

one Republican vote, and now they are criticizing the President and Democrats for not coming up with a plan before they introduce a budget.

Today the majority criticizes us for not providing leadership on Medicare. Well, they are the majority. Leadership is tough. If the Republican majority wants to continue to live in a dream world and think that they can balance the budget without cutting health care costs, they need to come up with a plan. Medicare should not be a cut.

THE TRAGEDY IN OKLAHOMA CITY

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

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, following the tragedy in Oklahoma City, as was expected, tremendous rhetoric grew out of this fracas that occurred, both from the right and the left, calling for hearings on terrorism, international terrorism, domestic terrorism, paramilitary actions, all kinds of themes and theses that were propounded following that tragic event.

But we must focus once and for all on what happened there and then at that tragic moment. This was an act of mass murder, willful, deliberate, intended to kill people, and succeeded in that.

Our job, as the American people and the law enforcement and Members of Congress, communities together, must focus to bring those culprits to justice, bring them to the bar of justice, and then try them for murder and seek the death penalty. That is the analysis with which we must start in contemplating what happened in Oklahoma City on that fateful day.

The death penalty, which is favored by most people in our country, has never been more appropriate than in this particular situation.

GOP MEDICARE CUTS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, today, the Republicans are over 2 weeks late in producing a budget.

I believe the reason for the Republican delay is that they do not know how they are going to keep all of their promises. Part of their answer to balancing the budget is to cut Medicare by over \$300 billion. This means that seniors will have to pay on average an additional \$900 in out-of-pocket expenses.

Now, Speaker GINGRICH is claiming that any Medicare cuts will be used to keep Medicare solvent. Of course he forgets to mention that Democrats have already worked to keep Medicare from going bankrupt in the past. In addition, it was Democrats, last year, who put forth an effort to reform health care and save Medicare.

I believe in balancing the budget and have always voted in support of a balanced budget, but I feel that any Medicare reform needs to arise in the context of health care reform. It is rising health care costs that are contributing to the deficit, not senior citizens.

OPPOSING THE AGREEMENT WITH CASTRO

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

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, the secretly negotiated agreement between the Clinton administration and Fidel Castro, announced yesterday, to return Cuban refugees to Castro's state security is unprecedented as well as immoral.

As Speaker GINGRICH declared yesterday, for the first time in history, the U.S. Government has agreed to cooperate with a Communist dictatorship's security forces in order to carry out the forced return of refugees who managed to escape.

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The administration now says that Castro has given it assurances that those refugees turned over to state security will not be persecuted, and yet they did not even ask Castro to abrogate his own law that requires jailtime for those caught trying to leave without permission. An administration official told me yesterday not to worry, that Castro has prosecutorial discretion. This, Mr. Speaker, this incident, this agreement, is shameful. It is another attempt to appease a totalitarian dictator who will still not be satisfied by the McGovernites who now control American foreign policy.

SAVAGE PLANS FOR MEDICARE

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, the Gingrichites took a poll, and now they are scurrying here, there, and everywhere searching for a way to dress up their plan to slash Medicare.

The Gingrichites are understandably scared silly that the American public recognizes that what they have in mind is a raid of \$305 billion from the Medicare trust fund to fund last month's \$345 billion tax break for the privileged few.

This week the Gingrichites say, well, Medicare is in such bad financial shape that it needs surgery to survive. Well, I ask, "Why didn't they think about that last month when they were standing on this floor and they approved a contract tax bill that pulled out \$56 billion from the Medicare trust fund?"

That is right, \$56 billion from the same fund they now complain is going broke, and, having bled the trust fund, now they intend to start whacking off the benefits for America's seniors.

The Gingrichites do not plan to salvage Medicare; they plan to savage it, and I think the American people are smart enough to recognize savagery when they see it, to know the difference between savagery and salvation.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is our National Day of Prayer, and there will be events, big and small, commemorating this all over the Nation. Every faith, every religion, believes prayer is a good thing.

If we have any hope of overcoming evil things like we saw in Oklahoma City 2 weeks ago, we need to overcome evil with good—good things like prayer.

I hope all Americans will participate in our National Day of Prayer tomorrow, at least in a small way. I do not say this in any holier-than-thou manner, because I have as many faults as anyone.

But I do believe this Nation would be a better place if more people spent more time in prayer.

The Old Testament tells us:

If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land.

Almost all of us need some type of healing—physically, emotionally, spiritually. I hope everyone will support the National Day of Prayer tomorrow.

REPUBLICANS TURNING TO MEDICARE IN ORDER TO PAY FOR TAX CUTS

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, why have the Gingrich Republicans failed to meet the statutory deadline for passing a House budget resolution? The same Gingrich Republicans who were so proud of the fact that they met their hundred-day deadline for the Republican Contract With America, they read letters, fan mail, all sorts of comments from their districts about how proud they were, and yet when it comes down to the most basic thing, the spending bill for the Federal Government, the Gingrich Republicans have just dropped the ball.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the reason is pretty simple. The last item in the Republican contract was a Republican tax bill which adds \$600 billion to our national debt over the next 10 years. When they sit down and try to figure out this \$600 billion and how to make it up, they run out of solutions.

Well, where did they turn? They turned to one of the most important

programs in America, Medicare, a program not only important for seniors, but important for hospitals and doctors all across the United States.

The Republicans have found themselves in this box, they have painted themselves in this corner, because they insist on tax breaks for the wealthiest people and absolving corporations from paying their Federal taxes, and they want to make up the difference by cutting Medicare. That is not fair.

I hope the Republicans will get off this premise that they have to give these tax cuts to the privileged few and focus on the truly important programs like Social Security and Medicare.

UNITED STATES-JAPAN AUTOMOTIVE AND AUTO PARTS NEGOTIATIONS

(Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an extremely important issue facing the automotive and auto parts industry. The United States-Japan framework talks were initiated in July 1993, but no agreement has been reached in these critical areas which amount to 60 percent of the United States bilateral deficit with Japan. Now these 1993 talks are only part of an effort that is now 10 years long to deal with very substantial nontariff barriers that Japan throws up to American auto parts and American automobiles even though that is the biggest item of our bilateral deficit. In recent years, as a result of these talks and all of the efforts that have been made, yes, Japan has increased the purchase of American parts, but only for those factories that produce in America.

Mr. Speaker, if we are to maintain a strong industrial base in America, we must be able to export quality, cost-competitive United States auto parts and automobiles everywhere in the world, even to Japan, and I strongly support the need for a negotiated agreement with Japan and support our United States Trade Representative, Mickey Kantor, in his efforts.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN JOSEPH NOVABILSKI, AN AMERICAN HERO

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

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a fallen hero. On Monday, May 1, in Prince Georges County, MD, we buried Police Corporal John Joseph Novabilski, known as "Nova."

Corporal Novabilski was killed in uniform while sitting in his cruiser working as an off-duty security guard. Allegedly, following an earlier argument, his assailant walked up from behind and shot Novabilski 11 times.

Officer Novabilski first joined the Prince Georges police force in 1988. He took his job as an officer of the law seriously, and sought duty in high crime areas. He was also compassionate, using his own money to buy toys for poor youngsters in the neighborhood. His fellow officers knew him for his big, warm smile and good humored griping.

At the funeral, a friend, Kirk Mullings, described Corporal Novabilski as a good man who wanted nothing more than to fall in love with a good woman, have many good friends, and do the job he loved.

On behalf of the citizens of Prince Georges County and the State of Maryland, I want to say to his wife, Karen, and his family that we appreciate what John did to help our community and we'll long remember his efforts. May God rest his soul. John Joseph Novabilski, American hero.

UNITED STATES-JAPAN AUTO PARTS NEGOTIATIONS

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

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, the meetings that begin today in Canada between the world's four economic powers mark another critical juncture in this country's ongoing effort to level the playing field for Japanese-American automotive trade. Although progress has been made in this area since talks began 4 years ago, much remains to be done.

This is not a question of demanding one-sided concessions: an improved trade situation is in the interest of both countries. Motor vehicle and equipment manufacturing is the largest U.S. manufacturing industry, and a cornerstone of America's industrial base. The "Big Three" alone—Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors—employ almost 700,000 Americans, and are among the largest employers of research engineers and scientists in the country. Thus the health of the U.S. auto industry has far-reaching implications for the larger U.S. economy and its competitiveness. Japan stands to gain, as well, including Japanese consumers, who currently pay prices for auto parts that are on average 340 percent higher than for identical parts in the United States.

Resolution of this crucial imbalance can set an important precedent, not only for anyone seeking access to Japan's markets, but also for American access to and competitiveness in other critical markets overseas. I strongly urge Ambassador Kantor to continue his effective leadership on this issue. I am confident that with a healthy balance of trade, this important relationship can flourish rather than flounder.

REPUBLICAN MEDICARE CUTS

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

Mr. WARD. Mr. speaker, I must rise today to speak out against the proposed reductions in Medicare spending which I feel will devastate our Nation's elderly.

Under the guise of protecting and strengthening the Medicare trust fund, Republicans have proposed billions in reductions in future spending over the next 7 years. Republicans have pledged not to cut Social Security, interest on the debt, or defense in order to pay for their tax cuts, therefore, the only remaining source from which to cut is Medicare.

The Medicare trust fund should be addressed appropriately as a long-term problem and should take into careful consideration the needs of our Nation's seniors. This debate should take place apart from the budget debate and apart from efforts to salvage the cynical, public opinion poll-driven Contract for American campaign promises.

Mr. Speaker, I call once again for compassion for the elderly of our society, another vulnerable, defenseless group which must be protected.

THE USUAL CLASS-WARFARE RHETORIC ON MEDICARE

(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, there are some things going on here in Washington the American people really ought to know about. Members of President Clinton's Cabinet have raised some very serious questions about the long-term health of Medicare. A report by the Medicare trustees concludes that Medicare will begin losing money next year and could become insolvent by the year 2001, and, by the way, this Medicare board includes Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, Labor Secretary Robert Reich, and Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin.

Now, last Friday, the Speaker of the House wrote the President expressing his concerns over this matter and communicated a willingness to work together on a solution, but the news about Medicare has apparently fallen on deaf ears at the White House and on this side of the House because the Speaker's letter is being dismissed with the usual class-warfare rhetoric. In fact, Leon Panetta suggested the White House will do nothing to help fix Medicare.

This is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker. Medicare is going broke and all the White House can offer up is class-warfare rhetoric. This shows a total avoidance of responsibility and a lack of respect to older Americans who expect leadership from Washington, and not excuses, not class-warfare.