My colleagues, Mr. Speaker, there is no separate fund. We have used up all of the money. If we were to start today to make Social Security solvent for the next 75 years, we would have to, if we just looked at reducing benefits or increasing taxes, we would have to increase the FICA taxes by 16 percent starting today, or we would have to start reducing benefits by 14 percent, starting today.

Now, that is why some of us have decided to introduce a Social Security reform bill to gradually increase the retirement age, to allow individuals to invest some of that money in their own account.

I know why they are saying there is no big deal. They do not want to disrupt the senior vote for this coming November election. But it is not fair to the future. I think the mistake they are making, Mr. Speaker, is thinking that senior citizens only care about their own economic welfare.

Here is what I think American senior citizens care about, and that is leaving a good world, a good United States, to their kids and their grandkids.

SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND SOLVENCY

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the congressional Republicans today began once again to distort the issues surrounding the Medicare trustees' report, basically in order to attempt to justify their extreme and damaging cuts in the Medicare program. It is the same thing they did last year. If you think about over the last 18 months, the congressional Republicans have refused to cooperate with President Clinton and congressional Democrats to make responsible adjustments to Medicare and extend the solvency of the trust fund. In fact, if you look at the votes over the last 18 months, congressional Republicans have repeatedly voted for deep cuts in the Medicare program in order to pay for their massive tax cuts for the wealthy and against bipartisan reforms that would extend the solvency of the trust fund.

I just wanted to point out some of the key votes on this issue because once again we heard today that there was no effort by the President or by the Democrats to solve the problem with the trust fund. The President actually stated today, mentioned on several occasions when there were votes in this House to try to deal with the solvency issue, and he actually asked the congressional Republicans, the Republican leadership, to come out and support similar type proposals once again before the end of this Congress.

Back in May of 1995, about a year ago, the House Republicans brought up their budget resolution for the fiscal year, and that vote basically provided $288 million in Medicare cuts to pay for $345 billion in tax cuts targeted to the wealthy. This was the first major time when we saw the Republican leadership move on these massive cuts in Medicare and propose major changes that I think negatively impact the Medicare program.

Now, the Medicare cuts in that first budget resolution, the one that they passed last year, were more than 3 times larger than the $90 billion in Medicare cuts that the trustees stated were necessary to extend the solvency of the trust fund through 2006; in other words, another 10 years. According to the Treasury Department, 52 percent of the tax cuts in that proposal went to the top 12 percent of American households, those making over $100,000, and it not only made these cuts that basically was transferring money to wealthy Americans, but it also undermined the current Medicare program. Among other things, the deep GOP cuts would have doubled the monthly Medicare part B premium paid by all Medicare beneficiaries, drastically reduce the reimbursement paid to providers under the Medicare program, which would result in hospitals closing and also, I believe, jeopardize the general quality of health care available to seniors.

Now, some have said, well, what was the Democrats' alternative? Well, in October 1995 the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GIBBONS], a Democrat who is the ranking member of the Committee on Ways and Means, brought up a vote on exactly or proposed an amendment on exactly the $90 billion in Medicare reforms; in other words, the level of cuts that the Medicare trustees said was necessary to make sure the program remains solvent into the next century.

Well, 233 House Republicans voted against the Gibbons substitute, again a strong indication of the fact that they were not really interested in dealing with the solvency issue but wanted to make the larger cuts that would have primarily been for tax breaks for the wealthy and the substantive changes in the Medicare program.

We had other votes. We had a vote on October 19 also. This was a motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT] to recommit the budget or to recommit the GOP Medicare Revisions Act and basically would have removed the increase in the monthly part B premium paid by all Medicare beneficiaries. So once again Republicans on record, in this case 233 Republicans who said that it was okay to significantly increase part B premiums for every Medicare beneficiary who opted for the part B program, which pays for doctor bills.

Now, this year we see the same thing happening again. On May 18, just really a few weeks ago, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. SABO], who is the ranking Democrat on the Committee on the Budget, he brought up the Clinton budget, the President's budget that essentially contained $116 billion in Medicare reforms and would have again solved the solvency problem and extended the Medicare program and kept it solvent into the next century. This was again something that was 225 House Republicans voted against.

So when someone says to me, what are the Democrats doing, what is the President doing to try to deal with the solvency problems, those votes have come up, the President's budget came to the floor, and once again the Republicans voted it down.

Instead what we got on May 18 was the new Republican budget resolution for the next fiscal year. Again the same thing again. It called for $168 billion in cuts in the Medicare program, too much unless you want to use it for tax breaks for the wealthy.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. HAYWORTH. In view of the preceding remarks, do the rules of the House require that speakers tell the truth during the course of their remarks?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That is not a valid parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. HAYWORTH. I thank the Chair. However, I find it a valid point.

MEDICARE TRUST FUND

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

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, you know the one thing, or one of the things, that a representative democracy cannot tolerate is the poison of disinformation and deceit and demagoguery. And it is a solitary, singular and extraordinarily disturbing time when it is necessary to, or one is certainly moved to feel the necessity to correct the record at every single turn just so that the poison of disinformation, the poison of deceit, the poison of hypocrisy and the poison of lies will not completely undermine the vary fabric of our ability to represent ourselves in a representative democracy.

So what I would like to talk about this evening is the Medicare trust fund and particularly this chart because what this is this is the Federal hospital insurance trust fund report, for it represents the report for 1995 and then for 1996.

In 1995 the trustees, the President's trustees; these are not, they are not supposed to be, partisan trustees, they are nonpartisan, or they really should not have a partisan impact. But if they were going to be considered partisan, I suppose you would have to consider them to be Democratic representatives because they were all appointed by the President. But I do not consider them to be partisan; I do not think that is correct. I think that in fact they were