

Now, they will look at lots of issues, but one of the ones I wanted to talk about this morning, one of the most major issues, is providing prescription drugs for our senior citizens under Medicare.

Prescription drugs have always been a problem, not just for seniors, but for everyone. When those of us go buy pharmaceuticals for ourselves or our children, we realize how high the cost is. But it seems like in the last 3 years, it has gone up dramatically.

I know senior citizens do not always have the choices we have. Sometimes, if we are working, we can earn more overtime, we can cut some other areas, we can actually increase our income. But seniors do not have that option. Seniors do not have that option, if they are required to take so many prescriptions and they just cannot go out and work more overtime.

I was worried earlier this year, and I am glad the House passed it, that between 65 and 70, I was cosponsor of the bill, let seniors work for those years. I was worried that was only going to be our effort this session, let seniors be able to go out and work and pay for their prescription drugs that are not covered under Medicare.

I know this is my fourth term and in 1993, 1994 and 1995 at our town hall meetings and community meetings, we have dozens every year, we would have one or two people come up and talk about prescription drugs. But in the last 2 or 3 years, it seems like I cannot have a town hall meeting or community meeting without either a senior citizen or someone my age saying, my parents cannot afford it, or even someone my children's age saying, my grandparents cannot afford their prescription drugs.

So, you know, in the early nineties you would only hear one or two, but in the last 2 or 3 years, because it seems like the cost of escalation has been so much, and it hits seniors so much more than it does anyone else.

We asked 2 years ago, and our Committee on Government Reform staff, the minority staff, actually conducted studies around the country for a lot of members of Congress. One of them they did in my own district in Houston, and we did three of them starting about 2 years ago.

One, we compared prices for large purchasers, for example, whether it is Blue Cross-Blue Shield or the Veterans, what can they do if the average citizen goes down compared to what the larger purchaser can do. We found out the large purchasers actually save about half of what my seniors going to their local drugstore would pay as compared if they could get it through some large purchaser.

We also, because I am in Houston, Texas, and it is a 6½ hour drive to Mexico, what it would be for seniors who can drive to Mexico, who can both

lower their prices by bulk purchasing, but they have also price controls. So we found out that people can drive from Houston to Mexico and save half, at least, on their prescription drugs. These are studies conducted not by my office, but by the minority office of the Committee on Government Reform. So, again, seniors could save half.

The last thing we did this last spring is we picked out certain pharmaceuticals that are also used for animals. I remember very well in East End Houston at the magnolia Multipurpose Center, we had a good crowd of seniors there, and we had a young lady, I guess in her early 20's, and she had a beautiful German shepherd.

She had that dog, and we started listing pharmaceuticals that my seniors in Houston take, like seniors all over the country, and animals take. Well, it just so happened this dog, this German shepherd, also had asthma, and so did one of my seniors. She talked about how it was tough.

I looked at that dog and I thought it was a purebred German shepherd, Madam Speaker, but it turned out she got it real cheap at the SPCA, and it was a beautiful animal.

But this senior citizen came up and said, I know this dog has asthma, and this is what I pay for my asthma medicine, and it was outrageous. Again, it was more than double for seniors as compared to what we do for our own animals.

That is why it was frustrating that this House has not addressed it, except for one bill that passed earlier. We compare the House plan and the Democratic plan and Governor Bush's plan and the House plan, and it just looks like it is giving more money to insurance companies who, under our current HMO system are not even covering seniors.

Madam Speaker, I know next Tuesday a lot of people, no matter what their age, will go to the polls. I know prescription drugs are important, and I hope they look at the Democratic plan.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 45 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PEASE) at 10 a.m.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

At the beginning of a new work week, Lord God, be with us. Fill us with a

freshness and a renewed energy as we face the tasks here set before us today.

May our minds be bathed in the light of Your spirit and our hearts be set free to discern clearly the ways of justice and integrity.

Bring to this Nation a true sense of purpose as it interprets the signs of the times and seeks to be an instrument of peace in the world.

God of all grace, guide us now and forever. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker pro tempore's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 298, nays 47, not voting 87, as follows:

[Roll No. 577]

YEAS—298

Andrews	Buyer	Doolittle
Archer	Callahan	Doyle
Armey	Calvert	Dreier
Baca	Camp	Duncan
Bachus	Canady	Dunn
Baker	Cannon	Ehlers
Baldacci	Capps	Ehrlich
Baldwin	Carson	Emerson
Ballenger	Castle	Engel
Barcia	Chabot	Eshoo
Barrett (NE)	Chambliss	Etheridge
Barrett (WI)	Chenoweth-Hage	Evans
Bartlett	Clayton	Ewing
Bass	Clement	Farr
Bentsen	Coble	Fletcher
Bereuter	Coburn	Foley
Berkley	Collins	Fossella
Berman	Combest	Frelinghuysen
Berry	Cook	Frost
Biggert	Coyne	Gallely
Bilirakis	Cramer	Ganske
Bishop	Cubin	Gekas
Blagojevich	Cummings	Gibbons
Bliley	Cunningham	Gilchrest
Blumenauer	Davis (FL)	Gillmor
Blunt	Davis (VA)	Gilman
Boehlert	Deal	Gonzalez
Boehner	DeGette	Goode
Bonilla	DeLauro	Goodlatte
Bonior	DeLay	Goodling
Bono	DeMint	Gordon
Boswell	Deutsch	Goss
Boyd	Diaz-Balart	Graham
Brady (TX)	Dicks	Granger
Brown (OH)	Dixon	Green (TX)
Bryant	Doggett	Green (WI)
Burr	Dooley	Greenwood