last week, he has missed 31 consecutive days of congressional session, including every day this month.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully submit that no Member should be paid for a month in which he completely failed to report for work and was sentenced to jail. Under the law, the Speaker has the authority to deduct from Members' salaries for each day they are absent from the House, unless the Member was absent for his sickness or family sickness.

Mr. Speaker, today I am submitting a letter to Speaker GINGRICH, signed by quite a few Members of the House, requesting him to stop this Member's collection of over $11,000 of taxpayers' money for September's salary. The National Taxpayers Union has led the investigation into the Speaker's authority into this matter and strongly supports this urgent request.

ETHICS INVESTIGATION REQUIRES CONSISTENCY

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

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, the credibility in this institution requires that both the public and the Members serving here know that there is consistency in the application of the processes by which Members are investigated for alleged wrongdoings. Specifically, that the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct follows the same process for each and every Member.

Simple due process for anyone requires that they know what to expect, and know what the procedures are. That is why I have some concern when I read that the gentlewoman from Connecticut, the present chair of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, was quoted as saying recently that, and I quote from the Hartford Courant, ''The letter of the law is not compelling to me. I will work with the rules. Our rules have a certain amount of flexibility. Our goal is to have a process that the committee members feel good about.''

Mr. Speaker, justice and Committee on Standards of Official Conduct investigations are not best conducted in a hot tub, feel-good atmosphere. I am concerned when an aide of hers quotes Speaker GINGRICH in 1987, when he said that investigation requires a high standard. I urge it to be followed today.

READ ALL ABOUT IT

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, read all about it. The Washington Post, Thursday, September 28. Democratic former Member of Congress, Tim Penny, ''Medicare Mistake.'' ''My party is making a big mistake. The Democratic Party is closely identified with Medicare, and rightfully so. Democrats first conceived of Medicare, put it into law. As architects of Medicare, we have a responsibility to shore up the program before it collapses.''

Democratic Congressman Tim Penny says:

> We cannot afford to ignore Medicare's shaky financial situation or put it off until after the next election. It is just too important. Medicare trustees have given us a 7-year warning. Those 7 years shouldn't be squandered in indecision, stall tactics and politicking. We should view this time as an opportunity to devise and employ creative solutions. Democrats should be the leaders in this debate, not the obstructionists.

Mr. Speaker, my parents are on Medicare. I love my parents. As Republicans, we are promoting protecting and preserving Medicare for this generation and future generations. Democrats, take Mr. Penny's comments seriously. Join us in the fight to protect it and stop the demagoguery.

THE EFFECTS OF A $270 BILLION CUT IN MEDICARE

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

Mr. PAYNE of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, in a few weeks this House will have a profound choice. We can cut $270 billion from the Medicare Program, or we can scrap big tax cuts and move forward with a reasoned program of Medicare reform.

Many of my constituents have made that choice. I have spoken to hundreds of them, both elderly and young people, about Medicare. They have looked at this budget and decided that it is unfair to pay for big tax cuts at the expense of health care for the elderly.

Mr. Speaker, I toured hospitals that are typical of the 13 rural hospitals in my district. One administrator told me that 56 percent of his facility's revenues are derived from Medicare and that Medicaid accounts for another 13 percent. This hospital is 50 miles from another acute care facility and, like many rural hospitals, it operates at the margins.

The hospital administrator told me that if cuts of the magnitude being proposed now in the Republican plan are adopted, they could well force this facility to close. Where will the elderly go then? If we move forward recklessly or cut too deeply just to pay for a tax cut, we will do irreparable damage.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this body to move responsibly and to reject $270 billion in cuts in Medicare.

DEMOCRATS: COME IN FROM THE RAIN

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, last week the Democratic leadership sat outside in the rain moaning and groaning and grandstanding for the television cameras about the Republican plan to preserve and strengthen Medicare and increase spending on Medicare.

What do others have to say about that? The Washington Post calls them ''medigogues.'' Former Congressman, Democratic Congressman, Tim Penny calls their tactic the ''Medicare mistake.'' He says:

> There was a time when Democrats were willing to act responsibly, but by politicizing the issue, Democrats are threatening the viability of the very program they created.

He goes on to say:

> We cannot afford to ignore Medicare's shaky financial situation or put it off until after the next election. It is just too important.

So, what have the Democrats done? Nothing. Where is their plan? Nowhere.

Mr. Speaker, that is not surprising for people who do not even know enough to come in from out of the rain.

THE REPUBLICAN RECORD AFTER 7 MONTHS

(Miss COLLINS of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Miss COLLINS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to inform you of the Republican record after 7 months. The Republican agenda is strictly an agenda that caters to the rich and powerful special interest and alienates and belittles the rest of us. For example, the Republicans have given families earning more than $100,000 a $245 billion tax cut while on the other hand they are cutting Medicare spending by $270 billion. Talk about robbing Peter to pay Paul—Paul must be an awfully happy camper.

Mr. Speaker, not only do the Republicans want to save the wealthy money—they want to give them money also. The Republicans are giving an average tax break of $20,000 a year to the richest 1 percent of taxpayers while senior citizens are going to experience an average reduction in Medicare benefits of more than $1,000 a year. I ask you, does this sound like a fair agenda for our seniors that have worked so long and hard for their benefits?

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Republicans want to hurt our educational system by making changes in our student loan program that would increase profits for banks and guarantee agencies while the spending cuts would make college students pay $4,500 to $7,500 more for each student loan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues, does this sound like a fair agenda for our seniors who have worked so long and so hard?

Mr. Speaker, these uncalled for tactics show you why the American people are becoming more disgruntled with the Government.

HELP SAVE MEDICARE

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

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, Democrats have been playing a broken record for the last few months. It goes something like this: ''Medicare is not really going bankrupt—Republicans only want to give a tax break to the rich.''

What unmitigated drivel. I've heard a lot of tall stories in my time, but this takes the prize. It is true that Republicans advocate tax cuts. But the vast overwhelming majority of those tax cuts go to middle-income working American families. One of those tax cuts is the $500-per-child tax credit for almost every child in America.

Now, let me ask a question: Are there more millionaires in this country, or working families with children?

The most important point to realize here is that tax cuts have nothing to do with Medicare. Even if the budget was balanced and rich people were taxed 100 percent of their income, Medicare would still go broke in 7 years.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats need to fix their broken record and begin helping Republicans save Medicare.

WHY CUT $270 BILLION FROM MEDICARE?

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

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, there are philosophical differences between Democrats and Republicans on Medicare, and there is no doubt that the Republican party would like $270 billion in tax cuts, but why $270 billion in tax cuts in the Medicare program? To pay for the tax breaks for the wealthiest 1.1 percent of all Americans and for tax breaks for corporations.

□ 1045

I sit on the Subcommittee on Health and Environment of the Committee on Commerce. As of October 10 we will begin the Medicare markup. We have never yet seen a bill. We have a 59-page summary. In that summary that we have read from cover to cover, nowhere, nowhere does it say that $270 billion will go and be reinvested into Medicare. Nowhere does it say that.

If they wanted to save Medicare, take the $270 billion in tax cuts and put it back into the Medicare system. What is going to happen, Mr. Speaker, is just what the U.S. News & World Report says: Tax exempt. You pay Uncle Sam.

How come thousands of American corporations do not? Because they are going to take the $270 billion in tax cuts out of Medicare and give it to the corporations.

CONTACT REPRESENTATIVES DIRECTLY

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

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, recently I received a letter from a senior citizen in my district, Mrs. Esther Koster, who responded to a letter I had sent her. She responded as follows:

DEAR SIR: It was refreshing to get a letter from a Congressman with information without having to sign a petition and send money. For the past month I have received a minimum of three letters a day from different organizations asking me to sign petitions and send money. At first I complied but lately it has gotten out of hand and now those letters go from the mailbox to the garbage without being opened. Are all these organizations necessary and how can I tell if some are using the funds for themselves or for other purposes?

Mr. Speaker, last month I gave a speech on this floor decrying the fraudulent organizations which are soliciting money from senior citizens, ostensibly to let us know their opinion. Mrs. Koster, I want to assure you, you do not have to send money to these organizations to let us know what you think. Spend 32 cents for a stamp to send us a letter, as you did. To all senior citizens out there, avoid these fraudulent organizations. Contact your Congressperson directly.

PEOPLE WANT THE LETTER OF THE LAW

(Mrs. SCHROEDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute, to revise and extend her remarks, and to include therein extraneous material.)

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, as an American, I feel very good about the fact that everybody is under the letter of the law. As a Member of this body during Watergate, I was very saddened by the fact that the Presidency was being attacked, but I also felt very good that we were showing the world that no one is above the letter of the law in this great and wonderful country, thanks to Thomas Jefferson and many of our forefathers and the rules they put together.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I felt sick because I found an article in the Hartford Courant in which the ethics charges against the Speaker were being discussed by the chairwoman of the Ethics Committee who said, the letter of the law is not compelling to me, that there is a lot of flexibility in our rules, and I wanted to put together a process that will make Members feel good.

I do not think people want that flexibility. I think they want the letter of the law.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the article to which I referred.

JOHNSON DEFENDS ETHICS CASE STANCE

(By John A. MacDonald)

WASHINGTON.—Rep. Nancy L. Johnson, R-6th District, confirmed Tuesday that she signed a 1988 letter to the House ethics committee urging if to conduct a ''full inquiry'' into complaints against then Speaker Jim Wright, a Texas Democrat.

The letter was a circulated by Rep. Newt Gingrich, who at the time was a relatively unknown Republican from Georgia. Now, he is speaker of the House and is the subject of complaints under review by the ethics committee.

Johnson became the committee's chairwoman when Republicans took control of the House in January.

In addition to the letter, Gingrich issued a press release may 26, 1988, in which he said it was ''vital'' for the committee to hire an outside counsel to pursue the complaints against Wright throughly.

The letter and press release are significant because many think they set a standard the committee has failed to meet in its Gingrich investigation.

Asked why that was not happening, Johnson said, ''This is Newt speaking, and you see some of our Democratic colleagues agree with him. . . . In signing this original letter, that didn't mean I agreed with him on all this stuff.''

Johnson's comments came during a wide-ranging meeting with Connecticut reporters.

The committee is considering complaints relating to a book deal Gingrich signed with media magnate Rupert Murdoch, the financing and promotion of a college course Gingrich taught in Georgia and whether the speaker allowed an outside consultant to perform official House business.

Johnson also defended the committee's decision not to use an investigative procedure set out in the House Ethics Manual.

''The letter of the law is not compelling to me,'' she said. ''I will work with our rules. Our rules have a certain amount of flexibility. . . . My goal is to have a process that the committee members feel good about.''

Rep. Jim McDermott of Washington, the senior committee Democrat, has objected to the course the committee is following, complaining that the panel was not prepared to question key witnesses who appeared in July. Tuesday, Johnson complained that McDermott had not raised his concerns with the committee before making them public.

McDermott did not respond to a request for comment.

As she has in the past, Johnson held out the possibility that the committee will turn for help to an outside counsel, as many House Democrats and several government watchdog groups have requested. But she said the 10-member panel, evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats, had not reached that point.

Responding to reports the panel was close to appointing an outside counsel, Johnson said, ''It is absolutely true, without doubt in my mind, that the committee has made no decision.''

Johnson sought to portray the committee as struggling to find the best way to achieve a consensus on how to complete its inquiry. ''Jim's position is certainly legitimate,'' she said, referring to McDermott.

But, she went on, ''Six-four decisions aren't healthy. They don't get you anywhere, particularly 6–4 procedural decisions. Six-four procedural decisions tend to set up 5–5 deadlocks.'' A 6–4 vote is the narrowest majority by which the 10-member committee can approve an action.

The letter Johnson and 70 other House Republicans signed in 1988 has been circulated in recent days by groups seeking an outside counsel with unlimited authority. It concluded: ''The integrity of the House of Representatives and the trust of the American people require a full inquiry [into the Wright complaints].''