

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 557, RELATING TO THE LIBERATION OF THE IRAQI PEOPLE AND THE VALIANT SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES AND COALITION FORCES

Mr. DREIER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-438) on the resolution (H. Res. 561) providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 557) relating to the liberation of the Iraqi people and the valiant service of the United States Armed Forces and Coalition forces, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the Special Order time of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

THE REPUBLICAN MEDICARE BILL

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the Republican Medicare bill is so good, why do they have to sell it so hard? That is a question I have been asking myself lately. I bet it is a question the American people are starting to ask too.

When AARP boss Bill Novelli came out for the Bush Medicare privatization bill last year, he launched a \$7 million ad campaign to convince seniors he had made the right decision. America's seniors knew better, and 45,000 AARP members quit in protest.

Rather than learn from AARP's mistake, the President is repeating that same mission, this time at taxpayers' expense. The Bush administration is spending almost \$14 million on a nationwide taxpayer-financed TV advertising campaign, the goal of which is to "educate" seniors on why the new Medicare drug law is not as bad as it appears. Interestingly in this election year, he is running those ads at taxpayers' expense even though the Medicare bill does not take effect for 2 more years.

The Bush administration's Medicare ads were suspect from the start. With the slick look of a campaign spot, they assure seniors that the bill guarantees the same Medicare, the same benefits.

It is not the same Medicare. They would not be spending the money and trying so hard to convince us if it were the same Medicare. It is not the same Medicare. All seniors will pay higher deductibles. Millions of seniors will pay higher premiums.

And in terms of more benefits, the new coverage is not even available until 2006. It is far from free, and it is actually less generous than the employer-sponsored retiree coverage many seniors have today. In fact, by jeopardizing these employer-sponsored benefits that some 12 million seniors have today, the new Medicare law is likely to leave millions of those seniors with less coverage than they have today.

"The same Medicare, more benefits." It is a catchy soundbite. The Government Accounting Office, the non-partisan Government Accounting Office, also said it is false advertising. In the people's name with their tax dollars. They said it was false advertising. Now newspapers tell us that the Bush administration is not just manipulating the news; they are inventing it. The administration is using the people's tax dollars literally to hire actors to portray reporters in staged "interviews" that look more like the Home Shopping Network than they do legitimate news, and they do a public disservice.

Even the conservative editors at *The Plain Dealer*, the largest paper in my State in Cleveland, called those ads phony. And that is just the beginning. News reports, real news stories written by real reporters say the \$13 million ad campaign, the infomercial-like interviews are just the tip of the iceberg. The administration is reportedly planning to spend another 80 million of the people's tax dollars to push the Medicare bill which is now law. The drug companies, close allies of President Bush and the Republican leadership in Congress, the word on the street is that the drug companies are going to contribute \$100 million to President Bush's reelection. No surprise that the drug companies came into this institution and wrote that language and wrote that Medicare law, the parts that the insurance industry did not write in the Medicare law. Those drug companies are also partners in the marketing plan. Drug giant Pfizer recently launched a traveling road show to talk up the law's new coverage. A less credible champion for drug affordability would be hard to find, Mr. Speaker, less credible than Pfizer. After all, it is the same company, Pfizer, that cut off supplies to Canadian pharmacies when my constituents are trying to buy drugs in Canada because they are so much less expensive. The same drug, same packaging, same dosage, just much less expensive. By the way, Pfizer's pitchman is former U.S. Republican Senator Bob Dole, the same Bob Dole who voted against Medicare in 1965, its creation, who was still bragging about his "no" vote 30 years later.

There is even more to this story. Last year Medicare's chief actuary, a government employee, the man responsible for actually drawing an honest fiscal picture to tell the Congress and to tell the American people, said the Bush plan would cost well over \$500 billion rather than the President's promise and Republican leadership's promise that it costs \$400 billion. After the bill was enacted, the administration released a revised estimate, surprise, and said actually it will cost about \$530 billion.

The Medicare actuary, a Federal employee, was forbidden by his boss, a Federal employee, a Bush political appointee, who is now, interestingly enough, a drug industry lobbyist, that Medicare actuary was prevented from releasing the plan's true cost under the threat that he would be fired if he talked to the American people about the real cost, if he talked to Congress about the real cost. When he was threatened, he was threatened with the loss of his job by a Bush political appointee who is now a drug company lobbyist.

These actions, Mr. Speaker, by the Bush administration and its drug company allies raise serious questions of judgment and serious questions of conduct by those elected officials and appointed officials, by the President, by the head of the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services, now a drug company lobbyist. I hope these questions will receive careful scrutiny. And still they raise the basic question: If the Republican Medicare bill is so good, why do they have to sell it so hard using 80 million taxpayer dollars?

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

(Mr. MURPHY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, last week there was a quote attributed to JOHN KERRY, the Democratic nominee for President, who said "I've met foreign leaders who can't go out and say this publicly, but, boy, they look at you and say, 'You got to win this; you got to beat this guy; we need a new policy,' things like that." He has not denied the statement.