

so if somebody needs to get a passport, we go hurry up and try and help them get their passport quicker. If somebody has a problem with a permit or something, WE go call the bureaucrats up and say, Can you help out? What form have we not done? How can we help this? And we try to help our constituents out. Now, I'm picturing I'm on the phone and we've got this kind of system, and I'm getting the phone call that says, You've got some government bureaucrat that just told my dad he can't get a heart bypass. What am I supposed to do?

I yield.

Mr. SOUDER. The chancellor of one of my universities, yesterday, when I was at Turnstone, this fellow that works with kids who have physical disabilities and gets them recreational activities, he said, My dad is a veteran and my mom is now in the hospital, and we tried to check with the Federal Government to get the eligibility benefits. We kept getting taped messages saying the person is there on Thursdays for 2 hours.

That's what you'll get with government health care.

Mr. AKIN. Thursdays on 2 hours. So get in line. That's incredible.

We are about at the end of our hour. I would very much like to thank my good friends representing a host of different States, people with a great deal of common sense, and particularly Pennsylvania, with 25-plus years of being in the medical business. You see this thing, it's like a train wreck that you're seeing in slow motion.

What we're trying to say is Americans, pay attention. We cannot afford to go this deal about taking 18 percent of our economy and giving it to the Federal Government to run. It doesn't make sense. It's going to be expensive. It's going to destroy health care. And in every other regard, this is just a bad deal for everybody.

Thank you so much for joining me, gentlemen.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2892, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 111-300) on the resolution (H. Res. 829) providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2892) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2442, BAY AREA REGIONAL WATER RECYCLING PROGRAM EXPANSION ACT OF 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 111-301) on the resolution (H. Res. 830) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2442) to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to expand the Bay Area Regional Water Recycling Program, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS HOUR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KISSELL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Black Caucus, the CBC, is proud to present this hour on issues that concern America's senior citizens. The CBC is chaired by the Honorable BARBARA LEE from the Ninth Congressional District of California. I am Representative MARCIA L. FUDGE from the 11th Congressional District of Ohio, and I am the anchor of the CBC hour.

The vision of the founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus, to promote the public welfare through legislation designed to meet the needs of millions of neglected citizens, continues to be a focal point for the legislative work and political activities of the Congressional Black Caucus today.

Tonight, the CBC will focus its attention on the issues currently confronting our seniors. In his last speech, Hubert Humphrey said, The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped.

The fact that some Americans work their entire life, regularly paying into Social Security and are confronted by poverty in their golden years is indeed a problem, Mr. Speaker.

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The social insecurity facing our Nation's seniors is not a Democratic problem or a Republican problem; it is an American problem, Mr. Speaker. This year's news headlines tell the story: "Seniors Struggle With High Cost of

Housing and Food, Barely Getting By"; "Seniors Struggle to Survive"; "Single Seniors Can't Make Ends Meet"; "Subsidized Lunches in Greater Demand Among Senior Citizens"; "Forty Percent of Senior Citizens Not Taking Prescribed Medicines Due to Budget"; "Senior Citizens See Largest Gain in Credit Card Debt As Recession, Medical Costs Take a Toll."

Mr. Speaker, our country will recover from this recession, but we cannot forget the seniors who struggled before the recession began. Many live on fixed incomes and find it difficult to live under the pressure of high medical bills and the rising cost of essentials like medication, food, and housing.

One of the most disheartening news headlines of 2009 had the title, "U.S. Is Losing Ground on Preventable Deaths." In this story, AARP reported that Americans are dying too soon, although the United States spends \$2.4 trillion a year on medical care, vastly more per capita than comparable countries. Our Nation ranks last when compared to 19 other industrialized nations on premature deaths caused by illnesses such as diabetes, epilepsy, stroke, influenza, ulcers and pneumonia, all medical issues that disproportionately attack and weaken American seniors.

In my district, senior citizens call my office daily. Some call looking for reassurance that Medicare will be strengthened through the health care reform, and others asking questions about the future of Social Security.

One senior called just this past week. He is an 85-year-old man living in public housing. He has an artificial leg which he has had since the age of 11. He is worried that his Social Security check will not cover the cost of the medications he uses for complications caused by his artificial limb if the cost of his medications continues to climb.

I am confident, Mr. Speaker, this Congress will answer the calls and the concerns of these seniors, and I will not rest until all seniors have their answers.

Reports have been looming for years about the long-term financial problems of Social Security. The retirement program is projected to start paying out more than it receives in the year 2016. According to the Social Security trustee, without changes, the retirement fund will be depleted by 2037.

Demographic factors are accelerating Social Security problems. Life expectancy is increasing faster than anticipated. In 1940, a 65-year-old man could expect to live maybe another 12 years. Today it's 15 years, and by 2040, it will be 17 years. The fertility rate is falling faster than expected, from 3.6 children for a typical woman of childbearing age in 1960 to just two today, and a projected 1.9 by 2020.

The elderly portion of the population will likely rise from 12 percent today to 20 percent by 2050, increasing the number of retirees from 34 million to 80 million. The smaller working age population and larger elderly population