

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, May 4, 1995

Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

PROTECTING MEDICARE

TIME FOR PRESIDENT TO JOIN CONGRESS IN EFFORT TO PRESERVE, PROTECT & IMPROVE MEDICARE

Last month, the Medicare Board of Trustees issued it's annual report. Four members of this committee are appointees of President Clinton--three of them currently serve in his cabinet.

The trustees concluded that Medicare will begin to go broke next year, and will be completely bankrupt by the year 2002.

If this were to occur, no payments, by law, can be made by Medicare to pay for hospital care or for any other services paid for by the trust fund.

Thirty three million seniors and four million disabled individuals depend on the Medicare program every year. It is for them, and for those who will follow, that we must commit to preserving, improving and protecting the Medicare program.

On Tuesday, the Speaker of the House and I extended a verbal invitation to President Clinton, to sit down with us, and to begin working on a bi-partisan plan to preserve, improve and protect Medicare.

The President's Speech

Judging from the President's actions in the past weeks, and from remarks he delivered yesterday at the White House Conference on Aging, it appears that the President has once again chosen partisanship over leadership.

Instead of heeding the advice from his trustees, the President heeded the advice of his political pollsters, using yesterday's speech as an opportunity to engage in scare tactics and to mislead America's seniors.

Nevertheless, Speaker Gingrich and I are willing to give the President the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps he didn't watch the news Tuesday evening or read the paper yesterday. Perhaps no one at the White House told him of our invitation.

Written Invitation to President

So, yesterday afternoon, a letter from the Speaker and myself was delivered to the White House, and I ask unanimous consent that the text of that letter be placed in the record following my remarks.

In this letter we once again extend our invitation to the President, asking him to join us in a bi-partisan effort to preserve, improve, and protect Medicare. It was precisely this type of bi-partisan effort which saved Social Security in 1983, and it's what is needed today.

The President's Trustees & Relevance

It also appears to me that Treasury Secretary Rubin, Labor Secretary Reich, and Health and Human Services Secretary Shalala--all of whom serve as trustees, and all of whom signed the report calling for action now--have a great deal riding on the President's response.

The President's inaction to this date suggests one of two things: either he believes his trustees are incompetent and have reached an erroneous conclusion; or he accepts their conclusion and just doesn't believe it's the duty of his administration to solve the problem, in which case his trustees are irrelevant.

If, however, he treats the recommendations of his trustees seriously, then he has only one choice: to stop searching for campaign issues, and to join Congress in searching for solutions.

###