota as a member of the historic 34th Red Bull National Guard Division.

That is why, this July 11 through 13, the thin ranks of the 135th Infantry's combat veterans of World War II and the Korean War, the ''Sons of Colvill'' as they are known, will gather to remember. They will close ranks in Mankato, Minnesota, to honor those who have fallen and to remember one more time the sacrifices of a generation.

Once again, they will listen to the special music that identifies the 135th: ''March of the Red Bull Lesions,'' ''The Old Gray Mayor,'' ''The Sons of Colvill.'' It will be a final hoo-ah for the surviving men of World War II, and it will be one more commemoration for the thinning ranks of the Korean War vets. And, it will be one last chance for us to say, ''thank you, well done, oh good and noble servants. You have brought hope and freedom to millions who will never know your names.''

Mr. Speaker, I salute the brave Minnesotans who have given so much to keep the lamp of liberty burning brightly throughout the world. To the families of those who have made the supreme sacrifice, we cannot adequately salve the wounds that will never heal. The best that we can say is that we will never forget.

May God bless you. May God continue to bless our country and all who defend her.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

WOMEN AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, like the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) said, this is deja vu all over again. Here we are, once again, discussing ways to help seniors afford the prescription drugs that they need and must have and, once again, the majority insists on a sham proposal that gives seniors nothing more than a false sense of security.

I am here tonight with the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) to remind everyone that as we debate proposals to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare, the decisions we make