

A REPUBLICAN PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM BUILT ON FALSE HOPES AND VAGUE PROMISES

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, not long ago this House debated a prescription drug coverage bill, not a Medicare prescription drug coverage proposal but a bill endorsed by the Republican majority that features private stand-alone prescription drug coverage for seniors. It was the only bill we were permitted to consider.

I joined many other Members of this House when I questioned the logic of this proposal, the feasibility of this proposal, the arrogant anti-Medicare message of this proposal.

Our concerns are not theoretical. It turns out that Nevada has adopted a prescription drug program almost identical to the Republican plan. It is not working. It is not working for the same reason the Republican plan will not work, because insurers refuse to participate. They say the risks and the costs of providing individual insurance policies for prescription drugs are simply too high. We do not actually have to implement the national proposal to see whether insurers will participate. They have already said they will not.

This House raised the hopes of millions of seniors by passing prescription drug legislation, legislation that was forced upon this body by a majority unwilling to consider any other plan, any other bill, any other approach. Republican leadership forced this House to take seriously a proposal built on false hopes and vague promises.

The majority in this House saw a political opportunity and seized it. They decided it was time to associate themselves with the prescription drug issue. After all, Medicare beneficiaries and their families are a huge voting block, and the majority is up for grabs.

To my Republican colleagues, more power to them. If the media plays their bill right, maybe they will hold onto a few more seats, except for one thing. This is not a token issue. When Members play the prescription drug issue like a game, they are playing with the lives of real people. They are playing with the quality of those lives and the length of those lives.

To the 84-year-old woman eating 1 meal a day so she can afford the arthritis medication that permits her to walk, this is not a game. To the 67-year-old man who cannot afford to fill a blood pressure prescription that could keep him alive, this is not a game. To the adult sons and daughters wondering whether they are going to be able to find money for their parents' prescriptions, this is not a game.

Last week was the 35th anniversary of the Medicare program. The American public has financed that program and benefited from that program for 35

years. Various private insurance companies have come and gone. Private health plans have evolved from true insurance programs, where everyone paid the same rate and everyone was eligible for coverage, to selective organizations favoring the healthiest enrollees.

Medicare does not play favorites. It provides reliable coverage to all seniors. The original Medicare program is available to everyone. It never skips town. It never ratchets down benefits. It does not charge different premiums to different people based on different circumstances. It enables seniors to see the provider of their choice. No wonder it is the most popular political program, public program, in the Nation's history.

But to keep up with modern health care, the Medicare benefits package needs to be modified to include prescription drugs. Updating the Medicare benefits package, that is what the debate some weeks ago should have been about. It was an insult to the public, that instead we debated a bill that makes no sense unless the goal is not to provide a prescription drug benefit plan, but rather, to set the stage for a massive overhaul of Medicare; unless the goal is to promote privatization of Medicare. After all, if we privatize one benefit, like prescription drugs, we might as well privatize them all.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to change course. I urge them to shift their support towards legislation that updates Medicaid and Medicare instead of spurning it. If we work together on a proposal like that, we can do the right thing for the American people. But if my Republican colleagues continually insist on going down this dead end street, they should not be surprised if come November it is the American voter who says, game over.

WILLIAM R. MOTE

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

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few words about William Russell Mote. Mr. Mote passed away a few days ago after a long and productive life, as Members heard my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER), announce from this podium a few minutes ago.

I suppose not every American may know the Mote name, but surely they have been affected by his life and his generosity. William Mote contributed measurably to our understanding of the oceans and the fishes and other life in the oceans, helping us to learn how to be good stewards, taking care of these natural resources.

Mr. Mote's accomplishments are very many, but I think his most notable one from my perspective was the establishment and the sustainment, the very generous sustainment, of the world-

recognized Mote Marine Research Laboratory in Sarasota, Florida.

Prior to redistricting in 1990 in Florida, I used to represent Sarasota and the Mote Marine Lab where it is. I can tell Members that today it is one of the premier marine laboratories in the world, an opinion that is quickly seconded by experts in this field, I would add.

Mote Marine is a very busy, very professional, and very accomplished institution, just like its founder. While Mr. Mote has passed on, all of us are going to continue to benefit enormously from his life and the Mote Marine Laboratory, which continues on. We are in his debt for that.

I would like to pass along to the many members of the Mote Marine laboratory community and their families my sincere condolences from myself and my wife, Mariel, and of course from other friends from southwest Florida which I now represent who understand the Mote Marine Laboratory and knew Mr. Mote well.

We appreciate greatly the legacy that he leaves us of awareness about the oceans and how fragile they are, and that the fishes and the critters and mammals in that ocean do need stewardship, now that mankind has made such a strong imprint on our globe; the educational efforts that are being made at Mote Marine to share knowledge with people who need that knowledge and want that knowledge to push forward into the horizons of the unknown in our oceans; and of course, the research that is done there in so many areas.

I have memories myself going back when I was a city councilman in the city of Sanibel trying to deal with the scourge of red tide, which is something that occasionally visits the Florida beaches. It is a very unpleasant thing, with dead fish and a bad smell, and it is bad for tourism, but it obviously says that something is wrong with the environment. We tried to understand that.

That was my first meeting with Mr. Mote, going to his laboratory and saying, can you help me understand red tide? Is there something we can do about that? That pursuit still goes on. That was back some 20 or 25 years ago, I think.

Bill Mote was a hands-on activist. He got very enthusiastically involved. He had a wonderful, charming way about going into a project. He was very pleasant. He was very knowledgeable. He was very eager to share whatever knowledge he had and pass it along.

He certainly raised awareness about sharks. I think most of us are familiar with the movie, but the facts about sharks, what they really are, how they live, what goes on with shark populations in the world, we owe a huge debt to the Mote Marine laboratory and the work that has been done there.

Dolphins, I remember going to Mote Marine to get assistance in writing legislation for dolphin protection. There

is such a thing as dolphin captive program legislation now to protect our dolphin inventories, because they were being exploited at one point.

Manatee rescue operations, an endangered species in Florida. Those who have seen manatees know in what perilous shape they are and how wonderful they are, what great creatures, and the work that has been done there to try and make sure that we will continue to have manatees on this globe. All of these kinds of things are wonderful parts of the natural resource that Bill Mote found and fell in love with and decided that he would do something about.

I would suggest that Bill Mote met the test that most of us would like to meet. He left life a little better on this planet for the work that he did. I think that is his best and most wonderful legacy.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning hour debates, pursuant to clause 12, rule I, the House will stand in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 25 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 (Mrs. EMERSON) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: O Shepherd and Guardian of our souls, we have returned to You.

At times we do not realize how we have distanced ourselves from You. Not always attentive to Your voice, we tend to wander on our own.

Then, by Your grace, You bring us back.

When a sense of alienation shadows our soul, we find our differences difficult to bear and move away from each other.

Help us to overcome our hesitancy to accept diversity.

Bringing us to a deeper level of awareness by Your Spirit, make us one Nation.

Give us listening hearts, willing to give each other time and attention and ready to respond to Your Spirit living in one another 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 her approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. TRAFICANT 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.

MOROCCAN GIFTS

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, Mrs. Clinton has decided that she wants New York to be her new home. Of course, if New York decides this fall that the feeling is not mutual, she may decide to move somewhere else.

She certainly has no lack of friends in other places. Just this weekend she was in Annapolis, Maryland, raising money from the rich and famous. And we are pretty sure she still has some friends back home in Arkansas.

But it seems that some of her very best friends are from more exotic places. Last year she returned from the country of Morocco with \$52,000 in gifts from Moroccan leaders.

One of the presents she received was a \$20,000 purse. That is one heck of a purse. It has gold overlay, 64 diamonds, and 11 garnets.

I suppose, to be fair, we should point out that her husband was held in such high regard by the Nicaraguans that he came home with a \$650 humidor for his cigars to be put in.

With friends like these, who needs the Senate?

But it must be lonely at the top.

TAX CODE MUST GO

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Speaker, the Tax Code must go.

Our labor, our savings, our investments all taxed. Our boat, our goat, our vote all taxed. Our sweat, our thrift, our future all taxed.

Beam me up.

Tax this.

It is time to replace the socialist Income Tax Code in America with a simple flat 15 percent sales tax.

No more forms, no more lawyers, no more accountants, no more IRS and, once again, Congress will restore liberty, true liberty, in America.

I yield back with the slogan "the Tax Code must go."

U.S. SHOULD NOT BECOME WORLD'S POLICEMAN

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Madam Speaker, as a former Air Force pilot and veteran, I have a special sensitivity and permanent appreciation for the needs and concerns of our Nation's military.

It seems obvious to me and to the men and women who serve in our military forces that I have spoken with that the Clinton-Gore administration has put our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines in danger by continually asking the military to do more and more with less and less.

Over the past 8 years, President Clinton has requested drastic cuts in military spending and yet continues to send our troops all over the world.

As Commander in Chief, President Clinton has deployed U.S. forces 34 times, while cutting troop strength by 40 percent.

During the previous 40 years throughout the Cold War and prior to the Clinton administration, our military forces were only deployed 10 times.

Madam Speaker, our military should not become the world's policeman.

I am proud that this Republican Congress realizes the importance of maintaining a strong national defense and that our military serves the United States first and the rest of the world second.

"PORKER OF THE WEEK" AWARD

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

Mr. HEFLEY. Madam Speaker, it appears that this time the Federal Government is the one that is due a substantial refund. Auditors within the Federal Emergency Management Agency have found \$442 million in emergency funds that should be returned by States that did not need or abused these emergency dollars.

As my colleagues know, FEMA is often called upon to provide emergency aid to States in cases of natural disaster. However, the agency is starting to be viewed as a Federal insurance company which hands out free money to repair and to renovate.

In one case, the New Orleans sheriff's office has kept \$56,000 it received for flood clean-up work that was performed free by prisoners.

California is holding on to \$1.4 million it received to fight a wildfire that was recovered from a negligent party. And Georgia used \$15 million in emergency payments to not only repair flood damage but to also upgrade a facility.

FEMA funds are taxpayer funds. They are not part of a slush fund for States to tap into for whatever they want. The guilty State governments get my "Porker of the Week" Award.

106TH CONGRESS HAS AGENDA FOR SUCCESS

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