Your answer, though, was that doctors today are turning away Medicare patients, which is true, and that doctors under your plan could choose to participate in what you call Medicare Plus. But Medicare Plus is not the Medicare system that people have relied on for the last 30 years, and which you say you would continue to give them the right to participate in. I do not think the Republican Party, tonight or in their so-called information packet or at any other time, has provided any genuine assurance to the American people that they are not going to be forced out of a Medicare system, and whether they are going to have providers who will provide them Medicare in the traditional way.

I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. HEFNER. I would just like to make a point. I know the gentleman's intentions are good. You can give us these numbers, but you do not know where the money is coming from. You do not even have the total numbers on all where this money is coming from or how you are going to pay for it, as late as today. You can give these assurances, but delivering them is another thing.

Where is the money going to come from? All these assurances that you have given to us here tonight, if you can give us these assurances and put our mind at ease, why do we not have an extensive debate, something at least as long as the Waco hearings or the Oklahoma hearings or what have you, and let the American people, the senior citizens, sit before the television and assure them? We will see who they believe and see whose record speaks for itself over the years. Let our backgrounds, let the history speak for itself. But the assurances that you give us, you cannot guarantee that. And your party cannot guarantee that.

Mr. GREENWOOD. If the gentleman will yield to me, I can.

Mr. DOGGETT. I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

Ms. DELAURO. I have a lot of respect for my colleague. We have worked together on a number of issues. I would like to believe and I think the American public would like to believe what you say.

Again, just yesterday in the Washington Times, it says that—

The Congressional Budget Office will not be able to certify the necessary savings and the GOP plan will have a gaping budgetary hole. Senior GOP aides said an even larger problem is that a preliminary CBO analysis has revealed Republicans will glean little more than $30 billion from one of their most highly touted reforms, allowing seniors to enroll in health maintenance organizations instead of staying in Medicare's traditional fee-for-service program. Republican aides also said they foresee little savings from the malpractice reforms. The CBO also questions savings from reforms aimed at curbing waste, fraud and abuse. That leaves Republicans in a difficult position. They had been counting on saving as much as $80 billion from such reforms. A shortfall of that magnitude would reduce payments to doctors and hospitals each year by about $18 billion.

The look-back provision is buying a pig in a poke. You do not know if you take a look and your savings are not realized, you are going to go back after people again. We had this debate and discussion last night.

Mr. GREENWOOD. I would love for you to yield because I could give you wonderful answers to your questions if you are really interested in the truth.

Ms. DELAURO. Let me just say to you that when you cut back in the same way that you did in the Medicare Program, and we know that there are lower fees on reimbursements to doctors and hospitals, that you are doing the same thing in the Medicare system where it is not going to be just cuts to the providers.

We all agree that there can be cuts to the providers. I could not stand here and say that we could not do that. On the other hand, what you will see, you will see a cut in services. You will see a cut in the quality of care that is being delivered to our seniors.

Let me make one other point. There are some members of the other party that are trying to move away from their leadership. They are being quoted all over this country.

In Fresno, CA, one of my colleagues was heard saying, and this is a quote, one of my Republican colleagues: ''We are concerned about saving Medicare at least for the next 15 years.'' Beyond that, he says he cannot commit to continued support from the Congress. Make no mistake about it. The plan is to end Medicare as we know it.

One of our colleagues in Maryland, when he went out in terms of his road show this weekend, one of his constituents asked, ''Why are you offering tax cuts, while you're increasing the cost of Medicare?'' The Congressman's response was, ''Wouldn't you rather sing My Wild Irish Rose?'' I am not making this up. This is his quote. When you cannot defend your position, you change the subject.

There are a lot of questions that are unanswered. I would ask the Republican leadership the following questions: If you are willing to have hearings, will you support the Dingell resolution that calls for 4 weeks of hearings in this body? If you are so interested in saving Medicare, are you willing to take the tax package off the table? Those are the questions that have to be answered.

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Mr. DOGGETT. I appreciate your questions, and I have only about a minute left, but I would yield for observation briefly to my colleague from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. First of all, I am gratified that we attempted to have a bipartisan discussion, and I think it is important that we evidenced by this discussion that we need 4 weeks.

Lastly, the sickest of our seniors will be left without any coverage or at least without a sense of being able to have the best coverage. The system is not bankrupt. There is a life of 7 years, and there has always been a life on the Medicare system. That is the reality that we should teach the American public to get to national health reform.

I thank the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues for participating tonight, and particularly my Republican colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. GREENWOOD. Under the procedures of this House, he and his party now have a full hour in which to present their plan, and I hope they lay it out line by line so that the American people can see what is in this plan.

They have yet to lay it out, perhaps, to some of their own Members who do not understand the details, and as the morning's papers seem to indicate, do not know, themselves, how they are going to fill the great void that is there in their plan, and how it is they are going to provide a $270 billion cut in Medicare, without demanding that America's seniors pay more and get less.

We need a full and thorough debate; not just in their forum tonight, but with a series of hearings and a full open rule when this matter comes before the House. I hope the presence of my Republican colleague here tonight is an indication that the Republican leadership is going to change its ways, just as he says they have changed their ways on some of the increases that they were originally contemplating in taking out of the pockets of our senior citizens, that they will change their ways and that they will not fade the heat any further from the American people, but will instead give us a full, fair and open debate in committee and on the floor of this Congress.

If we do that, if we have the kind of bipartisan exchange, then the American people will know what is about to happen to them. They can understand the full consequences of having to take from seniors in order to afford a tax break to the most privileged few in our society.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we will see that happen and hope that our Republican colleagues in the hour that they now have, will indicate to the American people that we will have that kind of full, fair and open debate, unrestricted in terms of time, unrestricted in terms of amendments, so we can really get about the job of improving and strengthening the Medicare system instead of taking away from it.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1883

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be withdrawn as a cosponsor of H.R. 1883.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.