

You better check with those seniors, because what they tell us is they like Medicare. They want Medicare. The only thing wrong with Medicare is that it does not cover enough, like prescription drugs, but what they like about it is that it is a known benefit, it is a known premium, and it is there for them when they need it.

Another word that is used all the time is choice. We are going to give senior citizens choices now. Well, I have to tell my colleagues, in all the years that I was the executive director of the Illinois State Council of Senior Citizens and in all the years that I was in the State legislature and now in Congress, never has a senior citizen come up to me and said, Congresswoman, what I want is a choice of HMOs, a choice of insurance companies, send me those brochures so I can pick, tell those insurance agents to get me on the phone so they can pitch their insurance company to me.

Seniors want the kind of choice they get under Medicare, a choice of doctors, a choice of hospitals, a choice of specialists. That is the kind of choices that they want.

In fact, the only choice under this Republican bill is the choice that HMOs and insurers get, not senior citizens, because private drug plans, HMOs, get to choose what premiums to charge. There is no uniform benefit of premium under Medicare.

Private drug plans get to choose the copayments that they will charge. Private drug plans get to choose what pharmacies are in their network. They get to choose what drugs are covered. So if you want to give the HMOs and the insurance companies that kind of choice, then this bill is for you, but if you want to give senior citizens what they really want, then you are going to expand Medicare the way the Democrats have proposed, by giving them a prescription drug benefit under Medicare that they can count on, that they know what the premium is.

This legislation that is passed in the House is going to do exactly what the chairman said. It is going to destroy Medicare. It will be the end of Medicare. That is what happens in 2010 with this bill. So if you do not want to be chased down the street, then all of us better say no to the Republican bill.

---

#### HOMELAND SECURITY TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the following exchange of letters relating to yesterday's debate on H.R. 1416, the Homeland Security Technical Corrections Act of 2003.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,  
Washington, DC, May 14, 2003.

Hon. CHRIS COX,  
Chairman, Select Committee on Homeland Security,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN COX: In recognition of the desire to expedite floor consideration of H.R. 1416, the "Homeland Security Technical Corrections Act of 2003," the Committee on the Judiciary hereby waives consideration of the bill. Section 11 of H.R. 1416 creates new §5 in the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296). New §5 mandates that any report or notification required by the Homeland Security Act be submitted to the Select Committee on Homeland Security as well as to any other Committees named in the Act. Section 225 of the Homeland Security Act incorporated the Cyber Security Enhancement Act which, among many other things, requires the Attorney General to report to the Judiciary Committee regarding the use of electronic surveillance in emergency situations and requires the U.S. Sentencing Commission to submit a report in response to the Cyber Security Enhancement Act. To the extent that §11 of H.R. 1416 affects these reports required by §225 of the Homeland Security Act, these provisions fall within the Committee on the Judiciary's Rule X jurisdiction. However, given the need to expedite this legislation, I will not seek a sequential referral based on their inclusion.

The Committee on the Judiciary takes this action with the understanding that the Committee's jurisdiction over these provisions is in no way diminished or altered. I would appreciate your including this letter in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 1416 on the House floor.

Sincerely,  
F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Jr.,  
Chairman.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, May 15, 2003.

Hon. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Jr.,  
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SENSENBRENNER: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 1416, the "Homeland Security Technical Corrections Act of 2003." As you noted, §11 of the bill falls within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary to the extent it concerns the two reports described in your letter. I appreciate your willingness to forgo consideration of the bill, and I acknowledge that by agreeing to waive its consideration of the bill, the Committee on the Judiciary does not waive its jurisdiction over this provision.

I will include a copy of your letter and this response in our committee report and in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 1416 on the House floor.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,  
CHRISTOPHER COX,  
Chairman.

---

#### MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I come before you tonight to talk about the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization

Act of 2003 and to place it in context with the overall goals and beliefs of the President and the Republican party.

The Republican bill, H.R. 1, is quite simply a first step toward the Republicans' goal to privatize Medicare. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to do this for a couple of reasons.

The first is that they firmly believe that the private sector and the free market are always right and that government is always wrong. I am afraid that they have a very narrow-minded and simplistic view of how our economy, our government and our country are supposed to function.

There has been a shift in the rhetoric used during political debate in this country since the election of this President. There has been a conscious effort by his office and the Republican leadership of the House to use language that paints critical issues in simplistic black and white, us versus them, good versus evil, terms, ultimately simplifying the debate into a three word sound byte.

I view this as a very unfortunate occurrence because it allows a certain mental laziness to take over this body. When it is really our duty, it is our duty to debate, to discuss and to think very carefully and critically about very complex and important work that we do in this Chamber.

No one here has more respect for the power, the creativity and problem solving ability of the free market as I do. I am a hard-nosed, show-me-the-bottom-line businesswoman through and through, but my admiration of the market is based on years of deep study of its function and a real understanding of how it works.

My Republican colleagues, on the other hand, seem to feel that the invisible hand of Adam Smith and the hand of God are the same thing but our free market is not an all powerful system without limitations.

The free market is an incredible tool that has advanced many areas of human endeavor, but in order for it to work, it must include one very important ingredient, profit, and without this critical component, the free market system is useless.

Medicare was created in 1965 precisely to address the failure in this market. It was not profitable to treat our seniors with a free market health insurance industry so they found a solution to insuring the elderly. They just decided that they would not cover them. After all, old people get sick too much and insurance companies would have to pay. They figured that if you want to make money in the medical insurance game, insure young, healthy people, not old sick people.

Luckily for America, during the 1960s and 1970s and 1980s Democrats controlled this Congress and they were not satisfied with the solution that would push our mothers and our fathers, our grandmothers, our grandfathers out into the cold. So Democrats set up the government entitlement called Medicare.

□ 2115

We said, we value our elders. Even though the market says leave them behind, we will not. We will protect you and treat you with compassion and the dignity that you deserve in your old age.

So why do the Republicans want to privatize Medicare so badly? Maybe they have amnesia. Maybe they do not remember what happened when we left the health care of aging parents and grandparents to the free markets. Or maybe they are so swept up in their blind faith in the market that they believe that somehow the market will just take care of things. But we have already tried them and it did not work. Remember?

Taking care of the elderly is not profitable, nor should it be. Profit is not always the most important thing. These are the people that reared us. They are the people that took care of us when we were sick. They are the people that taught us right from wrong. I will not be a party to this slap in the face to my parents and to the seniors in my community being offered by the Republican majority of this body. Their bill purports to offer a prescription drug benefit for Medicare beneficiaries, but it fails to offer any guarantee that seniors will actually receive it.

The prescription drug plan is only available through private insurance companies or HMOs.

And besides all this, it does not ensure that all seniors will get this coverage. The eligibility of all seniors has been a hallmark of the Medicare program.

If that was not bad enough, in a provision of the bill completely unrelated to creating a prescription drug benefit, the House GOP bill would increase seniors' costs for doctor visits by raising the Part B premium and indexing it to inflation.

This provision is included for no other reason than to raise the cost of traditional Medicare and force seniors into Managed Care Plans.

And who does this benefit? Seniors? I think not. It benefits Insurance Companies and Pharmaceutical Manufacturers—the real constituents of the Republican Party.

Republicans are doing in this bill what they have consistently done this whole Congress: Advantaged the wealthy and the powerful and put the screws to the little guy.

Just last night, DAVID OBEY stood on this floor and asked the Republicans to cut back, from \$88,000 to \$83,000, the tax cut for those whose annual income is over 1 million dollars in order to pay for desperately needed homeland security projects.

The Republicans said “no.” Cutting taxes for the wealthy and powerful is more important.

Just a few weeks ago, I tried to offer an amendment to the tax bill that would have pushed back the start date of the dividend portion of the tax cut for 1 year—just seven-tenths of one percent of the tax cut—to fund homeland security projects to make our country safer.

The Republicans said “no.” Cutting taxes when we are in astronomical debt is more important.

How about the Child Tax credit? “No,” say the Republicans, we are not going to help out poor children or the children of veterans of a war in Iraq where Marines and Soldiers are still dying.

Today, I offered an amendment to the Medicare Bill, in order to offer a real prescription drug benefit to all seniors, and to do it through Medicare.

I hope that the committee will allow this amendment to be considered on the floor of this House. It is an important amendment because it is not designed to protect the profits of the insurance companies or the pharmaceutical industry. It is designed to help our seniors.

It is clear to me and to my Democratic colleagues where the Majority's loyalties lie. From homeland security to education, from veterans benefits to the Child Tax credit, and now finally to the health and well being of our parents and grandparents, the Republican message is clear: We do not care about you.

#### OLDER WOMEN AND MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to stress the importance of a health safety net that has worked for the American people. It is our duty to protect the seniors that have contributed to society over their lifetimes. Our older constituents have built or supported most of what America is today and we owe them respect. We owe them the safety net that is called Medicare.

I want Congress to know that not only is Medicare important for the American people, it is a huge issue for America's women. Women, indeed, are the face of Medicare. Women constitute 58 percent of the Medicare population at 65, and women constitute 71 percent of the Medicare population over the age of 85. Women can expect to live on the average 19 years into retirement, while men can only expect to live 15 years. We must take care of our mothers, our sisters, and our daughters. We can do no less.

Across the breadth of the United States, the older and the poorer the woman, the higher the out-of-pocket health costs. The more she needs assistance, the less she will actually receive. Because of barriers to enrollment, close to half of older women with incomes below the poverty line are not enrolled in Medicaid. Research suggests that women on Medicare spend 20 percent more on prescription drugs than their male counterparts. Middle class women who have made wise financial planning decisions, can quickly find that high drug costs will eat away any retirement security they have worked to establish.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give you some thoughts on cultural diversity in regards to women and Medicare. More minority women than Caucasian women are uninsured or rely on public rather than private health insurance. Minority women are more likely to

have lower incomes and to live in poverty than other women. The percentage of women on Medicare with incomes of less than \$10,000 a year is a very telling statistic. Twenty-four percent of white women, or 14.7 million; 56 percent of African women, and there are 1.8 million; and 58 percent of Latina women, and there are 1.2 million, live way below the poverty line. Clearly, not only should we strengthen the safety net but we should find out why so many women need that net.

So, Mr. Speaker, a health safety net for the American person is imperative. Our older constituents have built or supported most of what America is today, and we owe them a great amount of gratitude. They should go to bed each evening feeling secure that they have health benefits when they are needed. They should know that their benefits are universal and affordable.

What a shame, a shame, that our seniors have to leave the United States and go to Canada or Mexico, where the same prescription drugs, same ingredients, are much, much cheaper. We have seniors who are eating dog food rather than regular food because they have to pay the cost of these expensive drugs.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, these older Americans should be given a benefit that they can rely on, that they will know they can live a quality of life with respect rather than the one they would have to live if we whittle away at Medicare. Let us honor our seniors.

#### REPUBLICAN PRESCRIPTION DRUG BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I oppose the Republican prescription drug plan. I represent the fastest growing Congressional District in the United States. I represent the fastest growing senior citizen population in the United States. When I came to Congress, I thought I would modernize Medicare, improve Medicare, strengthen Medicare. I never dreamed that I would participate in the destruction of Medicare. This legislation before us this week destroys the Medicare system.

I oppose this plan. It does not offer a guaranteed prescription drug benefit for seniors. It ends traditional Medicare that seniors in my district and throughout the United States rely on. Under this Republican proposal, there is no guarantee that private insurance companies will offer prescription drug coverage. While Republicans estimate that the cost of the premium would be \$35, the fact is we do not know how much the premium is going to be. Private insurance companies can devise their own plan and raise premiums whenever they want to meet their bottom line rather than meet the needs of our senior citizens.

The Republican plan does not guarantee that seniors will receive any help