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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. SHAW].

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 25, 1995.

I hereby designate the Honorable CLAY SHAW to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of May 12, 1995, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties with each party limited to 25 minutes and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall the debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York [Ms. SLAUGHTER] for 5 minutes.

HARDSHIPS FOR MEDICARE RECIPIENTS

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, this week we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the enactment of Medicare, the only program that provides universal health coverage to virtually every elder American. Unfortunately, today Medicare is in big trouble. Much of the trouble stems from the majority plan to cut coverage and raise fees, not to shore up Medicare, but simply to pro-

vide tax cuts for large corporations and wealthy individuals.

The \$270 billion in Medicare cuts proposed by the majority means that the average Medicare beneficiary will be liable for an additional \$3,400 in out-of-pocket health care expenses. Total out-of-pocket costs would add up to about \$29,000 over the 7 years of the budget plan.

I do not know how many seniors back in my hometown of Rochester can afford that level of cost increase. I do know that it will be a hardship for those on a fixed income. This morning I want to bring particular attention to the hardship that the cuts will bring to older women who make up the majority of Medicare recipients. They are the ones who can least afford to bear the brunt of Medicare cost hikes to subsidize tax cuts for the rich.

Elderly poverty is already more prevalent among older women. Only 13 percent of women age 65 or older actually receive a private pension, and even with Social Security, one-quarter of all older women are living near or below the poverty level.

The typical older woman, age 75 or older, has an annual income of \$9,170. Where will she find an additional \$3,400 over the next 7 years to cover higher Medicare premiums, deductibles, and new copayments?

At any age over 65, women have greater functional limitations due to diseases like arthritis and osteoporosis. That means they have an even greater need for affordable Medicare services like home health care.

Older American women, the majority of all Medicare recipients, have worked hard all their lives, whether in the home taking care of children, aging parents, or ailing spouses, or at jobs that paid them less than men at the same level to help support their families. They do not deserve to be abandoned by Congress in their time of need and they do not deserve to have to do

more with less and less simply to subsidize tax cuts.

PROTECT, PRESERVE, AND STRENGTHEN MEDICARE

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

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, July 30 marks the 30-year anniversary of Medicare, and while this vital program is only 30 years old, it is facing a financial crisis that threatens its longevity and the health security of 37 million seniors.

Just a few months ago, Medicare's Board of Trustees, four of whom are members of the Clinton administration, reported that Medicare part A, the hospital insurance trust fund, will be bankrupt in 7 years and unable to pay the hospital bills of our Nation's seniors.

The Republican majority in Congress obviously will not allow this to happen. We understand the importance of Medicare to retirees and stand ready to save this important program from going broke. We have been working very diligently to develop a proposal to preserve, protect, and strengthen Medicare for current and future retirees, and have already laid out six principles that will guide our efforts to reform Medicare.

Instead of acknowledging the spending crisis in Medicare as indicated in the trustees' report, and joining our efforts to save this important program, the President and his political allies have attempted to distort our principles to reform Medicare by scaring seniors with imaginary Medicare cuts. Why? Because they have no plan of their own to solve the Medicare crisis.

House Republicans are not proposing to cut Medicare. Under our plan, Medicare spending will increase each year.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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