

ignorance. We, the benefactors of their sacrifice owe them at least that much.

THE REPUBLICAN PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROPOSAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the last couple of weeks have produced some of the most spectacular propaganda we have seen here in some time. It relates to the Republicans Medicare prescription drug proposal. First PHARMA, the drug industry and prescription drug manufacturers' lobbying group, launched an advertising campaign in the newspaper Roll Call and other papers claiming that a plan like the Republican proposal could cut prices by 30 to 39 percent.

By expressing their exuberant support for this plan and its alleged results, the drug industry as much as said it can comfortably weather price cuts in the 30 to 39 percent price range. If that is the case, the drug industry should do us all a favor and simply make the cuts in price. It is a lot easier than requiring seniors to go into a prescription drug coverage market that does not exist to purchase a stand-alone product that cannot stand alone.

The second wave of rhetoric came yesterday when Chairman THOMAS announced the GOP prescription drug plan which relies on private insurers to offer individual prescription drug coverage saying it would cut prices twice as much as the Democrats Medicare based plan. If only it were true. The Congressional Budget Office said the Republican drug plan may cut costs by 25 percent, not through lower prices but by restricting access to medically necessary drugs.

It is an important division. I will say it again. The Republican plan saves money not by miraculously convincing drug companies to lower their prices but instead by limiting access for senior citizens to medically necessary prescription drugs. It cuts costs by decreasing the value of the prescription drug benefit. The insurers win, the drug companies win, the government wins but senior citizens lose.

The Republican plan gives insurance companies carte blanche to do what they are doing today, that is, put price tags on treatment decisions and deny coverage for medically necessary treatment. Sound familiar? The President's plan is explicit in requiring coverage, on the other hand, for any medically necessary drug prescribed by a doctor, which makes sense given it is the doctor, not the insurer, who should be and is making medical decisions and who is actually treating the patient.

The Republican plan guarantees nothing other than assistance for low income seniors. Prescription drugs, however, are not just a low income problem. Seniors who thought they

were financially secure are watching their savings go straight into the pockets of drug makers. Some of my colleagues are trying to tell seniors that there will be a choice of reliable, affordable private prescription drug insurance plans available to them. Based on what? Certainly not history. Even the insurance industry is balking at the idea. It says something that insurers do not sell prescription drug coverage on a stand-alone basis today, even to young and to healthy individuals. That is because it does not make sense.

Medicare is reliable. Medicare is a large enough insurance program to accommodate the risks associated with prescription drug coverage. Individual stand-alone prescription drug policies are not.

Some in this body are actually trying to convince seniors who stand firmly behind Medicare that expanding the current benefit package is less efficient, more onerous, than manufacturing a new bureaucracy, as the Republican plan does, and conjuring up a new insurance market. Seniors are simply too smart for that.

I do not want to ask seniors in my district and across the country to rely on a market that does not want the business to provide a benefit not suited to stand-alone coverage to a population that, let us face it, has never been served well by the private insurance market.

I do not want seniors in my district and across the country to be coerced into managed care plans in order to avoid dealing with three different insurance plans, with Medicare, with Medigap and with individual prescription drug coverage.

I do not want seniors in my district or across the country to receive a letter from their employer telling them that their retiree prescription drug coverage has been terminated on the premise, quote, that the government is offering private insurance now.

I do not want to forsake volume discounts and economies of scale by segmenting the largest purchasing pool in this country, and then waste trust fund dollars on insurance company margins, on insurance company market expenses, on insurance company huge executive salaries.

I do not think the individual health insurance market is a reasonable model for Medicare prescription drug benefits. In fact, as anyone who has had to purchase or sale coverage in that market knows the individual health insurance market is not even a good model for individual health insurance. It is the poster child for selection problems, for rate spirals and for insurance scams.

The very fact that the drug industry backs Citizens for a Better Medicare supports the private plan approach is a giant strike against it. The drug industry and their puppet organization clearly feel that undercutting seniors' collective purchasing power, relegating

seniors to private stand-alone prescription drug plans, is the key, underscore this, is the key to preserving discriminatory monopolistically set outrageously high prices.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that Members of this Congress read the fine print when we decide these Medicare prescription drug bills.

RESOLUTION OF KASHMIR ISSUE MUST INCLUDE THE KASHMIRI PANDITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, in recent years the United States and the world community have been forced to confront the need for a resolution of the conflict in Kashmir. This conflict in the Himalayan Mountains has for decades poisoned relations between India and Pakistan.

The conflict has also poisoned life within Kashmir itself. People from all ethnic and religious groups have suffered from the violence, be they Hindu, Muslim or Sikh, but the most forgotten victims have been the Pandits.

Recently, it was reported by the Indo-American Kashmir forum that Karl Inderfurth, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, reiterated the view that Pandits should not be ignored in upcoming discussions of the Kashmir issue. In a meeting with the National Advisory Council on South Asia at the State Department earlier this month, Mr. Inderfurth acknowledged that the U.S. has not always mentioned the Pandits in its statements on the Kashmir, but assured the Council that the displaced status of the Pandits is a matter of concern to the United States.

As a U.S. official who has frequently sought to give more attention to the plight of the Pandits, I am encouraged by Mr. Inderfurth's recent statement. I will urge our State Department to continue to draw attention to the suffering that the Pandits have endured and continue to endure in its statements on the Kashmir issue.

I have also called for the U.N. and international organizations to devote greater attention to what I consider a case of ethnic cleansing that is afflicting the Kashmiri Pandit community.

Mr. Speaker, India's Prime Minister Vajpayee has indicated that his government would be willing to meet with Kashmiri groups to address their concerns but the prime minister has stressed that Pakistan should not have any role in this dialogue, which is in fact an internal matter for India.

Some of these separatist elements within Kashmir, the same organizations involved in the terrorism that has uprooted the Pandit community, are clearly working to promote greater Pakistani involvement in this process.

Mr. Speaker, there is overwhelming evidence of Pakistani support for the continued terror campaign in Jammu and Kashmir. Indeed, Pakistani involvement and terrorist activities in Kashmir has been acknowledged by our State Department and a Congressionally appointed advisory panel has recommended that Pakistan be designated as the government that is not fully cooperative against terrorism.

The Pakistani government itself has at least tacitly acknowledged, under heavy international pressure, that it must take action to curb the network of militants that has taken root on its soil. The one aspect of this tragedy that frequently is overlooked is the plight of the Hindu community of this region, the Kashmiri Pandits. As I have gotten to know the Kashmiri American community, and hearing about the situation facing the Pandits, I have been increasingly outraged not only at the terrible abuses they have suffered but at the seeming indifference of the world community. At the same time, I am impressed by the dignity and the determination that the Kashmiri Pandits have maintained despite their horrible conditions, and I am touched by the deep concern that the Kashmiri Americans feel for their brothers and sisters living in Kashmir in the refugee centers set up in India to accommodate the Pandits driven from their homes in the Kashmir Valley.

Mr. Speaker, in the great international debates that we have, it is sometimes all too easy to overlook the so-called small problem of one persecuted ethnic group, but I hope that the United States and India, as the world's two largest democracies, will show determination to finally address this humanitarian catastrophe in an effective and humane way.

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 21 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

The Reverend Ken L. Day, Level Cross United Methodist Church, Randleman, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

Most Holy Lord God, You have created and designed us for intimate fellowship with You, one another, and all Your creation. We acknowledge that You are the giver of all good and perfect gifts we are endowed with for this fellowship to be realized. We also ac-

knowledge that You continually present us with opportunities to exercise these gifts and abilities. These representatives, staffs, and aides have assembled here this day to freely exercise these gifts and abilities in service to You and our country.

We confess that we have not always exercised these gifts and abilities faithfully. We have occasionally allowed selfish desires and personal agendas to cloud our visions and influence our actions. Forgive us, Lord, when we fail to esteem others higher than ourselves. And in forgiving us, allow us continued opportunities to serve You, one another, and our country. In Christ's holy name we pray, 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LINDER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOME TO THE REVEREND KEN L. DAY

(Mr. COBLE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the privilege to recognize our guest pastor today who is from my district. He serves the Level Cross United Methodist Church in Level Cross, North Carolina. I said to him yesterday, "I address my minister as Preacher. Ken, are you comfortable with that endearing title?"

He said, "That is an ascribed title, not earned. I like it."

So, Preacher, it is good to have you with us here today. Your family is in the gallery. I know your parishioners are watching today.

SAFEGUARDING SECRETS

(Mr. FOLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, my mother makes a great carrot cake. For generations the recipe has been a guarded secret. In fact, the recipe to our family's carrot cake is probably more secure than this country's nuclear secrets. However, based on the lack of concern from the Vice President, you would not

think our national security was a major issue. The Vice President has had no problem taking credit for discovering Love Canal, inspiring the novel "Love Story," inventing the Internet, and just last week he took credit for the strength of our economy. But when this administration has repeated security lapses, putting our citizens at risk, he is nowhere to be found.

The Vice President and the other side of the aisle have spent most of their time and energy on this floor worried about political attacks when instead we should be concerned about defending this Nation from nuclear attacks.

INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue in my efforts to bring to light the problem of international child abduction. Every day possible I have come to the House floor to deliver a 1-minute on the issue and including in that 1-minute the story of an individual child. Today I will tell you about Benjamin Eric Roche.

Benjamin was abducted when he was 3 years old by his mother Suzanne Riley and taken to Germany. Ms. Riley had physical custody of Benjamin at that time, but both she and his father, Mr. Ken Roche, shared joint custody. Under the Hague Convention, a German court ordered Benjamin to be returned to the United States in August of 1993.

Mr. Roche had not heard from his ex-wife or his son until February 1, 2000, when Ms. Riley initiated contact with him. However, since that contact, Mr. Roche has once again not heard from her or his son.

Mr. Speaker, there are 10,000 other children who are in the same shoes as Benjamin. They have been kidnapped across international borders. We must continue to work to make sure that they are returned. We must bring our children home.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG CHOICES

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, last year a 75-year-old woman in Las Vegas had to let her homeowners insurance policy lapse just to pay for her prescription heart medicine. Tragically her home was destroyed in the floods that ravaged the Las Vegas valley last year as well.

Mr. Speaker, such a tragedy should never have been allowed to happen. This Congress has an opportunity to provide a voluntary, affordable and accessible Medicare drug benefit plan to all our Nation's seniors. The House bipartisan prescription drug plan will solve this very serious problem currently facing our Nation's seniors.