In 1965, Medicare was established to demonstrate that this Nation cares about its senior citizens, that it cares whether or not they receive medical treatment, and, ultimately, that it cares whether they live or die. In 1965, only 46 percent of America's senior citizens had health coverage. Today, 99 percent of American seniors are covered for medical expenses.

Today we are at a crossroads. We must decide if we will break our sacred oath to millions of Medicare recipients by forcing them to pay more for less care, wait longer for personal care, and have less control over who provides that care.

There is a fundamental question that we must ask ourselves when the Republican leadership asks you to cut $270 billion from Medicare to pay for a tax break for the wealthy: Will we vote to take the CARE out of Medicare? Will we vote to take the care out of Medicare?

That, Mr. Speaker, is the question we must all ask ourselves.

This Congressman says ''No.''

MAJORITY OF AMERICANS SAY REPUBLICAN MAJORITY IN CONGRESS IS GOOD FOR AMERICA

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

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, during the August recess I heard the same message over and over again, and that is we need to move forward, we need to be bold, we need to dare to make differences that the Democrats have refused to make for the past 40 years. I bought a book, ''A Tribute to Robert Kennedy,'' and I read one of the most moving speeches, his 1966 speech in Johannesburg. Bobby Kennedy said:

> The future does not belong to those who are content with today, apathetic toward common problems and their fellow man alike, timid and fearful in the face of new ideas and bold projects. Rather it will belong to those who can blend vision, reason and courage in a personal commitment to the ideals and great enterprises of American Society.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot be content with a status quo. We have got to save Medicare, we have got to balance the budget, and we have got to reform welfare. That is what the Republican Party has talked about doing for the past 8 months. The American people in every poll that is cited agree with us. We have to move forward. Fifty-three percent of Americans believe that the Republican majority in Congress is good for America. Only 33 percent oppose. Sixty-five percent believe that we need to reform Medicare in a very important manner. Mr. Speaker, that is what we are here to do.

I ask the Democrats in this body to heed the words of Bobby Kennedy, to dare to make a difference, dare to reform this Government, and dare to push America into the 21st century stronger than what it was when it left the 20th century.

WE CANNOT LET THE SENIORS OF THIS COUNTRY DOWN

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

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, I accept that challenge that we have just heard from the other side of the aisle, but I will tell my colleagues what I have run into in my series of meetings in my district in Louisville, KY, over the last 2 weeks.

Mr. Speaker, in 10 separate meetings from one part of the community to the other I heard the same thing. What I heard was a reflection of fear, a reflection of the concern on the part of the seniors who, yes, say we do need to make some small changes to keep our system afloat. ''But what changes are being proposed,'' I have been asked. ''What changes will we see from Speaker GINGRICH and the Republican plan?''

Mr. Speaker, we do not know yet. That is the disappointment of this August break. We need to make sure we preserve the benefits, as they are expected by the seniors of this country, and not let them down when it comes to their health care.

HOLD THE LINE ON FEDERAL SPENDING BEFORE IT GOES THROUGH THE CEILING

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, according to the Department of Treasury, the new debt ceiling that Congress approved in 1993 will be reached sometime in October. The debt ceiling was $4.9 trillion. We are currently borrowing, and we are currently borrowing $4.6 trillion. So, we are going to reach that debt limit. This means that the Government's ability to borrow additional money will be exhausted by November, and the House and Senate will be asked to increase the debt ceiling for the 78th time since 1940.

Since I and other fiscal conservatives of both parties firmly believe that we should put our fiscal house in order by making sure we are irrevocably committed to balancing the budget before increasing the debt ceiling, we are facing a potential cash-flow problem. That is because in next year's budget we are calling for a borrowing of about 10 percent, and revenues coming into the Federal Government only account for about 90 percent of that required spending. So that is going to mean a cash-flow program, it is going to mean prioritizing spending.

As an enthusiastic supporter of the effort to use the debt ceiling to achieve a balanced budget, I have joined with 160 members of the Debt-Limit Coalition to pass legislation that will eliminate the deficit within 7 years.

Later this month, Congress will present the President with a historic package of spending and tax cuts that will achieve that goal. If he vetoes this bill and does not present a credible alternative, we will be compelled to use the pending debt-ceiling vote to force the issue of the Federal Government's out-of-control spending.

Mr. Speaker, I insert for the RECORD the next 3½ paragraphs, and I conclude by saying now is the time to hold the line on Federal spending before it goes through the ceiling.

Some critics of the Republican budget-cutters, many of whom are those who helped get us into the Federal debt morass, say that cutting spending on social programs is mean-spirited and cruel, and that this is only designed to put pressure on the President and force him to take the blame for shutting down the Government.

But there is ample precedent for Congress using the debt limit as leverage to resolve budget battles, including 1985 during the debate of the Gramm-Rudman balanced budget act and in 1990, when the Democratic Congress used the looming debt ceiling to force President Bush to raise taxes.

So this isn't a partisan issue. It's an American issue. As a dairy farmer and former Michigan legislator, I have persistently advocated tax cuts and spending restraint. Now is not the time to back off. Now is the time to hold the line on Federal spending, before it goes through the ceiling. Thank you very much.

REMINDING OUR YOUNG GENERATION THAT FREEDOM DOES NOT COME EASY

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

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, 14 Members of the House of Representatives went to Pearl Harbor this last week to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the V–J victory. We were led by the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP], chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

As my colleagues know, it is good that we have these celebrations to remind our young generation that really freedom does not come easy at all. Many Americans sacrificed their lives for this country, and, Mr. Speaker, over 50 percent of the Americans living today and most of the people in this Chamber today were born after World War II. So we have to let them know of the problems we had back 50 years ago. Over 400,000 young Americans, 18 and 19 years old, did not come home. We cannot forget them.

LET US DO WHAT WE ARE PAID TO DO

(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, I spent the August recess crisscrossing the State of Illinois from Chicago to Carbondale meeting with a variety of

different people, asking them what was on their mind and what they were concerned about. The one thing that came through loud and clear at every meeting with every group was the fact that they are beginning to feel that working families in this country, the middle class of America, the backbone of this country, are falling behind. Husbands and wives are both working hard, playing by the rules, beating their heads against the wall, pushing their credit cards to the limit, worrying about paying for the kids' education, worrying about their own health care, worrying about whether that pension is going to be around.

Mr. Speaker, I thought to myself as I worked across the State that, when I come back to Washington, each day as we sit up here and debate the important issues I am going to try to hold those issues against that basic concern that I heard across Illinois. What is it we are doing on this floor of the House of Representatives that will respond to that?

Frankly, I do not think cutting Medicare benefits responds to those concerns, putting an additional burden on senior citizens and their families. I do not think the idea of tax breaks for people making over $150,000 a year makes any sense at all with our budget deficit, and that does not help the working families. Cutting back on education? Heck, most of those families are praying that their kids will qualify for a Federal college student loan. It is their only ticket to get that higher education and have an opportunity, and yet on this floor we are talking about cutting those opportunities.

So I hope in the weeks ahead we really can address this in a bipartisan fashion. I hope we can all be sensitive to the concerns of what has really been the strength of America now for 50 years, the strongest, most vibrant and growing middle class in the world. I hope we all are not taking pride in the politics of Washington. I hear people almost boasting about a train wreck that may occur. ''We may close down Government,'' they are saying with some level of pride. We should not be proud of that fact. Democrats and Republicans ought to sit down together and work out the problems. That is what we were sent here to do, and that is what we are paid to do.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

[Mr. HORN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

RESTORING PUBLIC TRUST THROUGH LOBBY REFORM

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

Mr. BRYANT of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today the House will be given the opportunity to move forward on the most dramatic reform of this institution in the way it does business that will be considered this year. Unfortunately it has not been allowed to be considered prior to now in a serious way, and by that I am talking about an effort to reform the rules under which this House operates with regard to lobbying and lobbyists. Today on the legislative appropriations bill conference report that comes back a motion will be made to not approve; that is, to vote against the previous question. We hope that that motion to oppose the previous question will be successful; that is, that it will be defeated, the previous question will be defeated, and, as a result, we will then bring up a rule which will allow consideration of a proposal to prohibit the receipt of gifts by Members of the House of Representatives from lobbyists and also a provision to regulate the way in which lobbyists go about their business in this institution.

About 5 weeks ago the United States Senate took up this matter and passed it. It did so with dispatch, and now in the United States Senate it is against the law for a Member of the Senate to accept a gift in excess of $50 or a gift in excess of $100 from any individual source in any one year. It is a proposal that does not go as far as many of us hoped, but it goes a long way. It is a dramatic change and takes us in the direction of many of the State legislatures who have already grappled with this matter and already imposed rigorous requirements on their own members, leaving now the House of Representatives of the United States as the only remaining bastion of freebies for its Members from the lobby.

My view is that the vast majority, the vast preponderence of the Members of this institution, do not accept and are not affected by this kind of activity in any respect whatsoever. But it is incumbent upon us to instill in the public a strong sense of confidence in this institution, and the reports over the last few years have Members flying across the country, and taking free golf vacations, free ski trips, free junkets of various types from groups that are interested in lobbying this House to enact legislation in their favor are disturbing to the public, and rightfully so.

Today, if the previous question on the rule is defeated, we will take up the House Concurrent Resolution 99 as an amendment to the legislative appropriations bill, which would, as the Senate did, say that no Member of the House will be able to accept a gift with a value of greater than $50 in terms of meals and entertainment or any type of gratuity and no more than $100 annually, $100 annually from any single source. Gifts of less than $10 will not count toward that $100 limit, but anything over $10 will count toward that.

The effect of that will be to put an end to the grossest abuse of, in my view, the public trust and put an end of the activities which have gone on here for 200 years, and gradually, and I think to this date, to some extent fatally injured the public's view of this institution. There are many exceptions to this. It is written in a way as to be reasonable so that Members of Congress can go about the representational activities as normal human beings. They will be able, of course, to take a meal at a public gathering, to take a meal when they are making a speech to a group and so forth, and minor acceptance of small things that are really part of a social gathering will not be affected in any way whatsoever.

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It will state that these abuses of the public trust, these abuses of this institution's prerogatives, have gone on in a much heralded fashion, particularly in these new magazine shows on television which will no longer be permitted.

Well, as I said, this is not all that we had sought. You know, this House passed legislation much stronger than this in the last Congress, twice. First the bill passed, and then the conference report passed. Unfortunately, it was filibustered to death in the Senate at the very last minute and killed before it could take action.

Today we are on the verge of making history again, and there really can be no objection to what we are trying to do. All we are trying to say is the kind of activity that the public disagrees with, and rightfully so, is not going to be allowed anymore of this institution.

Mr. Speaker, in the 1-minute speeches here today we heard a lot of talk about what Members found when they went home. I guarantee you the one thing that would have been unanimous in every town meeting in the country is that Members of the House of Representatives should be allowed to take free meals, free tickets, free trips, free vacation, and free golf from the very people that are hired to come here and influence the outcome of legislation in this place.

Today we have an opportunity to do the public's will. We have an opportunity to vote against the previous question on the rule and the conference report on the legislation appropriations bill to allow a rule to come up that allows us to take this matter up. It is simple. Protestations that we have heard in the past from some leaders in this institution that somehow or another we do not have time to deal with this matter; to the contrary, we have plenty of time to deal with the matter. We do not even need to take a lot of time. Vote no to the previous question today. Let this come up. Cast a vote for the American people and for the integrity of this institution.