premiums for the most wealthy. The most wealthy are going to have to pay more for Medicare part B. If someone is single and making $100,000, they will have to pay more for Medicare part B. If someone is married and makes over $150,000, they will have to pay more for Medicare part B. We are telling the most affluent that they have a rule to play in this.

Mr. Chairman, their bill lets the wealthy get all the benefits the poor get. Give me a break.

When I look at this bill, I know we have three major goals. We are going to get our financial house in order. We are going to do that and balance our budget. We are going to save our trust funds. We are going to protect them, and we are going to preserve them, and we are going to strengthen them, and we are also going to change this social, and corporate, and farming welfare state into an opportunity society. but we are going to save our Medicare trust fund, and how are we going to save it? In part because of a strong criminal fraud that we have in our bill.

When my colleagues voted against the rule, they voted against making crime in health care a Federal offense because in our rule we make health care fraud a Federal offense. We make it a Federal offense not just in Government programs, but in private programs as well. Theft and embezzlement, a federal offense. False statements, a federal offense. Bribe and graft, a Federal offense. Illegal enumerations, Federal offense. Obstruction of justice, a Federal offense. My colleagues voted against it when they voted against the rule. In our bill, contrary to what the previous speaker said, we have injunctive relief, we have subpoena power, we have grand jury disclosure. It is in our bill. Read it. My colleagues and continually distorting the facts, and, when the American people know what we have done, they are going to like it, and when I speak to the American people and my constituents, they say why would I object to a plan that does not increase copayments, does not increase deductible, does not increase my premium, allows me to have private care? My colleagues are into the old system. They are not giving their constituents choice. We are going what the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT] did in 1980. He said we should allow people in Medicare to get into a private-sector plan. The problem is he is 20 years later not in step.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 15 seconds to point out that my good friend's district would be cut $251 million between now and the year 2002 to give to the wealthy a large and unrequested tax cut.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON].

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair will take this opportunity to remind the gentlewoman that wearing of badges is against the House rules.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Chairman, I will observe that.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, are the wearing of buttons, or sloganeering, or communicative badges against the rules of the House?

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair has stated that on several occasions today.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, if someone is wearing that when addressing the House, they are violating the rules of the House?

The CHAIRMAN. The are indeed.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, if they have been informed of that, they are, therefore, willfully violating the rules of the House?

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair just reminds all Members that the rules are here to maintain a level of comity in the House and it would be proper for all Members to observe the rules.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Chairman, let me make a statement.

Did I not say I would be glad to observe that? Did the Chair not hear me? Did anyone else hear me? I said I will be glad to observe that rule, so it is not willful.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Chairman, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Chairman, would wearing a paper bag over one's head violate the same rule of the House?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman knows the answer to that. Let us move on.

Mr. WILLIAMS. No, the gentleman would not ask the question if he knew the answer.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair's guess is that the gentleman does know.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Chairman, I am not asking for a guess. I am asking for a parliamentary ruling. Would wearing a paper bag over one's head, as has been done by some of our Republican colleagues in previous Congresses, violate the same rule of the House?

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair would respond by saying that the Chair was not here at the time, but the Chair's understanding was that that was ruled a breach of decorum at the time, and the Chair promises the gentleman that, if he sees anyone with a bag over their head today, he will ask them to remove it.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON].

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Chairman, I have really risen to speak in behalf of the amendment, and I do want to say that the Democrats have provided, I think, a reasonable alternative, a reasonable plan, that addresses saving health care. It also reads for senior citizens. Medicare needs to be reformed. Why? Because the trustees said it needed to be reformed to make sure there was financial stability.

But also, since my colleague raised the concern of the badge I was wearing, let me tell him why I had worn that badge inadvertently into the House and really in error. It was not meant to affront the House. But I do want to say it so my colleague understands: ''Shame on you. No to the Republican plan.''

Mr. Chairman, I may not be able to wear that, but I can say it over and over again:

> Shame on you, balancing the budget on the most vulnerable people in society. No to any plan that is so atrocious it does not indicate what it would do to poor people, senior citizens, rural communities, and inner cities, and no rule removes that moral obligation for the shame on your conscience.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally in order that the House may receive a message.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS) assumed the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will receive a message.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Edwin Thomas, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore The committee will resume its sitting.

MEDICARE PRESERVATION ACT OF 1995

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. STEARNS], a member of the committee.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Chairman, to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GIBBONS], my good friend, to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. DINGELL], to the minority leader, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT], let me first of all say, Your argument about tax cuts for the rich is clearly false, but let's really look at this argument in two ways.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, all the tax cuts were paid for before we even started talking about Medicare. Confirmed by CBO, these tax cuts were paid for as follows: welfare reform is $90 billion in savings; FCC spectrum auction is $15 billion; Uranium Enrichment Corporation is $2 million; and appropriation reductions are $38 billion in savings. My friends in the House and to all Americans, you should realize that they were paid for—$245 billion—was saved even before we even started talking about saving Medicare.

So the point is that there is nothing about this tax cut that is coming from Medicare savings or going for the rich.