

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 299, AMENDING RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING OUTSIDE EARNED INCOME

Mr. SOLOMON, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104-441) on the resolution (H. Res. 322) providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 322), to amend the Rules of the House of Representatives regarding outside earned income, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2677, NATIONAL PARKS AND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEMS FREEDOM ACT OF 1995

Mr. SOLOMON, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104-442) on the resolution (H. Res. 323) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2677) to require the Secretary of the Interior to accept from a State donations of services of State employees to perform, in a period of Government budgetary shutdown, otherwise authorized functions in any unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System or the National Park System, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

UNAVOIDABLE QUESTIONS REGARDING IMPORTANT NATIONAL ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, as the only Independent in the Congress, someone who is not a Democrat or a Republican, I want to take this opportunity to raise some questions that my Democratic and Republican colleagues often choose not to deal with, questions which I think get to the root of some of the most important issues facing our Nation. But before I do that, let me say a few words about what is going on in Congress right now in terms of the partial closing down of the Government and the furloughing of some 280,000 American Federal employees.

The Government is shut down, partially shut down tonight for a reason that I think most people do not dispute. That is that the Republican leadership has not been able to pass and get signed the requisite appropriation bills. That is about it, pure and simple. If the appropriation bills were passed, the departments and the agencies would be funded, Government would be running as it always does, and 280,000 Federal employees would not be today furloughed, living in great anxiety, wondering what is going to be happening to them as Christmas approaches.

Mr. Speaker, the reason that the shutdown is taking place is that instead of passing a continuing resolution which would continue the Government's functioning, the Republican leadership is holding hostage the Federal employees, and saying to the President and saying to those of us in the House and in the Senate that "If you do not pass our 7-year balanced budget proposal, we are going to shut the Government down." That is what is going on.

Some of us very strongly object to the Republican 7-year balanced budget proposal. We think that it is right that the country moves forward toward a balanced budget, we think that the budget can be balanced in 7 years, but we very strongly disagree with the priorities that the Republican leadership has established. For example, many of us are terribly concerned about a \$270 billion cutback in Medicare, and a \$163 billion cutback in Medicaid.

□ 2045

Today the United States remains the only major industrialized Nation on Earth that does not have a national health care system guaranteeing health care to all people. So we already start off in much worse condition than many of the other industrialized nations.

My friend from Connecticut a moment ago mentioned Canada. We border on Canada, and in Canada, every man, woman, and child has health care and goes to the doctor of their choice without out-of-pocket expense. In Europe, different types of programs exist, but in all of the industrialized world, health care is guaranteed to their people. So many of us, therefore, regard it as abhorrent and very frightening that the Republican leadership wants to cut back significantly on Medicare and Medicaid.

Now, I know that many of my Republican friends say well, these are not cuts. Let me talk about that for a moment. If a worker goes to his employer and the employer says, Harry, the good news is that I am going to work out a 7-year contract with you, and today, hypothetically, you make \$25,000 a year, but Harry, at the end of the 7 years, guess what? You are going to be making \$26,000 a year. We are going to be spending \$1,000 more for you at the end of 7 years than we are today. Is that a cut, or is that not a cut?

Well, from the worker's point of view, my guess is that he or she would say, well, you know, thank you, but in 7 years there is a lot of inflation. My food prices are going up, my rent or mortgage is going up; it costs a lot of money to send my kid to college. \$1,000 is more than I am making today, but \$1,000 over 7 years does not keep pace with inflation.

So you can argue that the employer is spending more money, that is true. But you can also argue that from the worker's point of view at the end of 7 years, in this case, he is going to be

significantly worse off because his income has not kept pace with inflation.

Another example: An employer can say to 100 workers that we are going to be spending thus-and-such more for our work force at the end of 7 years, but guess what? We are going to be having more workers. We are going up from 100 workers to 150 workers. Is the employer spending more money? Yes, that employer is. But what happens to the individual worker? It could well be that the wages and benefits that worker receives has gone down.

Within that context, let me say a few words about Medicare. Now, in my State of Vermont, and I do not know that the figures and the statistics in Vermont are much different than the rest of the country, but 12 percent of the people in Vermont who are 65 years of age or older have incomes below the poverty level of \$7,360. Forty percent of senior citizens who are single have incomes below \$14,270. Nationally what we know is that 75 percent of seniors have incomes less than \$25,000. Within that context, let us talk about Medicare.

Under the Republican proposal, Medicare premiums would increase from the current rate of \$46.10 per month now to \$89 per month by 2002. Between now and 2002, seniors would be forced to pay, therefore, about \$1,700 more over that period of time. After 2002, they would pay over \$500 a year more for their premiums.

Now, we hear a whole lot of talk from our Republican friends that this is not a cut, we are spending thus-and-such more; but let us look at it from the other perspective. Let us look at it from the point of view of the a senior citizen in the State of Vermont right now who has an income mostly from Social Security of about \$10,000 a year, \$10,000 a year. Now, for some people with a whole lot of money, a \$500 a year increase in premiums may not be a lot of money, and I can understand that. But if you are living on \$10,000 a year, \$500 increase in premiums is 5 percent of your total income. It makes your Medicare premium payment 10 percent of your total income. That does not include MediGap that many senior citizens take out to cover areas of health care that Medicare does not cover; it does not include prescription drugs. So for elderly people in the State of Vermont and throughout this country who are low income, these cuts in fact are devastating.

Now, in terms of the Medicaid cuts, these are really quite incredible and heartless. At a time when many of us are trying to move this country in the direction of the rest of the industrialized world and are trying to make sure that every man, woman and child in this country has health insurance as a right of citizenship, what Medicaid does is make significant cuts in terms of the number of people who have health insurance.

Under the current Medicaid proposal that our Republican colleagues are