

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1911

Messrs. HASTINGS of Florida and CROWLEY changed their vote from “aye” to “no.”

So (two-thirds not being in the affirmative) the motion was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I regret missing floor votes on Tuesday, May 31, 2011. Had I registered my vote, I would have voted:

“Yea” on rollcall 377, On motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1484—Veterans Appeals Improvement Act, as amended;

“Yea” on rollcall 378, On motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 1082—Small Business Temporary Extension Act of 2011;

“Nay” on rollcall 379, On motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1954—Debt Limit Extension.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

RENEWING AUTHORITY FOR STATE CHILD WELFARE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1194) to renew the authority of the Secretary of Health and Human Services to approve demonstration projects designed to test innovative strategies in State child welfare programs.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1194

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. RENEWAL OF AUTHORITY TO APPROVE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS DESIGNED TO TEST INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES IN STATE CHILD WELFARE PROGRAMS.

Section 1130 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a-9) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking “1998 through 2003” and inserting “2011 through 2016”;

(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “or kinship guardianship” after “placements”;

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking “address kinship care” and inserting “provide early intervention and crisis intervention

services that safely reduce out-of-home placements and improve child outcomes”; and

(iii) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D) and inserting after subparagraph (B) the following:

“(C) If an appropriate application therefor is submitted, the Secretary shall consider authorizing a demonstration project which is designed to identify and address domestic violence that endangers children and results in the placement of children in foster care.”;

(C) in paragraph (4), by inserting “or kinship guardianship” after “assistance”; and

(D) in paragraph (5), by inserting “and the ability of the State to implement a corrective action approved under section 1123A” before the period;

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (6);

(B) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (7) and inserting “; and”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(8) an accounting of any additional Federal, State, local, and private investments (other than those with respect to which matching funds were provided under part B or E of title IV) made, during the 2 fiscal years preceding the application to provide the services described in paragraph (1), and an assurance that the State will provide an accounting of that same spending for each year of an approved demonstration project.”;

(3) in subsection (f)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by striking “; and” and inserting “, including all children and families under the project who come to the attention of the State’s child welfare program, either through a report of abuse or neglect or through the provision of services described in subsection (e)(1) to the child or family.”; and

(B) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D) and inserting after subparagraph (B) the following:

“(C) a comparison of the amounts of Federal, State, local and private investments in the services described in subsection (e)(1), by service type, with the amount of the investments during the period of the demonstration project; and”;

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(h) INDIAN TRIBES CONSIDERED STATES.—An Indian tribe (as defined in section 479B(a)) shall be considered a State for purposes of this section.”.

SEC. 2. BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise tonight in support of H.R. 1194, a bill to extend the child welfare waiver authority for States.

This bill will allow States to test innovative approaches to improve the way we protect children from abuse and neglect. In doing so, it extends authority that was in place between 1994 and 2006 but has since lapsed.

Since 2006, the Department of Health and Human Services has not had the authority to approve new efforts by States to test better ways of helping children at risk of abuse or neglect. The bill before us today would simply allow HHS to approve new waivers once again so States can test new ways of better serving children and families.

As the current chairman of the Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over child welfare programs, I’m pleased to cosponsor this legislation with my friend, Mr. McDERMOTT, a current member of the subcommittee, as well as its prior chairman.

The Human Resources Subcommittee held a hearing on child welfare waivers last year, which showed the value of State flexibility in this area. Since 1994, 23 States have run waiver programs that helped inform the child welfare policy debate and, more importantly, improve the lives of children and families. Seven States have been granted extensions and have continued their waiver programs approved before 2006. This bipartisan bill before us today will allow such current waiver programs to continue, while importantly providing the Secretary of HHS with authority to approve up to 10 new waivers a year.

The bill before us is identical to legislation the House approved unanimously on September 23, 2010. However, the Senate did not act on that legislation before conclusion of the last Congress.

This bill is supported by the National Conference of State Legislatures, as well as groups active in promoting effective child welfare programs.

I would like to insert in the RECORD following my remarks copies of their letters in support of H.R. 1194.

Especially in challenging financial times, we must be sure that taxpayer dollars are well spent. The original 1994 law required rigorous evaluations of each waiver program, and this bill continues that requirement. This means States will have the flexibility to test new ideas, but the American people and the Congress will know if these ideas have made a difference. And because these waiver programs must be cost neutral to be approved in the first place, the Congressional Budget Office has assured us that this legislation as a whole is cost neutral.

I would like to include the CBO analysis to that effect in the RECORD as well.

It is fitting we are debating this measure in May, which is National Foster Care Month. National Foster Care Month is a time to celebrate the great work done by thousands of foster parents across the Nation, and also a time to raise awareness of the hundreds of thousands of children in foster care who need a permanent home. This legislation will let States test better ways of helping these young people, including by working with families to keep kids from entering foster care in the first place.

So as we recognize National Foster Care Month, this bill is a great way to work towards solutions that ensure that each child has a permanent home. Child welfare legislation has often been an area of bipartisanship in this Chamber, and I'm grateful that we can continue that tradition with the bill before us today.

I thank Mr. MCDERMOTT for his extensive work on this bill and look forward to continuing to work with him and all our colleagues as this legislation moves forward. I urge support for this legislation.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES, Washington, DC, April 13, 2011.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER, Speaker of the House, Longworth HOB, Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI, House Minority Leader, Cannon HOB, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER AND MINORITY LEADER PELOSI: On behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), we urge you to support H.R. 1194, a bill to renew the authority of the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to approve demonstration projects designed to test innovative strategies in state child welfare programs. Congressman Jim McDermott and Congressman Geoff Davis have fashioned bipartisan legislation that helps create opportunities to enhance the state/federal part-

nership to assist our nation's most vulnerable children.

NCSL supports reinstating and expanding federal waiver authority so that states can test the results of increased funding flexibility on the development of service alternatives and on the overall delivery of child welfare services, targeting programs to address the needs of their children. By renewing Title IV-E waiver authority from 2011 through 2016, H.R. 1194 will give states an enhanced ability to provide early intervention and crisis intervention services that will safely reduce out-of-home placements and improve child outcomes.

H.R. 1194 will allow states to improve the quality of their child welfare interventions and reinvest savings in their programs. It will also provide both state and federal legislators more information on what innovations are effective to transform the lives of children who are at risk of abuse and neglect. We applaud Congressmen McDermott and Davis for crafting this legislation.

Sincerely,

HON. MARY JANE WALLNER, New Hampshire House of Representatives, Chair, NCSL Standing Committee on Human Services and Welfare.

HON. WES KELLER, Alaska House of Representatives, Chair, NCSL Standing Committee on Human Services and Welfare.

YOUTH VILLAGES, Arlington, VA, May 24, 2011.

Chairman GEOFF DAVIS, Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC.

Congressman JIM MCDERMOTT, Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN DAVIS AND CONGRESSMAN MCDERMOTT: On behalf of Youth Villages, I am writing in support of your bill, H.R. 1194, and to thank you for your leadership on this issue. This legislation provides critical au-

thority for the Department of Health and Human Services to extend the Title IV-E waiver program, which has demonstrated substantial impact since creation in 1994. These waivers provide states with greater flexibility in the use of Federal funds for alternative services and supports that promote safety, permanency and well-being for children in the child protection and foster care system.

Youth Villages is a leader in innovative and effective services for troubled youth and their families. Since 2008, Youth Villages has had the opportunity to work collaboratively with several local, privatized child welfare organizations, known as Community Based Care agencies in implementing Florida's Title IV-E waiver. Youth Villages has three offices in Florida and is working with local entities to implement our intensive in-home Intercept services, identify and serve underserved or "stuck" populations, and provide them with outcome data to support the impact of their waiver effort.

As a result of the flexibility afforded by the Title IV-E waiver, intensive reunification and targeted prevention services are given greater focus in the state's child welfare service approach. Without the award of the waiver, it would have been difficult for Youth Villages to expand its Intercept program into the state to serve the child welfare population. In the three years that Youth Villages has been operating in Florida, we have served over 300 children and families across the Central and Southern regions of the state. Over 70% at six months post-discharge are still living at home or in a home-like environment. The savings associated with serving these 300 children through Intercept instead of congregate, out-of-home placements amounts to roughly \$23 million when considering recidivism rates associated with both Intercept and non-Intercept placements.

Youth Villages pledges its full support of H.R. 1194, as this legislation has the ability to transform the child welfare system from one that incentivizes out-of-home placement to a system that promotes in-home treatment and family unification.

Regards,

PATRICK LAWLER, CEO, Youth Villages.

CBO ESTIMATE OF THE STATUTORY PAY-AS-YOU-GO EFFECTS FOR H.R. 1194, A BILL TO RENEW THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO APPROVE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS DESIGNED TO TEST INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES IN STATE CHILD WELFARE PROGRAMS

By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2011-2016	2011-2021
NET INCREASE IN THE DEFICIT													
Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Impact	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: H.R. 1194 would renew Section 1130 of the Social Security Act for the 2011–2016 period. Section 1130 allows for demonstration projects related to child welfare to be operated by the states. Those projects are required to be cost-neutral, and the Department of Health and Human Services has mechanisms in place to ensure that this requirement is met. As such, there would be no costs associated with the renewal of Section 1130. Source: Congressional Budget Office.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1920

Mr. MCDERMOTT. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1194, a bill that would reinstate authority within the Department of Health and Human Services to allow up to 10 States and Native American tribes a year to conduct demonstration projects that test ways to improve child welfare programs.

I want to thank the chairman of the Human Resources Subcommittee, Mr. DAVIS, for following in the tradition of the previous chairman, Mr. Linder. He

was the one who worked with us last year in putting this through. It's good to have that same thing going through. This is a rare bill. It's actually a bipartisan bill.

This bill reinstates the waiver authority to allow the States and tribes to implement and evaluate innovations to improve outcomes for at-risk families and children. The legislation is cost neutral and renews waiver authority for the next 6 years.

Twenty-three States and jurisdictions received waivers under the previous authority, which began in 1997 and ended in 2006. Although the authority for new waivers has expired, a

handful of States and counties have continued demonstration projects, including Florida, Ohio, and Los Angeles County, California.

The legislation also includes a new emphasis on the Federal side of supporting waivers that identify and address domestic violence and related problems, which lead to children being placed in foster care. It emphasizes early intervention and crisis intervention services that safely reduce out-of-home placements.

The waiver authority requires States to report on the Federal, State, local,

and private funding sources that support various services under the demonstration project. This additional information will increase our understanding of waiver policies and increase accountability. The innovative strategies successfully tested in States under the previous waiver authority taught us some lessons at the national level that were helpful because it made child welfare policy more effective.

One of the most successful demonstration projects provided support to grandparents and other relative caregivers who became the guardians of young relatives in foster care. This became Federal policy when it was incorporated into the Fostering Connections Act, which passed in 2008.

Since the waiver authority expired, States, service providers, and foster care experts have called for it to be renewed, to allow continued innovation and evaluation of strategies to address the complex needs of children and families in our 21st-century communities. Many States, like my State of Washington, can do more with limited funds than they have if they have well-defined waivers.

Following a hearing last year in the Ways and Means Committee, I introduced legislation with John Linder, as I mentioned before, to reinstate the waiver authority. We did it late in the session; and a short time later, the legislation passed the House. Unfortunately, it was late in the session, as I said, and the Senate was unable to take up the bill. So we thought if we put it over early this time, maybe it will be dealt with before the end of the 112th. The legislation before us is identical to the bill introduced last year and passed in this House unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, my support for restoring this waiver authority is not meant to suggest that traditional Federal investments are not needed in the child welfare system. We need to fully fund our child welfare programs. These child welfare waivers simply give the States more flexibility in developing innovations. Waivers are not a panacea. They are not a substitute for comprehensive solutions for the problems that remain in the child welfare system.

I also want to point out that the authority provided by this bill in no way affects a child's entitlement for assistance under Federal foster care and adoption assistance programs. This is important to remember for anyone comparing the waiver authority in this bill to proposals for much broader waivers in other safety-net programs. Reinstating the child welfare waiver authority will allow States to continue developing strategies to improve the lives of children and families, who are some of the most vulnerable in our midst.

I urge a "yes" vote on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Let me thank Dr. McDERMOTT, first of all, for his consistent, years-long support of our children that are in foster care. And I thank the manager and the Representative of the majority for their hard work.

This bill was introduced in the 111th Congress. It was passed by voice vote. It is an important amendment to the Social Security Act to renew through FY 2016, where it authorizes up to 10 States and tribes to conduct demonstration projects that serve as tests for methods to improve child welfare programs.

As a cochair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, we have worked on a number of issues through the years. We have been privileged to deal with the question of mentoring, the question of bullying, the question of dealing with the disabled child, and, yes, the question of dealing with foster parenting. In fact, some years ago I served as a cochair with then-Congressman Mike Andrews to provide relief to foster parents by finding a process that would provide vacation time for them. I have gone to meetings dealing with grandparents who have become foster parents. So it is important to be able to find the best practices.

The waivers that will come about are designed to afford more flexibility to States in determining how to use Federal funding for child welfare and foster care. The program gave more discretion to the State Departments that administer child welfare programs aimed to foster innovative and effective child welfare programs.

One of the issues in the State of Texas is the age-old issue of aging out. What do you do with the 18- or 19-year-old who had lived in foster care, ages out, and has no place to go? I hope in the course of this legislation we will find that creative thinking.

This bill, of course, addresses delays to guardianship for children in foster care, provides early crisis intervention programs that are so important to improve the outcomes of the foster care system, and addresses domestic violence that results in placement in foster care.

To the late Congressman Mickey Leland, I am reminded that we had a facility called the Mickey Leland refuge or relief area in our district, the 18th Congressional District, that provided an emergency placement for children that had to be taken out of the home immediately. We cradled children from zero to toddler age. Our children need us, and those who are in fact taking care of foster children need us as well.

There are 423,000 children living in foster care; 26,000 of these children are from my home State of Texas. I frankly believe those numbers are even higher. But this legislation will continue a unique opportunity for States granted waivers to address the diverse needs of

the cities and regions of the particular States.

I can't think of a more precious resource than our children. I am very glad to be part of the Congressional Children's Caucus; and I deeply believe this particular legislation, Mr. Speaker, provides a safety net for our children. I ask my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1194, a bill to renew the authority of the Secretary of Health and Human Services to approve demonstration projects designed to test innovative strategies in state child welfare programs. My colleague, JIM McDERMOTT, introduced this bill in the 111th Congress, and it was passed by a voice vote. This legislation, which amends Title XI of the Social Security Act to renew through FY2016, authorizes up to ten states and tribes to conduct demonstration projects that serve as tests for methods to improve child welfare programs.

Under the previous authority, which began in 1997 and ended in 2006, 23 states and tribal jurisdictions received waivers to certain provisions of the Social Security Act. These waivers are designed to afford more flexibility to states in determining how to use federal funding for child welfare and foster care. The program gave more discretion to the state departments that administer child welfare programs, and aimed to foster innovative and effective child welfare programs.

The waiver authority in this legislation requires states to report on Federal, state and local funding sources that support all services under a demonstration project, increasing our knowledge of waiver policies and allow for successful implementation of similar programs in the future.

Under the previous waiver authority, many innovative and effective demonstration projects were successfully tested in States, providing the Department of Health and Human Services with new ideas for implementation at the national level. This legislation does not seek to reduce funding or services for child welfare at any level, but rather seeks to improve these services by allowing states the flexibility to test programs.

The bill introduced by my colleague from Washington addresses delays to guardianship for children in foster care, provides early and crisis intervention programs to improve the outcomes of the foster system, and addresses domestic violence that results in placement in foster care.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) reports that at the end of 2009, there were 423,000 children living in foster care. 26,600 of those children were from my home state of Texas. In fact, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services estimates that as of February 2011, 3,726 children in Houston were living in foster care. As the Representative for Texas' 18th Congressional District in Houston, I am committed to increasing the efficiency and improving the outcomes of foster care and other child welfare systems.

This legislation would continue a unique opportunity for states granted waivers to address the diverse needs of the cities and regions in that particular state. Of the 3,726 children in foster care throughout Houston, nearly 2,000 of those children are African American. While foster care disproportionately affects African Americans in Houston, these demographics change throughout the state. This program encourages innovation based on the needs of

states, and will certainly contribute to national initiatives.

Child welfare is a deeply important issue for this country. The Department of Health and Human Services estimates the 2010 Census will show the number of children in foster care is over half a million and will only continue to rise. It is our responsibility to take any possible measure to improve the outcomes of foster care, and renewing the authority granted to Health and Human Services under H.R. 1194 is essential to that goal.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. I continue to reserve the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I simply want to say again "thank you" to my colleague from Kentucky. This working relationship on behalf of children is one that has never gotten really political, and it is one of the nicest things about serving in Congress. So I appreciate having GEOFF come on as the new chairman of the committee.

I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful again to acknowledge my colleague Mr. McDERMOTT and his many years of work on this issue. The staff in both the majority and minority on the subcommittee have worked very hard through time on this issue to bring this bipartisan measure to the floor today.

Passage of H.R. 1194 will renew child welfare waiver authorities so States can again test new ways of helping at-risk youth. These waivers will let States develop new ideas, and allow them to spend money on what we know is most effective, which is working to keep children safely together with their families.

I urge passage of this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. QUAYLE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1194.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1930

HONORING MOUNTAIN HOME RESIDENT SERGEANT AUGIE HELD

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

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, on Thanksgiving Day 1944, current Mountain Home, Arkansas, resident Sergeant Augie Held took a bullet in his left shoulder. Held was 22 years old at the time and a member of 84th Infantry Division, Bravo Company. That was how Sergeant Held received his first Purple Heart. He was back to battle a mere 3 weeks later.

On December 19, 1944, during the Battle of the Bulge, Sergeant Held earned his second Purple Heart. Members of his company tried to take shelter from the cold in a barn, where they were attacked. Bullets and shrapnel went flying, and Sergeant Held took a piece of shrapnel to his left wrist.

Just 2 months later Sergeant Held was caught in mortar fire. Mortar hit so close to him it knocked him unconscious and a piece of shrapnel was embedded in his cheek, and that shrapnel stayed with him until he went stateside, and that was how Sergeant Held earned his third Purple Heart.

Sergeant Held is one of many First District residents in my home district in Arkansas who selflessly fought for America. Our district has an amazing group of veterans from World War I to the current War on Terror who put America first and their own lives second. These are the people that make this country great.

Yesterday was Memorial Day, a day to honor those who fought for our country and also remember the fallen soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice. My family and I spent this weekend honoring all who served, not only in the First District of Arkansas but all across America.

I want to thank the troops and their families for the shared sacrifice they make to our country. And a special thank you to Sergeant Augie Held, who is a living reminder of why I am so proud to be an American.

REMEMBERING RICHARD "PINKY" McNAMARA

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of Richard "Pinky" McNamara, entrepreneur, philanthropist, and former college athlete.

Pinky passed away last week at the age 78 after a battle with Alzheimer's disease. He attended the University of Minnesota on an athletic scholarship, eventually earning three varsity letters as halfback for the Golden Gophers.

Shortly after his graduation in 1956, Pinky embarked on a successful career in business, buying struggling companies and turning them around.

Over the years, Pinky McNamara would donate millions of dollars to his alma mater's liberal arts and athletic departments. Along with his brother, Bob, another former Golden Gopher, Pinky helped raise the funds to bring football back to the university's campus that he loved.

His philanthropic efforts will leave a lasting and permanent mark on campus, with the university's McNamara Alumni Center named in his honor. Pinky may be gone, but his legacy will always live on at the campus he loved.

NATO ASSEMBLY IN BULGARIA

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I return from a meeting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Varna, Bulgaria, where the U.S. delegation was chaired by Congressman MIKE TURNER, accompanied by MIKE ROSS, JO ANN EMERSON, and JEFF MILLER. We were welcomed by the former Mayor of Varna, Hristo Kirchev, who is a champion of freedom and democracy in a nation which, since 1990, has evolved from the chains of communist totalitarianism to being a vibrant free market democracy today.

Parliamentarians from NATO's 28 member nations and delegations, from Russia to Montenegro, were briefed on issues critical to promoting democracy in the world. Secretary General Anders Rasmussen presented a clear report on NATO's progress in Iraq and Afghanistan, while encouraging civil society movements in North Africa. Prime Minister Boyko Borisov of Bulgaria gave a stirring promotion of a missile defense system for Europe. Bulgaria is a valued partner of America.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

MEDICARE

(Mrs. BLACK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BLACK. I have been doing town hall meetings for the last 4 months, and up to this point I have had about 12. When Medicare comes up, people tell me, Don't touch my Medicare. Hands off my Medicare.

And you know what I tell them? There is a dirty little secret that the Democrats in Congress and the President don't want them to know, and that is their Medicare is already changed. Because last Congress, when this House passed ObamaCare, they robbed \$500 billion from Medicare to pay for their government takeover of health care.

Not only that, but ObamaCare set up an Independent Payment Advisory Board, or an IPAB, and you know what those 15 unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats will do? They are going to ration your Medicare to cut the costs and limit seniors' access to Medicare.

You know what else happens under this plan in a decade? There is no Medicare because the program will become bankrupt.

Now, the truth about the Republican plan and the Path to Prosperity: Under our plan we save Medicare. We address the unsustainable growth rate of Medicare so the program doesn't go bankrupt in 10 years. The Democrats have no plan to stop Medicare's descent into bankruptcy, but the Republicans do. And unlike ObamaCare, where you