

We must do everything we can to help our Iraq veterans cope with their traumas. It is the least our government can do after sending them to war on false pretenses, with insufficient equipment and without an exit strategy.

But as an even more urgent matter, we can ensure that no more soldiers suffer from terrifying nightmares and setbacks and flashbacks by ending this occupation and bringing them home at once.

I have actually presented my four-point plan for a radical shift in our Iraq policy to the President of the United States. This policy includes four major areas:

One, greater multilateral cooperation with our allies in enlisting their help in establishing an interim security force in Iraq;

Two, a diplomatic offensive that recasts our role in Iraq as construction partner, rather than military occupier; this means no permanent bases in Iraq, no American claims on Iraqi oil;

Three, a robust post-conflict reconciliation process with a peace commission established to coordinate talks between the Iraqi factions; and

Four, and most importantly, withdrawal of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.)

ENCOURAGING NEWS ON MEDICARE PART D

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of turn.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the encouraging news that more than 25 million seniors are now enjoying prescription drug coverage under Medicare Part D. This includes over 1.5 million Americans who have enrolled in the last month alone.

Twenty-five million enrollees. That is 25 million seniors who are saving money every time they visit the pharmacy, 25 million seniors who have better access to drugs they need to prevent and manage their illnesses, 25 million seniors who can now afford protection from many catastrophic medical costs.

Like many of my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, I am working incredibly hard to educate seniors about Medicare Part D. With any new program, parts of the enrollment process certainly can be confusing. After all, this is the largest enrollment effort since the introduction of Medicare 40 years ago. But by investing a little time, seniors can nar-

row down their choices and find the plan that best fits their prescription drug needs. And let me assure you, the benefits of this program are undoubtedly worth that effort.

I have been thanked by so many seniors who are now reaping the benefits of prescription drug coverage under Medicare, seniors who have seen their prescription drug costs drop by 50 percent or more, seniors who now have more money in their pockets at the end of the month.

In fact, I would like to share with my colleagues two of the many success stories I have heard from my constituents regarding their positive experiences. I hope these stories will encourage other seniors to explore the savings Medicare Part D holds for them.

Take the experience of Carol Burke. She lives in Newnan, Georgia, in my district, my wife's hometown. She recently wrote me, saying, "I am disturbed by media commentators repeatedly referring to the Medicare drug plan as too difficult to understand and a total disaster. I never hear them say what I truly believe, that it is a wonderful benefit to those of us who have no retirement drug plan provided. A few hours spent with pencil and paper show that the choice to pay a slightly larger premium and have no deductible is clear. The suggestions given in the Medicare 2006 Guidebook are complete and easy to follow, and math is not my strong suit. Thank you for your efforts in providing this much-needed service to seniors."

Now, my colleagues, that is a real letter, and I completely agree with Mrs. Burke's assessment. It may take a little time to choose the right plan. Seniors might need to rely on family, friends and community organizations to help with the process. But a little time spent enrolling today will pay huge dividends in the upcoming months and years, because affordable prescription drugs help seniors live healthier lives.

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Let me share another story with you. I received a phone call from fellow Georgian Mr. Richard Mosrie who recently enrolled in the Medicare part D plan.

Mr. Mosrie explained that he is now saving over \$150 a month on his medications, \$150 a month. Seniors across America understand what a difference a couple hundred dollars a month can make. These are the stories that seniors need to hear. These are the stories that are happening in every congressional district in America regardless of whether the Congressman or -woman is a Republican or a Democrat.

I find it disappointing that there are people who attempt to use Medicare part D as a political ploy. How cruel to put partisanship over the health of our seniors by encouraging people not to enroll in this great program. That is, in essence, encouraging seniors not to save money and not to improve their

health. So, Mr. Speaker, in the following months we will be hearing more and more positive stories from seniors who have enrolled in Medicare part D who are reaping financial and health rewards.

The initial sign-up period runs through May 15, 2006, so there is still time for seniors to enroll without a premium penalty.

As a physician, I know that access to the right medication is a bedrock of good health. Our seniors deserve affordable prescription drug coverage and Congress has passed good legislation to deliver this benefit.

Now is the time for seniors to enroll, and I sincerely hope all of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle will stand with me in commitment to helping our seniors access the medication they need to stay well.

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

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

THE CENTER CANNOT HOLD

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, it is doubtful that we can even accurately count the number of Iraqis who have died today in their country. The President vows he will stay the course. We have heard this before over and over again, as if saying it repeatedly would alter the reality.

For months the American people have spoken with an ever louder voice urging the President to redeploy U.S. soldiers to get them out of harm's way. For months, many Members of Congress, especially Mr. MURTHA of Pennsylvania, have urged the President to redeploy the U.S. soldiers to get them out of harm's way.

Now even U.S. soldiers overwhelming say that the U.S. should be out of Iraq this year. In military terms, that is enough time to quickly plan and safely reallocate U.S. soldiers. In other words, the men and women of the United States Armed Forces, those in the battlefield, are saying what this administration refuses to act on.

The ground the President is standing on has shrunk to the size of a postage stamp. His approval ratings have fallen so low they are below sea level. Today, not only is Iraq in the throes of relentless civil violence, even members of the administration are telling Congress that there is danger the violence in Iraq could spill outside the borders and inflame the entire Middle East.

Yet despite the warnings, despite the reality, despite the Iraqi leaders urging