

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act. The goal of this legislation is to create a Medicare program that can provide for our seniors the quality health care in the future that Medicare has been able to provide in the past.

Without the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act we passed and the President signed, the quality of the health care Medicare could provide would not keep pace with modern medical science, period. This bill was not and is not primarily about prescription drugs, though I believe we were morally and medically obliged to make prescription drugs a part of Medicare for all seniors.

The modernization of Medicare was more significantly about two facts. With seniors living longer, chronic illness has become a major fact of life for our seniors; and Medicare, through its old-fashioned structure, literally cannot pay for the preventive programs that can help seniors with chronic illnesses maximize their health and well-being and minimize their visits to the emergency room and the hospital.

Preventive health integrated into Medicare for seniors with chronic illness can both reduce costs and improve the quality of care available to our seniors. This must be done for the quality of life of our seniors but also for the sheer survival of Medicare.

One-third of our seniors have five or more chronic illnesses, and this third uses 80 percent of the resources. In every other sector of the population, we are seeing disease management programs increase the quality of care, increase the well-being of patients and reduce the costs of health care. We must do no less for our seniors.

We are morally, medically and fiscally bound to integrate disease management into Medicare, both into the plans that Medicare offers to our seniors and into the fee-for-service system that has long been historically the primary means for Medicare to deliver health care services to our seniors.

Only the House bill offered disease management as a new program under Medicare; and through the conference committee we strengthened this program, we broadened it, and we actually gave to those who manage Medicare the right to demonstrate various disease management programs and then simply roll them out to benefit all seniors and all Medicare programs without coming back to Congress. We delay things. We make them difficult. This is a matter of life for our seniors. It is a matter of quality health care for our seniors.

The Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act is just that. It is about prescription drugs and modernizing Medicare so that it will be prepared and capable of delivering cutting-edge, state-of-the-art health care to our seniors and particularly to those seniors with chronic illness.

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 addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may take the gentleman from Ohio's (Mr. BROWN) time.

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

There was no objection.

THE ADMINISTRATION GIVETH AND THE REPUBLICAN CON- GRESS TAKETH AWAY

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, we have now passed the budget in the House, one in the Senate, and they are starting a conference committee. We are going to have a product out here one of these days soon, but this budget will be perfect proof that the administration giveth and the Republican Congress taketh away. The administration gives massive cuts to the rich; the Republican Congress takes Federal unemployment benefits away from average Americans. That is the way it has been in this administration.

Millionaires get an average cut on their taxes of \$112,925. The average American, on the other hand, gets \$676. Why should a millionaire get \$112,000 and the average working person in this country gets only \$676? They have no answer for that.

They have an answer that is sort of strange. They say, well, these tax cuts are going to allow jobs to occur. If you give a lot of money to rich people, suddenly, miraculously, jobs will kind of sprout up out in the fields or in the factories. No proof of that whatsoever.

We have been following the President's ideas for three-and-a-half years, and this will be the first administration since the Hoover administration, since the Hoover administration, 1928 to 1932, that the administration has not produced one single job. They have lost jobs.

February was a particularly good month. You read the newspaper and they say, oh, the economy is recovering. We do not have to give unemployment benefits to anybody because the economy is recovering. How do we know the economy is recovering? We know it because the stock market is going up. What does that mean to somebody that does not have a job, the stock market is going up? They spent all their savings and their 401(k) and everything else to keep afloat, and this

administration says because the stock market is going up we have a recovery and we do not need to extend unemployment benefits, in spite of the fact that we have \$20 billion sitting in the trust.

All it requires is the President to say to the Congress, move it. Republicans will never do it. They do not care.

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But the fact is that in February, in this recovery, 21,000 jobs were created. That is 400 jobs for every State. Now, maybe in North Dakota 400 jobs is quite a lot, but in California it is nothing.

Not one single one of those jobs was a private sector job. Remember, we gave all that money to those rich people and they were going to create these jobs? They did not create one single job in February. That is a jobless recovery, and the President ought to be able to see that. We could see it in December when we started talking about this.

In my State, 80,000 people have gone off unemployment since December; and the government says, well, we have this \$20 billion but we are saving it. For what? To give another tax break, perhaps. You have to ask yourself what kind of an administration is this. They talk about compassionate conservatism, but I do not know what that means anymore.

We went to a workers' bus ride today, people who come to this city to tell us their problems. This guy who had been working in a paper mill up in Maine said, my grandfather worked in that mill, my father worked in that mill, I thought I would retire in that mill; but I lost my job, and now I have to go to the food bank to make it.

Think about it. Think about the loss of dignity. Think about the inability to feed your kids. But the President sits down in the White House and says, well, they do not need it; they just need to try a little harder, or maybe they can take their tax cut. They do not get a tax cut; they do not have a job.

For every person unemployed in this country there are three of them looking for every job that is created. The only reason the numbers have come down at all is because the President decided that he would not count them if they were not looking anymore.

This budget is a fraud and the American people should know it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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