

that it is not in order to cast reflections on the Senate.

RITALIN AND THE ROLE IT PLAYS IN THE LIVES OF STUDENTS IN NORTHEAST OHIO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE), I am glad to see the gentleman standing up there. He looks wonderful.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this great Chamber to talk about a report recently aired on my local NBC affiliate, News Channel 3. The report highlighted ritalin and the role this drug now plays in the lives of students in northeast Ohio. The report raised such concern that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) and I met with Department of Education officials today to direct their attention to this problem and request an investigation into the indiscriminate promotion and use of this drug and the potential harmful effects.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) and I believe the decision to prescribe ritalin to a child should rest with that child's physician and their parents.

Oftentimes, ritalin is prescribed to address attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. It is widely accepted as the remedy of choice for people who suffer from this brain disorder. Unfortunately, the medical community has not been able to develop a definitive test to properly diagnose ADD or ADHD related behavior. This oftentimes leads to a misdiagnosis.

The report has highlighted many examples. One, for example, is of Pam Edwards whose son Romeal attended a Catholic school in my district and was instructed to have her son use ritalin to address his behavior problem. In the alternative, her son would not be allowed to return to the school the next year if she did not. She refused to put him on this drug because she knew the root of her son's problems resulted from outside factors instead of an ill-diagnosed case of ADD.

□ 1800

I am happy to report that Romeal is doing fine in a new school and he did not need Ritalin. This is a success story, but there are many more Romeals out there whose parents might not have the insight to seek alternatives to Ritalin.

ADD or ADHD is a multiple symptom disorder coupled with the fact that many children exhibit a wide range of behavior that might be attributed to ADD or ADHD. In actuality it may or may not be that. Kids in fact will be kids.

ADD or ADHD is defined as a persistent pattern of inattention or hyper-

activity that occurs at four times more frequently in boys than girls.

When a person has been properly diagnosed with ADD or ADHD and Ritalin is prescribed, it has a remarkable track record of success. Oftentimes the drug is viewed as a godsend by parents and teachers alike because its effect is dramatic once prescribed to people who are hyperactive or easily distracted as a way to focus their minds, calm down and improve their attention spans.

Recently, at the urging of the National Institutes of Health, medical experts from around the country convened a panel discussion with doctors to address how Ritalin is being used in our society.

The use of Ritalin is not only a medical concern but it also is a big business. 1.3 million children take Ritalin regularly and sales of the drug topped \$350 million in 1995.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, the number of prescriptions for this drug has increased by over 600 percent in the last 5 years. To address this concern, manufacturers sent letters to doctors and pharmacists warning them to exert greater control over the drug.

No, I am not pointing fingers at the teachers or administrators because I know that they are one of America's greatest treasures. I am not pointing fingers at doctors or psychologists, but there appears to be a trend in my district, and I would guess the 11th Congressional District of Ohio is not unique in the use of Ritalin for behavioral purposes.

Nearly half a million prescriptions were written for controlled substances like Ritalin in 1995 for children between the ages of 3 and 6. The percentage of children with an ADHD diagnosis has jumped from 55 percent in 1989 to 75 percent in 1996. ADHD is estimated to affect 3 percent to 5 percent of children aged 5 to 14 years old, or about 1.9 million youngsters. About 10 million prescriptions were written in 1996. According to the IMS Health Association, 13.9 million prescriptions of stimulants, including Ritalin, were dispensed to children during the last school year, an 81.2 percent increase from 7.7 million 5 years earlier.

There is not a set guideline for diagnosing ADD or ADHD. No studies have been conducted in children younger than 4 years. For example, in Chicago, one of the ways that they have begun to deal with the issue is a public school system will address ADHD by offering teaching techniques.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) for assisting me and supporting me in this effort.

IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING THE NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

ON RITALIN PRESCRIPTIONS

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, before I begin with the comments that I came to make tonight, I would like to say that I think the previous speaker has pointed out some very important things about the prescriptions of Ritalin in this country. I remember a few months ago reading in the Knoxville News-Sentinel that a retired DEA official, in fact I think he was second in command of the DEA at one time who now has retired to east Tennessee, he wrote an article pointing out that our medical community was prescribing Ritalin at over six times the rate of any other industrialized nation. I think there is a serious question as to whether or not that very serious drug, that very serious controlled substance has been overprescribed in this country, and I think we need to be very, very careful with that and make sure that it is not being used in cases where particularly small children and particularly small boys might simply be a little more active or rambunctious than some others. I do raise that cautionary note.

ADMINISTRATION PROPOSED SPENDING

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to comment about the last comments of the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) who mentioned the some 80 new programs that the President proposed in his State of the Union address. The National Taxpayers Union put out a report saying that those programs if all were enacted would cost us \$288.4 billion in the first year. Newsweek had an even more interesting table a few weeks ago and had a chart which showed that if we enacted all of those programs that the President proposed, that it would lead to a \$2.3 trillion shortfall in the first 15 years. We have a good economy now but if we do something like that and allow at least a \$2.3 trillion shortfall to accumulate over these next 15 years, we could not pay the Medicare bills, we could not pay the Social Security bills, we could not do many of the most important things that the people of this country want us to do.

I rise though, Mr. Speaker, today to speak on several unrelated but very important issues facing this Nation right at this time. First, we are bombing Iraq and sending troops to Kosovo without votes by the Congress to do so. We still have troops in Bosnia in 1999 even though the President originally promised that they would stay in Bosnia no longer than the end of 1996. Yes, 1996. A few years ago, as I have mentioned before on this floor, the front page of the Washington Post had a story reporting that our troops in Haiti were picking up garbage and settling domestic disputes. Then about a year ago, I heard another Member of this body say that we had our troops in Bosnia, among other things, giving rabies shots to dogs. Certainly none of us have anything against the Haitians or the Bosnians. We want to try to help them, but I believe, Mr. Speaker, that

most Americans believe that the Haitians should pick up their own garbage and the Bosnians should give their own rabies shots. We have spent billions and billions of hard-earned tax dollars in recent years in Haiti, Rwanda, Bosnia and Somalia, and now in Kosovo we are going to be spending more, trying to settle or end ethnic or religious conflicts that have gone on in many cases for hundreds of years. We have spent several billions, and I am saying billions with a B, over the last few months in Iraq bombing people that our leaders tell us are not our enemies. Saddam Hussein is a ruthless, mentally ill dictator who apparently has killed many people in order to stay in power. I would agree with any bad thing you wanted to say about Hussein. In fact, I voted for the bill at the end of the last Congress to spend \$100 million to try to help remove him. Eight years ago I voted for the original Gulf War. But at that time Hussein had moved against another country, Kuwait, and he was threatening others. He had what at that time was considered to be the most powerful military in the Middle East, although we now know that his military strength had been greatly exaggerated or overestimated. But we had to stop Hussein from moving throughout the Middle East and taking over several other countries.

Now, though, his military was almost wiped out by the earlier war. He had been greatly weakened even further by the years of economic embargoes and sanctions since then. Hussein did not move against us or anyone else this time or even threaten to do so. We justify this bombing by alleging that Iraq had weapons or has weapons of mass destruction but they were weapons that U.N. inspectors did not find. Also, several countries have weapons of mass destruction, including us and most of our strongest allies. We cannot bomb everyone or every nation which has a weapon of mass destruction.

Robert Novak, the nationally syndicated columnist, called this war against Iraq a phony war. He is correct, but unfortunately it is a phony war that is costing U.S. taxpayers billions, billions that we could be using for many better purposes.

Former Congressman and Cabinet Secretary Jack Kemp said this: "The bombing is wrong, it's unjustified, and it must stop. The Iraqi people have done nothing to America or Great Britain to warrant the dropping of bombs in Baghdad."

U.S. News & World Report said: "Displays of American military might often leave the rest of the world puzzled, and this one was particularly discomfiting to both the usual carpers and friends. People spread around the world were left to wonder, like many Americans, whether this was a justified attack, or just a tack, by an American President desperate to forestall impeachment."

We are basically bombing a defenseless nation, and most Americans do not

even feel like we are at war. It is unbelievable that we are dropping bombs on people and not even giving it a second thought.

After the President's apology last August was such a monumental flop, he then ordered bombs to be dropped on Afghanistan and the Sudan, some people felt, to draw attention away from his personal problems. We now know from national press reports that we bombed a medicine factory and other civilian locations.

Also, we know that the President rushed into that bombing without notifying the Joint Chiefs of Staff or even the head of the FBI who is usually notified of actions against terrorists.

Also, the Sudan and Afghanistan bombings were done over the objections of the Attorney General. Now most people do not even remember that we did those bombings last August. Now we are bombing once again a country that cannot take one hostile or overt step against us and did not even threaten to do so. We are making enemies all over this world out of people who want to be our friends.

We started this latest Iraqi bombing on the eve of impeachment proceedings in the House, once again very questionable timing. We found out later from U.N. weapons inspector Scott Ritter that the UNSCOM report had been rigged with the White House in a lame attempt to try to justify the bombing.

The Christian Science Monitor, one of our leading national newspapers, and a newspaper, I might say, that usually supports the President, reported a few days ago that there are conflicts, fighting going on right now in 46 different locations around the world. Are we going to send troops to all 46? Are we going to send troops into every country? Obviously we cannot do this. It would cost far too many billions, and even our wasteful Federal Government does have some limits.

Right now our young people and many others are concerned about the future of Social Security. We really do not know how we will pay the staggering medical bills of the future. At a time when both air passenger traffic and air cargo traffic are shooting way up and all economic development is so tied into aviation, the President's budget is cutting aviation spending by several billion by reducing the Airport Improvement Program and eliminating the general fund contribution to the FAA. Yet we are spending billions to turn our military into international social workers.

We should try to be friends with every nation in the world, but we should not mortgage our own future in the process. We should send advisers in every field to help other nations which want us to do that. But we cannot continue sending billions and billions every time some other nation has a serious problem. Also, where there is an international tragedy of some sort, we need to quickly convene a meeting and ask Sweden and Germany and France

and Japan and all other nations how much they will contribute. Right now we are carrying far too much of these burdens on our shoulders alone.

And we basically are following a CNN foreign policy. We seem to get involved in a big way in whichever situation is being given the most prominence at the moment on the national news. Now we are going into Kosovo against the recommendations of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, columnist Charles Krauthammer and many, many others.

George Washington in his farewell address warned us against entangling ourselves in the affairs of other nations. Dwight Eisenhower, a career military man, warned us against the military-industrial complex.

Why are we doing these things? Why are we attempting to be the world's policeman? Why are we so eager to drop bombs and doing so in such a cavalier, even careless manner?

Part of it involves money, the military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned us about. Eisenhower believed, and I believe, that national defense is one of the most important and most legitimate functions of our national government. But some leaders of the military, now that most Cold War threats have diminished, are desperately searching for military missions so that their appropriations will not be cut. How else can you explain such eagerness to send troops or to drop bombs on countries which are no threat whatsoever to our national security and where no vital U.S. interest is at stake? Those should be the key tests, whether our national security or whether a vital U.S. interest is at stake. Certainly that is not present in Kosovo or many of these other places where we have gone and where we have spent so many billions in recent years.

Then, too, I think we are doing it in part because of the psychology of power and of human beings. Most men when they are running for President want that position more than anything they have ever wanted. But I think they soon become dissatisfied with running only the United States and then start wanting more. They want to be seen as world statesmen, great leaders of the world, not simply just a great leader of the U.S. alone. It seems to be human nature to always want more or something different, and this is especially true of hard-charging, ambitious, driven people. And these desires, these ambitions are always encouraged and supported by companies which benefit from billions in military expenditures, the military-industrial complex about which Eisenhower warned us.

□ 1815

Many liberals and big-government types, even some big-government conservatives, resort to name calling and childish sarcasm against anyone who opposes spending all these billions overseas. They will not discuss these issues on the merits but simply dismiss

as isolationist anyone who speaks out against any foreign adventure that they dream up.

Our first obligation though, Mr. Speaker, as the Congress of the United States, should be to the citizens and taxpayers of the United States. It should not be to take billions and billions of their money and spend it on problems in Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and on, and on, and on. What we need are foreign policies that put this Nation and its people first for a change. What we need is an American-first foreign policy, even if it is not politically correct or fashionable to say so.

Apparently, many people accept wasting all these billions today because they think our economy is stronger than it really is. Well, I might just say a few things about that. Levi Strauss has just announced that it is moving 6,000 more jobs to other countries. Last year, that company closed its largest facility in my hometown of Knoxville; and 2,200 people lost their jobs.

Last year was a record layoff in this country, a record year in this country for layoffs. Personal bankruptcies are at an all-time high, 1.4 million this past year alone. Our trade deficit hit a record 170 billion which means conservatively, according to the economists, we lose at least 20,000 jobs per billion, 3.4 million jobs, 3,400,000 jobs to other countries.

Many college graduates today cannot find jobs except in restaurants, and certainly there is nothing wrong with working in a restaurant, but you hope that people who get bachelors and masters degrees from colleges can find something a little better than that.

Our trade deficit with Japan reached 64 billion. The deficit with China was 57 billion, 57 billion. This is the same China that funneled millions in campaign contributions to influence the last presidential election.

The President has done several things, this administration has done several things, that will be very harmful for this Nation for many years long after he has left office and the administration has left office, when the problems that have been caused will be blamed on someone else. One involves the Chinese. The President ordered the sale of missile technology to the Chinese unbelievably over the objections of the State Department, the Defense Department and the Justice Department. Now the Chinese have, according to our intelligence reports, at least 13 nuclear warheads aimed at the U.S., missiles they could not have gotten here without the technology that millions of campaign contributions apparently got for them. Some apparently came from top executives of the Hughes Electronic Corporation, which sold some of this technology to the Chinese.

Now the Chinese have missiles pointed at Taiwan, our ally that we have a legal obligation to defend. We will now have to spend billions, extra billions, in

the years ahead to defend against this Chinese threat, the same Chinese who are eating our lunch in trade to the tune of a \$57 billion trade deficit with that country alone last year.

Nations like China at 57 billion, I might repeat, would be 1.4 million jobs, 1,400,000 jobs lost from this country to China last year because of that trade deficit. Nations like China, like Japan, nations all over this world need access to our markets far more than we need theirs. We need free trade, but it needs to be free in both directions, and we have economic leverage that we have not used in recent years because we have not put our own country first. We need trade policies that put America and its workers first even if our President and the national media and multinational businesses do not agree.

Another example of how the President's policy will hurt people for many years to come is the decision to lock up the largest low-sulfur coal deposit in the world in Utah, once again apparently in return for hundreds of thousands or possibly millions in campaign contributions from the Riady family of Indonesia, the owners of the second-largest low-sulfur coal deposit. Because our utilities are required to buy mostly low-sulfur coal, people all over this Nation will have to pay higher utility bills for years because of a political decision done in secret which had the double whammy effect of gaining huge campaign contributions and pleasing environmental extremists.

That brings me to another but related point. Environmental extremists are the new radicals, the new socialists, the new leftists in this country today. Many people do not realize how extreme many of them have become. They almost always, these environmental extremists almost always come from wealthy or upper middle income backgrounds and usually have sufficient wealth to insulate themselves from the harm they do to the poor and working people of this country. Everyone wants clean air and clean water, but some of these environmental extremists are not satisfied that we have the toughest clean air and clean water laws and other tough environmental laws, the toughest in the world. They constantly demand more, often supported by large contributions from many of our biggest corporations.

And I might say that the administration is trying to convince us to enter into the Kyoto agreement. Well, the Kyoto agreement is really just an attempt by some people that are upset that we have only 4 percent, a little over 4 percent of the world's population, yet we have about 25 percent of the world's wealth, and they want do a massive transfer of that wealth to other less developed countries. And so there is something like 125 less developed countries who do not have to participate and abide by the Kyoto agreement, but we have to.

And if we go through with that, if the Senate was to ratify that or if we try

to go through the back door and enact all the Kyoto protocols in appropriations bills and in various other ways through regulations, we will destroy so many thousands of jobs in this country and drive up prices, and once again the people that will be hurt the most will be the poor and working people of this country.

I mentioned that many of these environmental extremists are supported by some of our biggest corporations. The big corporations can comply with all the rules and regulations and red tape. They have the money and the staff and the lobbyists and the political connections to do so. And what happens? The big keep getting bigger and the small and now even the medium-sized business struggle to survive or go by the wayside.

When I was growing up, a poor man could start a gas station. Now, primarily due to all the environmental and governmental regulatory overkill, only the wealthy or big corporations can do it. Environmental extremists destroy jobs and opportunities, drive up prices and in the process become the best friends extremely big businesses have ever had.

There is a big move now to cut down on agricultural run-off or spill-off. Here again the regulations are making it even harder for small farmers to survive while big corporate farms, agribusiness really, can benefit by seeing much of their competition with small farmers removed.

Big government in the end, Mr. Speaker, has really helped primarily extremely big businesses and the bureaucrats who work for the Federal Government, and that is really all they have. The poor and the working people in this country and the small business people and the small farmers get the shaft. Everyone else gets the shaft. The intended beneficiaries get a few crumbs from most programs, but more jobs would be created and prices would be lower if more government money was left in the private sector.

In fact, government money does create jobs, but money left in the private sector creates on the average about two and one half times as many jobs. Why? The private sector, especially small business, is simply less wasteful and more efficient in their spending. They have to be to survive.

Edward Rendell, the Democratic mayor of Philadelphia, said in a congressional hearing a few years ago, quote:

Government does not work because there is no incentive for people to work hard, so many do not. There is no incentive for people to save money, so much of it is squandered.

How true that statement is.

The easiest thing in the world, Mr. Speaker, is to spend other people's money. Also, when it comes to politicians, usually those who proclaim their compassion the loudest usually have the least with their own personal money.

Talk about the efficiency of the private sector. I had the privilege of meeting a few days ago with the head of Embraer, a Brazilian company that produces regional jets. He said that when Embraer was a government corporation in late 1994, it was producing \$40,000 of product per employee. The company privatized in December of 1994 and now produces \$240,000 per employee, six times as much in just a little over 4 years.

When speaking of the great benefits of a private, free-enterprise economy, we should remember that private property is one of the keys, one of the foundation stones of prosperity. Today, however, the Federal Government owns over 30 percent of the land in this country, and State and local governments and quasi-governmental units own another 20 percent. Approximately half the land today is in some type of government control, and the really worrisome thing is the rapid rate at which governments at all levels are taking on even more.

In addition, governments are putting more and more restrictions on what private land owners can do with their own land, taking away or putting limitations on a very important part of our freedom. They also, if they take over much more land, will drive out of reach for many young Americans a big part of the American dream, and that is to own their own homes. Once again, much of this is done or accepted in this misguided worship of the environment, leading to a very great expansion of government control over our lives.

Some environmental extremists even advocate something called the Wildlands Project, which has the goal of turning 50 percent of the United States into wilderness where it is not already designated that way. This may sound good on the surface, but it would require moving millions of people out of their homes and off of land that they presently own.

People take better care of land they personally own than they do of property that is publicly owned. Look at the big city housing projects that have had to be blown up after just 15 or 20 years because no one felt the pride of ownership, and the properties deteriorated unbelievably fast.

We would be better off and could sustain a good economy far longer if we had more land in private ownership and less in public or government control. Yet we are going very rapidly in the opposite direction, and our wonderful environmental extremists fight the Federal government giving up even one acre of land. They want more and more and more.

What an environmentalist should realize is that the socialist and communist nations have been the worst polluters in the world. Their economic systems did not give people incentives or put pressure on them to conserve and instead really encouraged or at least did not prevent wasteful use of resources.

Also, our environmentalist should realize that only capitalist free market economies can produce the excess funds necessary to do the good things for the environment that we all want done. Environmental extremists have done such a good job in recent years brainwashing young people that I bet very few even realize that we have far more land in forests in the U.S. today than we did 50 years ago or that forests, to remain healthy, some trees need to be cut.

When control of Congress changed, and I will talk about the economy again for a minute, when control of the Congress changed hands in November of 1994, the stock market was at 3800. Today, the Dow Jones average is almost at 9400. The economy has done well for several reasons, among which are we reformed the welfare system against two presidential vetoes and several million people are now contributing and paying in rather than taking out. Also, the Congress brought Federal spending under control by passing a balanced budget, once again against three presidential vetoes, but at least we brought Federal spending under control.

There is a misunderstanding or misimpression among some that we have cut Federal spending. Federal spending has gone up each year. It is just that instead of giving, as we routinely were, just 8 or 10 years ago giving 10 and 12 and 15 and 18 percent increases to almost every department and agency, we are now giving 2 or 3 percent increases.

□ 1830

We have Federal spending under control. Also the Federal Reserve has acted in a very conservative manner, and we have reduced the capital gains tax and stopped the trend towards higher and higher Federal taxes.

However, Federal taxes are still far too high. They are taking more of our GDP than at any time in the last 55 years since World War II. As I mentioned a few minutes ago in the colloquy with some of my colleagues on the Floor, today the average person, not the wealthy but the average person, is paying about 40 percent of his or her income in taxes of all types, Federal, State, and local, and at least another 10 percent in government regulatory costs.

One member of the other body said not too long ago that one spouse works to support government while the other spouse works to support the family. Yet, the President said in Buffalo recently, as we quoted here earlier, that we cannot give the people a tax cut because they would not spend it wisely. They would do a far better job, Mr. Speaker, spending it than our wasteful, inefficient Federal Government would.

One example, and I could give many today, the Federal Government spends about \$26,000 per year per student in the Job Corps program. Most of this money goes to fat cat government con-

tractors and bureaucrats, so these students would be shocked to know that we are spending this much on them each year. But we could give each of these students a \$1,000 a month allowance, send them to some expensive private school, and still save money, and the young people involved would probably feel like they had won the lottery.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me spend a few minutes discussing one topic of great importance. Before I get into this final topic, let me just give another example of how harmful all of this overtaxation and over government spending has hurt the American people, and particularly, American families.

Before I came to Congress I spent 7½ years as a criminal court judge trying felony criminal cases. About 96 or 97 percent of those people plead guilty in the criminal courts throughout the country. Then they apply for probation. So I received, in that 7½ years, several thousand reports going into the backgrounds of all of these defendants.

The first day I was judge, Gary Tulick, the chief probation counselor for East Tennessee, told me that 98 percent of the defendants in felony cases came from broken homes. I would read over and over and over and over again reports like, defendant's father left home to get pack of cigarettes and never came back. Defendant's father left home when defendant was 2 and never returned.

I know that many wonderful people have come from broken homes, but I also know that, particularly with young boys, that the breakup of a home has had an extremely harmful effect on many young boys.

I saw a report in the Washington Times a few years ago in which two leading criminologists had studied 11,000 felony cases from around the country. They said the biggest single factor in serious crime, bar none, nothing else was even close, was father-absent households. How true that is.

In 1950 the Federal Government was taking about 4 percent from the average family, and State and local governments were taking another 4 percent, roughly. Many women had the choice of staying at home to raise their children, and many families were able to stay together, because most marriages—I saw one study which showed that 59 percent of all marriages break up in arguments over finances. That is the biggest single factor, disagreements about money.

But today, and for many years, the government at all levels has been taking so much money from the families of America that I think it has caused many serious problems. Many families I think have not been able to stay together or have ended up getting in serious disputes that have led to divorces and the breakup of families because government at all levels has been taking so much money from them.

I believe that the best thing we could do to lower the incidence of serious crime in this country would be to

greatly decrease the size and cost of the government at all levels, so that the families of this country could keep more of their own money to spend on their children in the ways that they see fit and that they know are best for them and their children.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me talk on one last topic for a few minutes, discussing something that is of great importance to everyone. That is health care.

Today health care is the only thing all of us pay for through a third-party payer system. If we bought food through a third-party payer system, millions would be starving. If we bought cars through a third-party payer system, a Yugo probably would have cost us \$300,000.

Before the Federal Government got into medical care in a big way in the mid sixties, medical costs were low and flat for many years. A lot of young people ought to look at that, and look back and see how low and flat medical costs were for all those years that the Federal Government stayed out of it. But when the Federal Government got into it in a big way in the mid sixties, we took what was a very minor problem for a very few people and turned it into a major problem for everyone.

I remember in the late seventies when the liberals were saying Medicaid would save the medical system. Four or five years ago the Washington Post ran a series of front page stories about Medicaid. A member of the other body, Senator ROCKEFELLER, who I think was one of the people who helped found the Medicaid system, was quoted as saying about Medicaid, "It is a horrible system, a vile system, and it ought to be abolished."

A scholar from the Brookings Institution said about it, "It is a success story of the American political system. We create a system so horrible that we are forced to go to total reform."

I was told yesterday by one of the leaders of the Tennessee legislature that TennCare, our replacement or reform of Medicaid, will go up 12 percent this year, and maybe as much as 15 or 20 percent a year in future years. If it does, we would be in a catastrophic situation. Third-party payer systems are inevitably doomed to failure. They will never work. In any politicized medical system, those who are the best organized or most politically powerful get rich, but it is a disaster for everyone else.

In recent years we have seen some doctors, nursing home operators, big home health care operators, and big hospital chain owners get rich, but we have turned health care into a major problem for everyone except possibly Bill Gates and Warren Buffett.

In a private free market system, we get much more fairness and we do not have the big winners and even bigger losers that we have in a politicized big government medical system.

In fact, the main point of what I have been saying here tonight is just that.

Poor and working people can get lower prices and many more job opportunities and have much better lives in a true free market system than in any other way.

If Members do not believe that, all they have to do is look around the world. I remember in the former Soviet Union the leaders of the former Soviet Union had, before their total collapse that they are undergoing right now, they had their dachas by the sea and their limousines and their special department stores. Other people, which was the great, great majority, 99-plus percent of the people, had to line up for hours to buy, say, a pound of sausage, or something that we run into a store for and take for granted as being able to purchase.

Every place in the world where the people have let the government get too big, people have ended up starving. It really is pretty simple, Mr. Speaker. Big government means a very small elite upper class, a huge underclass, and almost no middle class. A very small government means a very small elite, a huge middle class, and very few at the bottom.

We really should pay for medical care the same way that we pay for food. Then it would be cheap. If we could get the government and the insurance companies out of medical care, medical costs probably would not even be 5 percent of what they are. However, too many doctors and nursing home owners and health care providers are getting rich off the system the way it is today to get the government and the insurance companies out.

So since we cannot realistically do that, the only real hope is to go to a medical savings account or medical voucher system to get the consumer involved once again, to give people some incentives to shop around for medical care.

Right now we are distorting the law of supply and demand, because the number of doctors is going way up but so are the costs. We need to get at least some free market incentives into the system, because we are headed for a collapse within our medical system if we do not. Then the people will start demanding, if we let it collapse, they will start demanding national government-run health care, which is the worst of all worlds, as has been shown in country after country all over this world. Then we would end up with shortages, waiting periods, rationing, the closing of many small and rural hospitals, people having to go further and further distances for health care, a rapid decline in the quality of care, and on and on.

If the government had not gotten into medical care to the extent it already has, we never would have had HMOs and people being kicked out of hospitals way too early, or denied treatment in the first place.

We need major reform in medical care, Mr. Speaker, but if we give even more government control and involve-

ment, the system will become even more expensive as it grows worse and worse. The few will get rich and the many will suffer, as with any and every big government program.

AMERICA'S BIGGEST SOCIAL PROBLEM: ILLEGAL NARCOTICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House tonight and the American public to talk about a problem which I believe is our biggest social problem as a country, our biggest social problem as a Congress. That is the problem of illegal narcotics and the damage it is doing to our population, and particularly to our young people across this land.

Some people in Congress or some people in leadership positions would have us think that the Y2K problem is the major problem, or that other dotting I and crossing T of legislation is the major problem facing Congress. But I believe that we have no more important responsibility as legislators of this Nation than to see that we do the best job possible in addressing a problem, an epidemic that is ravaging havoc, particularly among our young people.

The statistics are mind-boggling. Last year over 14,200 Americans lost their lives because of drug-related deaths. Let me cite a few other statistics that every Member of Congress and every American should be aware of, when they turn away from the question of a drug problem, when they are given some other problem, smoking or Y2K or whatever the issue of the day may be that rates in the polls. Let me talk about the hard facts of what illegal narcotics are doing to us as a Nation.

The overall number of past month heroin users increased 378 percent from 1993 to 1997 in this country. Between 1992 and 1997, drug-related emergency room episodes nationwide increased 25 percent, and they increased 7 percent between 1996 and 1997. Between 1993 and 1997, LSD emergency room incidents increased 142 percent; not declined, but inclined.

Additionally, from 1993 to 1997, our youth aged 12 to 17 using drugs has more than doubled. It has increased 120 percent. There has been a 27 percent increase between 1996 and 1997. This is a 1998 national household survey.

In 1998, more than three-quarters, actually 7 percent, of our high school teens reported that drugs are sold or kept at their schools, an increase of 6 percent over 1996.

During 1997, statistically significant increases in heroin emergency room incidents were observed in Miami, a 77 percent increase; in New Orleans, a 63 percent increase; in Phoenix, a 49 percent increase; and in Chicago, a 47 percent increase.