

forces in the Air Force Reserve. General Lee is moving on to new challenges and opportunities and I wish him, along with his new wife, all the luck in the world, and success in all his future endeavors.

WAS CONGRESS IRRESPONSIBLE?
CONSIDER THE ARITHMETIC

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, before discussing today's bad news about the Federal debt, how about "another go," as the British put it, with our pop quiz. Remember? One question, one answer.

The question: How many millions of dollars does it take to make a trillion dollars? While you are thinking about it, bear in mind that it was the U.S. Congress that ran up the Federal debt that now exceeds \$4.9 trillion.

To be exact, as of the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, July 26, the total Federal debt—down to the penny—stood at \$4,941,608,987,271.97, of which, on a per capita basis, every man, woman, and child in America owes \$18,758.43.

Mr. President, back to our pop quiz, how many million in a trillion: There are a million million in a trillion.

RECESS

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I believe there is no Senator seeking recognition. On behalf of the majority leader, I ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in recess until the hour of 3 p.m. today.

There being no objection, at 2:09 p.m., the Senate recessed until 3 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. GORTON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Presiding Officer in his capacity as a Senator from the State of Washington notes the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMPSON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask that I be allowed to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE 30TH BIRTHDAY OF MEDICARE

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I wish I could rise only to spend these few moments celebrating a very important birthday of Medicare. It is the way 37 million Americans get their basic health protection. Medicare is turning 30 years old this Sunday. For three decades, Americans have been able to rely on health care benefits in their later years thanks to something called Medicare.

Medicare was not born overnight. It had a long gestation period, ever since President Roosevelt shared his vision in the 1930's of a nation which guaranteed both financial security to its citizens and also health care security.

As we all know, changing anything to do with health care does not happen overnight. It certainly did not happen over the last 2 years of nights or days. And it is hard to do. From the 1930's to 1965, which is a long period in this Nation's history, when President Johnson in fact signed the Medicare bill into law, special interests, parts of the medical community—sadly, large parts of the medical community—and plenty of politicians did everything they could to keep the dream of Medicare from becoming a reality.

Today, however, we have to do more than celebrate Medicare's birthday. The question is whether Medicare will be there for seniors and their families for the next 30 years.

Now, I do not mean to say that Medicare is going to cease to exist. Obviously, it is going to be there in some form. But when I look at a budget resolution that takes \$270 billion over 7 years from Medicare and just happens by coincidence to give away \$245 billion in tax cuts over that same period, unspecified tax cuts, the alarm bells tend to go off. Medicare was not enacted to be a piggy bank for tax cuts. Medicare is in fact a sacred part of America's vision and America's promise. I think of Geno Maynard, Sue Lemaster, and John and Betty Shumate.

My colleagues obviously do not know who these fine West Virginians are but every Senator represents thousands of people like them. Geno Maynard is 78 years old and lives in Kenova, WV. Sue Lemaster is 83 years old and lives in Follansbee. She is on oxygen all the time. John and Betty Shumate live in Beckley. That is in the coal fields of West Virginia. They are four of about one-third of West Virginians who depend on Medicare for their health.

They all recently told me when I visited them in their homes that they are very worried. I did not tell them to be worried. They are worried. They are scared. The annual income of the average Medicare recipient in West Virginia is less than \$11,000—\$10,700, to be precise. That is not much money. That is their income from everything they get—Social Security, black lung, whatever it might be, any investments left over, and probably not much of that—\$10,700. So they are very worried because cutting Medicare by \$270 billion sounds suspiciously to them like they are going to have to pay more for less, and I think they may be right.

This is a very big worry for these four West Virginians as they quite flatly told me because they do not have any more money to spend on health care.

Yes, they could sell their house. West Virginia has high ownership of houses. They could sell their house. I think that is sort of an unreasonable thing to

require to get health care in this country when people have worked over the course of their lives.

And then, of course, on average, seniors already spend 21 percent of their incomes on health care expenses. That is three times more than the rest of us. They spend money on benefits that are not covered by Medicare, the largest of which, of course, is prescription drugs. And that does not include eyeglasses and hearing aids and Medigap policies to cover Medicare's cost-share requirements, which can be very hefty.

Mr. President, I would love to have, quite frankly, as a member of the Senate Finance Committee and someone who ranks on the Medicare Subcommittee, I would love to have more details on exactly what the Republican budget will mean for these poor West Virginians. I do not think that is unreasonable. We are talking about a lot of money—\$270 billion. I can tell my people that a budget has passed that will cut \$270 billion from Medicare, but what does that tell them? That simply gets them, naturally, scared. But where? In what form?

I can tell them that the Republican budget will cut another \$182 billion from Medicaid, which hard-working families rely on as the last resort to get into a nursing home. People think of Medicaid often as just representing poor people. You know, not everybody gets to be born a Rockefeller so there are a lot of poor people. A lot of them cannot help it. Some of them could, but most of them cannot. And when they have to go into a nursing home and they do not have any family around, guess who pays 7 percent of the cost of that in West Virginia? Medicaid.

So these cuts are potentially devastating. And as seniors think about them in the raw number, the aggregate number, their imaginations run wild. They sort of think of the worst-case scenario. I do not know whether there is a worst-case scenario or not, but I ought to know. I ought to know as a U.S. Senator on the Finance Committee. I ought to know that. I care about health care.

I can tell them that the experts agree that a total of \$450 billion in health care cuts will have to mean less benefits at a higher cost and lower payments to providers and, incidentally, cost-shifting right onto business.

And I can show them that the same budget just happens to put \$245 billion into tax cuts. And if you did not have, let us say, all those tax cuts to whom ever they are going to go, that would leave really a very small cut for Medicare or maybe a cut for Medicare and a cut for Medicaid, but it would be much, much smaller. And, incidentally, the Republican budget has increased funding for defense.

But until we get more details on where and how these savings are going to be run out of Medicare, this Senator is sort of helpless as to how to give the people I represent any help, any sense