

12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. I am very concerned, Mr. Speaker, that the Speaker, the gentleman from Georgia, NEWT GINGRICH, and the Republican leadership are basically moving forward with this Medicare plan that they have proposed much too fast and without any real opportunity for public scrutiny. I am a member of the Committee on Commerce, and not yesterday but the Monday previous, on October 2, we received a copy for the first time of the 421-page House Medicare restructuring legislation proposed by the Republican leadership. Later that same day, on Monday, October 2, our Committee on Commerce was expected to mark up the bill, without any opportunity for a hearing, without any opportunity, really, to even have looked at the legislation.

At the time, I proposed an amendment to postpone voting until hearings were held to review the impact of the legislation on senior citizens and the health care industry. All but one Republican voted against the measure, voted against the effort to postpone until we had hearings, and, of course, the amendment failed. Because of that, many members, the Democratic members of the Committee on Commerce, including myself, felt we really were just witnessing a railroad job, and there was no point in staying at the markup anymore.

Instead, on the next day, Tuesday, October 3, a week ago, the Democratic members of the Committee on Commerce called our own hearing to begin discussing the ramifications of this bill. I learned a number of things in the course of those hearings on the Republican Medicare proposal. First, I learned that of the \$270 billion proposed for reductions in Medicare, nearly half would not even go to shoring up the Medicare Hospital Trust Fund, known as Medicare part A, which the Republicans, and I believe falsely, are suggesting faces insolvency.

Instead, the seniors would be asked to pay more for physicians' and outpatient services under what is known as Medicare part B, and premiums would double from \$46.10 per month over the next 7 years to over \$90 a month. I make this distinction between part A and part B again because the Republicans keep talking about the insolvency, which is not really true, of part A, which is the hospital trust fund. Medicare part B, though, the fund which pays for physicians' care, and where the seniors are being asked now to pay twice as much for their premiums, that Medicare part B comes out of the same fund as would \$245 billion in tax cuts proposed by the Republican leadership.

I would maintain that since any changes to Medicare part B do not really impact part A, they are separate funds, it is highly likely that the part B cuts would be used for tax cuts, and

most of those, of course, much of that to the wealthiest of Americans. Do not let the Republican leadership fool you. Most of the money that they are talking about cutting is, in effect, going to be used for a tax cut. The amount of the cut in Medicare is almost equivalent to the \$245 billion tax cut they are proposing.

The other thing that I learned about this Medicare plan is that it essentially seeks to lure seniors into HMO's and other managed care programs with no choice of doctors. This is the main way that the Republican leadership proposes to save a lot of money, if seniors do not move into managed care plans. There are budgetary gimmicks in this legislation that would kick in and take even more money out of the Medicare system.

Previous to having received this Medicare legislation, I had talked on the House floor about the Republican proposals for a voucher system, where they would simply give a senior a voucher or a coupon for a certain amount of money and say, that is all we can afford. That is all we are going to give you for your Medicare. Of course, the Republican leadership said that is not what they had proposed as part of their Medicare program, but if you look at the details of the Medicare program, you can see that is exactly what it is. It is a voucher system, because essentially what they are doing is giving the HMO and the managed care system a certain set amount of money, and if a senior wants a better system, or if the HMO or managed care system wants to charge seniors more for a better quality health care system, then the senior has to pay for it. That is another thing that are not brought out, but if you look at the legislation, it is exactly true.

Then, beyond that, if over the next 7 years or over the next 5 years we find out that not enough money is saved because not enough seniors are going into the voucher system or into the HMO or the managed care system, then all the cutbacks, the so-called failsafe, where if they do not save enough money they are going to cut back more on the reimbursement to doctors, hospitals, and health care providers, all those cuts come in the fee-for-service system, the current system where seniors choose their own doctor or their own hospital.

What is effect you are going here with this Medicare legislation is saying, you either go into a voucher system, or if you do not, we are going to force you into one, because the cuts are going to come on the fee-for-service side. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about this more. Maybe there will be more of an opportunity later this afternoon.

#### THE SEATTLE MARINERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Washing-

ton [Mr. METCALF] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, I just have to say it, how about those Seattle Mariners? The whole Nation saw the playoff as they swept the Yankees in Seattle to win the divisional series.

To recap, in the bottom of the 11th inning, Joey Cora bunted to get to first base, then Ken Griffey, Jr. followed with a great single which moved Cora all the way to third, as we watched. Then as the American League's batting champion, Edgar Martinez, hit a ball to deep left field, we knew Cora was home. But did you see Ken Griffey, Jr. really hustle all the way from first base to score the winning run? What a finish.

I would like to place a friendly challenge to my colleague, the gentleman from Cleveland, OH. If the Mariners lose the American League series, I will send a box of Washington apples and a salmon to him. I look forward to what my colleague would risk on this wager.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Mariners and Lou Piniella for their outstanding season, and it is not over yet. The Mariners just refuse to lose.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12, rule I, the House will stand in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 59 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT) at 2 p.m.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

May the beauty of the day not be lost in our sight, may the majesty of Your many graces be known in our hearts, may the splendor of Your love ever live in our souls, and may Your hand of forgiveness lift us up and point us in the way. O gracious God, from whom comes every good gift and all abundant blessing so fill our minds and hearts and souls that the presence of Your spirit is real to us beginning this day and for eternity. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.