

NEWS
FROM:

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS
SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, April 23, 1996

Contact: Clarkson
(202) 224-5358

MEDICARE

IN LIGHT OF ALARMING NEW NUMBERS, DOLE URGES PRESIDENT TO CHOOSE PATH OF LEADING - NOT MISLEADING - AMERICAN PEOPLE

Two years ago, the Medicare Trustees--three of whom are members of the President's Cabinet--reported to President Clinton and Congress that Medicare would be bankrupt by the year 2002.

From the day the Medicare Trustees issued their report, Republicans have worked to preserve and strengthen Medicare. We proposed to do this not by cutting Medicare--but by slowing its rate of growth. Under the Republican plan adopted by Congress, annual spending per Medicare beneficiary would increase from \$4,800 this year to more than \$7,200 in 2002.

If you believed what President Clinton and some of my friends on the other side of the aisle had to say, however, you would have thought that instead of increasing Medicare spending from \$4,800 per beneficiary to \$7,200 per beneficiary, Republicans were trying to throw America's seniors out on the streets. And to the President's credit as a public speaker, a lot of Americans believed what he was saying.

There is, however a very big difference between leading and misleading. Republicans chose to lead--and we suffered in the polls because of it. President Clinton chose to mislead--and he gained in the polls because of it.

But as a story in this morning's New York Times makes very clear, the President's gain came at the expense of the millions and millions of Americans who depend on Medicare.

The story reveals the fact that Medicare's Hospital Insurance Trust Fund, which pays hospital bills for the elderly and disabled, lost \$4.2 billion--that's billion with a "B"--in the first half of the current fiscal year. Those losses are more than 100 times larger than the \$35.7 million loss the Trust Fund experienced all last year.

The \$4.2 billion loss is also in stark contrast to the rosy scenario coming out of the White House last year. As part of their attempt to lead the public to believe that Republicans concern with Medicare was "much ado about nothing," they predicted that the Medicare Trust Fund would take in \$45 million more than it would spend in the current fiscal year. Obviously, the White House was as off base in its economic projections as they were in their political accusations.

The article also reports that Roland King, former chief actuary of the Health Care Financing Administration, which runs Medicare, said that after analyzing these new numbers, he believes the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund will not run out in 2002 as the Trustees originally projected. Instead, it will run out in 2000 or 2001.

I am sure that a number of Republicans are tempted to say "I told you so," this morning. But saying that will get us no closer to the solutions necessary to save Medicare from bankruptcy.

And so, this Senator stands ready to work on a bi-partisan basis to save, preserve, and strengthen Medicare. It is my hope that in the face of these alarming new numbers, the President will choose the path of leading rather than the path of misleading.

###

Clinton Judges Belie his Moderate Rhetoric

Unfortunately, Judge Daughtrey is not an aberration. Last year, in an important case before the D.C. Court of Appeals, two Clinton-appointed judges dissented from the court's majority opinion upholding the FCC's regulations prohibiting the transmission of indecency on television and radio during certain hours of the day. The purpose of these regulations is, obviously, to protect our children from images that would be harmful to their moral and psychological development. Yet, the two Clinton judges on the court joined with the two Carter appointees in arguing that these regulations somehow violate the First Amendment.

So while President Clinton touts the V-chip and holds high-profile White House conferences with television executives, his judges are attempting to strip the very protections that he supposedly supports. President Clinton may talk a moderate game, but his appointees to the federal bench are attempting to stamp their own brand of stealth liberalism on America.

And that's my point: selecting who sits on the federal bench is one of the most critical responsibilities of any President. Long after a President has left office, the judges he appoints will leave their mark on American society. While the Vice President may say that the Clinton administration appoints judges on the basis of excellence, not ideology, the facts -- regrettably -- tell a much different story.

###

* Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 3:10 p.m.