

the time the debate began. And all this hoopla about how we had everybody involved and there were task forces and so forth. The truth of the matter is this bill was written by one person, Speaker GINGRICH, sitting in his office with one special interest lobbyist after another coming in. These task forces that existed, they were just an excuse for democracy. Instead of having the normal committee process operate, little task forces would meet and go in and out of the Speaker's office, in secret, where the American people had no opportunity to observe what was happening.

Can you imagine raiding the Medicare trust fund to the extent of \$270 billion and not allowing one senior citizen in this country to testify on the specifics of the bill that provided for that raid?

Yet, my colleagues, that is precisely what happened with this new spirit of democracy and all the task forces and all the inclusion. The bill was written in the Speaker's office. The committee process was basically eliminated. I understand they are even considering the possibility of eliminating committees and perhaps just substituting a committee of one to write all of the legislation in this House.

You know, I have discussed this morning a bit tongue in cheek the fact that there was a painting that kind of summarized what was happening to seniors today, a painting by a famous American artist of the last century called plucked clean. It seemed to me that it symbolized what was happening here as our seniors were plucked clean and having to face higher deductibles and higher premiums and higher costs for health care at the time they were stretched to the limits.

Well, really, I think this same painting is a little bit symbolic of what is happening to democracy in this House. Instead of a proud eagle of democracy, democracy is being plucked clean in this House, because next week we are about to have the same thing happen. We have got something called reconciliation that is coming up, not the kind of reconciliation that happens between husband and wife. This is not a divorce unless it is the divorce between the reality of the real lives of the middle-class families that are working to make ends meet in this country and the Republican rhetoric that we hear on this floor.

No, indeed, we are talking about a bill that is going to do all kind of mysterious things that have never received a hearing. It is going to rewrite laws that committees refuse to pass, and all of that is about to occur next week without the Members ever having seen the bill and without there ever having been even a final hearing.

What we should be talking about next week is a gift ban on the gifts that tie lobbyists and legislators and a reform of the lobby process. Apparently under this Speaker we are going to continue to write laws in secret that bind the American people, like was

done today in secret working with various special interest lobbyists to get the law written their way. The American people deserve to have this out in the public. We need to reform this Congress and change business as usual as much as we need to protect the seniors of our Nation and prevent these kinds of Medicare raids.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### POLITICAL APPOINTEES ABUSING THEIR POSITIONS

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, there is much talk throughout our Nation about reforming the way Washington, DC operates. The people are upset about the way politicians have been conducting business. One reason that people are upset is because they see political appointees abusing their position using tax dollars to work on reelection campaigns instead of doing the jobs they are paid to do.

Mr. Speaker, last week the people of eastern North Carolina got a firsthand example of that abuse. A Clinton political appointee in the Department of Agriculture was assigned to contact one of the newspapers in my district. He not only called to use the agricultural appropriations bill to campaign against Republicans, he also called to campaign against Medicare, student loans, and other issues.

What in the world is an Under Secretary of Agriculture doing campaigning about programs that have absolutely nothing to do with his job on taxpayers time?

The answer, Mr. Speaker, is that the Clinton administration talks about the need for reform but at the same time they are using taxpayers' dollars to campaign for reelection.

He called to talk about how much the Clinton administration cares about rural North Carolina, but at the same time the Clinton administration is recommending policies that would destroy the economy of rural eastern North Carolina.

As Gene Price, the editor of the Goldsboro News-Argus stated in an editorial, and I quote:

Bill Clinton is the biggest enemy of the tobacco farmer ever to sit in the White House.

Tobacco farmers aren't stupid. The man who has been going for their jugular ever since he has been in Washington now has the gall to send his emissary on a scare-the-hell-out-of-'em mission telling North Carolina farmers the Republicans are threatening their tobacco program.

I further quote Mr. Price:

Republicans and conservative Democrats in Congress should not be fooled. Certainly the Third District's WALTER JONES, Jr. sees the President's campaign for what it is.

Mr. Speaker, the Goldsboro News-Argus is right. The President's campaign is exactly that, a political campaign paid for with your tax dollar. Every single Member of Congress from North Carolina, Republican and Democrat alike, voted for the agriculture appropriations bill. It is the Clinton administration, not Congress, that is trying to destroy the tobacco farmers.

Mr. Speaker, it is the Clinton administration that is now trying to classify nicotine as a drug. It is the Clinton administration that is trying to put families that have grown tobacco for generations into the same category as Asian poppy growers.

Now this same Clinton administration has the gall to have its political appointees call my district to say that he, Bill Clinton, is worried about what the Republicans might do to tobacco. The bad news, Mr. Speaker, is that this kind of hypocrisy only adds to the cynicism about all people in public life. The good news is that the people of eastern North Carolina have long ago figured out the Clinton crowd. The working people of eastern North Carolina who pay their taxes, go to church and play by the rules know that there is very little relationship between what this administration does and says and really what it does and says in reality.

Mr. Speaker, no matter how many Clinton political appointees call my district to say otherwise, the people of eastern North Carolina know that an administration that is trying to destroy the tobacco farmer does not care about rural North Carolina.

In the future, Mr. Speaker, I would advise the President to have his political appointees confine their campaigning to Hollywood or to San Francisco

or to some other place where the people have not yet figured out that this administration's word means very little.

But he is going to have his government employees do his campaigning for him. At least have them do it on their own time. That would be the beginning of real reform.

#### MEDICAID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to start out this evening by going over and trying to explain a little better some of the statements that were made by my colleagues on the Committee on Commerce with regard to low income seniors who, under current law, under the Medicaid program, are guaranteed that the Medicaid program or the Federal Government will pay the full amount of their part B premium.

Part B is that part of Medicare which covers doctors' bills. And in the motion to recommit that we had today on the Medicare bill, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MARKEY] addressed the issue and pointed out that there will be no guarantee that widows and other seniors who are low income will receive coverage by the Federal Government of their part B premium in the future because of the repeal of that provision in Medicaid.

The Speaker, Speaker GINGRICH, later this evening spoke and basically criticized Mr. MARKEY because he suggested that that was not true, that somehow Medicare under the Republican proposal, under the Gingrich proposal, would continue to cover those recipients. Well, I do not know what the Speaker had in mind, but he clearly was misinformed. He clearly has not read the bill or had not followed what had been happening both in committee as well as in the Committee on Rules as well as on the floor of this House when the bill came up.

The reality is that that guarantee for low income seniors, including the widows, was struck from the Medicaid bill in the Republican proposal that came out of the Committee on Commerce as well as out of the Ways and Means Committee. And I had actually proposed an amendment to bring that provision back, to guarantee that those low income seniors would have their part B premium paid. I brought up the amendment not out of the sky but because when I went back to my district in central New Jersey, I had many senior citizens who were what we called qualified Medicaid beneficiaries who received this benefit who came to meetings and forums that I had and were seriously concerned about the fact that this was being repealed.

And so I went back to the Commerce Committee and offered that amend-

ment, which was defeated on a partisan line, vote with the Republicans all voting against it.

When the Medicare bill came up in the Commerce Committee, my colleague, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. RUSH], offered a similar amendment on Medicare on the theory that if it is no longer going to be covered under Medicaid, let us try to cover these poor seniors, these widows, these elderly under Medicare. And again, on a partisan line vote, that amendment was defeated, defeated by the Republicans, by the majority.

Yesterday I went before the Committee on Rules on the Medicare bill. I asked the Committee on Rules to consider an amendment on the floor today that would have guaranteed that those seniors would be covered. I had a dialog with the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. LINDER] and perhaps other members of the Committee on Rules where I explained what this was all about. And again, that request was denied.

So that in fact when the Medicare bill came up today for consideration, contrary to what the Speaker said, it does not guarantee that those widows and the people, those low income elderly, it does not have to just be widows, it is anyone who is 100 percent of the poverty line whether they are male or female, whatever their marital status, it does not guarantee, the bill that was passed today by the majority, that those poor and elderly people are covered for the part B premium.

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What does this mean for these senior citizens? Well, essentially it means that they are going to go without physicians coverage. Part B pays for their doctor bills.

Now the other side said in committee, "Well, you shouldn't worry about that, Congressman PALLONE, because we have included in the block grant that we are going to now give to the States, even though there is no entitlement, no guarantee that these senior citizens get their part B paid, we are going to send in a block grant to the State under Medicaid, and, as the States want to do that, they can cover them." Well, that is very nice, but the reality, as the gentleman from California [Mr. WAXMAN] said before, is the amount of money that is going to be available pursuant to that block grant is about 85 percent of what is going to be needed.

In addition, there is no guarantee or requirement that the State pay that part B premium, so they are going to get 85 percent of what they need, but, if they decide not to spend it, not to even cover those widows and elderly, they do not have to. They can decide to cover 10 percent of them, 50 percent of them, or none of them, and the disincentive for not having the money to do it is certainly going to be there, so it is likelihood that they will not be covered.

Another reason why they are not likely to be covered is because that fig-

ure about how much is being block-granted to the States is based on the current premium, and, as we know and as the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MARKEY] pointed out, the premium under the Medicare under the Republican bill that was passed today doubles over the next 7 years, so instead of being 40-something dollars a month, it is going to be \$90 a month by the year 2002. So what likelihood is there that those widows and those poor senior citizens are going to have the States covering them for their part B premium when the premium doubles, when the amount they are getting is based on current levels, and when they are getting only 85 percent of essentially what is necessary? I would maintain that the likelihood is almost nil.

This, what the Speaker said today, there is no question that he was misunderstood, but I have very little doubt that he intends to do anything to make sure that those people are covered. We are going to do something about it though. We are going to go to the Committee on Rules next week on the Medicaid bill on the reconciliation bill, which the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY] said is going to come up next Thursday on the floor, and when the Committee on Rules considers amendments next Tuesday or Wednesday, Mr. Speaker, myself and the others are going to be before it and ask that this amendment be considered to basically make it so that the Speaker has to announce whether he is going to include this provision or not for the widows and for the poor elderly. I doubt that we will see it, but we are certainly going to try.

I just wanted to point out again today when I went to the Committee on Rules yesterday many of us, many Members of this body, not only Democrats, but also some Republicans because I was there for a good deal of time, asked that amendments be considered today because they did not like the provisions of the Medicare bill that we considered, and I am sure it was noticed that the reality was that no amendments were considered. The only thing that was allowed was a substitute amendment, one substitute.

We also asked for at least a week's debate because, as you know, there have been no hearings on this bill in any committee. The Committee on Ways and Means had one day of hearings on the draft of the bill on a press release, but there were never any hearings on the actual bill that we voted on today, so we asked there be at least a week's worth of debate. What we were given today was 1 hour on the rule, which was a very closed rule, 3 hours' general debate on the bill, and one substitute amendment in which we were allowed 1 hour of debate. I would maintain that the biggest problem, or one of the biggest problems, that exists in this whole Medicare debate and with the whole Republican proposal is that most of my colleagues really do not even know what is in the bill because