

few words. She may be able to survive without a tube.

Another important point I want to make here, there was a \$1.56 million medical malpractice settlement that was provided for her care. Much of that has been spent on legal fees trying to end her life. This is not a case where the State is spending a lot of money. The resources are there to take care of her needs in the future. Her parents do not want to see her dying of starvation and thirst. I think it is fully appropriate for us to step in, for her to have a right, the same right a death row inmate gets, and to allow, hopefully, review in front of a Federal judge reviewing all of the facts in this case. When doctors really look at the facts, I think it is very, very hard to justify ending her life in such a way.

So I would encourage all of my colleagues to sign on and support the bill and, most importantly, for our leadership on both sides of the aisle to allow expedited review. If not, her tube is scheduled to come out March 18.

THE VALUES OF DEMOCRACY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, something terribly wrong has happened in the House of Representatives. I am not talking about, from a partisan standpoint, the Republican takeover in 1995, I am not even talking about the ascension of Newt Gingrich to the Speakership. What I am talking about is the ascension of a new kind of House leaders who have run this institution even as former Speaker Gingrich has said, not in the fairest possible way, basically in an unprecedented way. We have seen things in the House of Representatives in the last couple of years that we have literally never seen.

I want to tell a story and spell out what I mean by this one example. Beginning a couple of years ago, at 2:54 a.m. on a Friday in March, the House of Representatives cut veterans' benefits by three votes.

At 2:39 a.m. on a Friday in April, the House slashed education and health care benefits by five votes.

At 1:56 a.m. on a Friday in May, the House passed the Leave No Millionaire Behind tax-cut bill by a handful of votes.

At 2:33 a.m. on a Friday in June, the House passed the first round of the Medicare privatization bill by one vote.

At 12:57 a.m. on a Friday in July, the House eviscerated Head Start by one vote.

After returning from summer recess, at 12:12 a.m. on a Friday in October, the House voted \$87 billion for Iraq.

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Always on a Thursday night, Friday morning, always in the middle of the night, always after the public has

turned their TV sets off and gone to bed and after most of the media which sits up there has left. As I said, always on a Thursday night, because if it gets in the paper at all, it would appear then in the Saturday paper, the paper that is the least read paper of the week.

That was just the beginning. Then came the Medicare vote. The final round of the Medicare vote took place in November. The debate began at midnight on a Friday night in November. The debate took 3 hours. The vote began at 3 a.m. Members of Congress are given this card, which we stick in a little black box on the House floor to vote. The votes as we all know are then recorded electronically. Almost all of us went down and cast our votes. Pretty soon after the vote was called at 3 o'clock in the morning, the privatization of Medicare, the most important piece of domestic legislation that probably anybody in this body had ever voted on, at 3 o'clock in the morning the vote began, as I said. We are normally given 15 minutes, an extra 5 minutes sometimes, to cast our votes. Normally not much more than that.

At 3:30 the vote was still on. At 4 o'clock, an hour after the vote had begun, an hour after most of us voted, the vote was 216 "yes" and 218 "no." At about 4:15, the Republican leadership, the Speaker of the House, the majority leader, the chairman of the committee and I are on that wrote the bill began to go around to recalcitrant Members of their party, Republican Members who had voted "no," trying to get them to change their vote. It is now 4:30. They woke up the President of the United States who from his living quarters at the White House got on the phone and began to try to lobby the 26 or 27 Members of the Republican side who had voted "no" on Medicare. They all stood their ground.

At about 4:45, the Republican leaders surrounded Nick Smith, a Republican from Michigan, who told his story on the radio the next day. He had already announced his retirement. His son was running for his seat. He was told that if he changed his vote, they would come up with \$100,000 for his son's campaign. When he said no, they said, if you do not change your vote, we will come up with \$100,000 for your son's opponent's campaign.

Congressman SMITH, under great duress with great courage, said, Nothing doing. Incidentally, his son later lost the primary. Finally, it is 5 o'clock. It is 216-218. It is 5:30. It is 216-218. It is 5:45 in the morning. It is still 216 "yes," 218 "no." Two hours and 55 minutes after the vote was called, two Republicans, one from Idaho and one from Arizona, came out of the cloakroom, walked down here, picked up one of these green cards, you cannot use the plastic electronic card that late in the voting, marked the card, changed their vote, sheepishly handed it to the House Clerk, the Speaker then gavelled the

vote closed, and that is how Medicare privatization passed.

We have seen in this body a new legacy of one-party rule, legislative strong-arming and abuses of power never before seen under leaders of either party in this House of Representatives, hiding votes from the American public under the cover of darkness. We spend plenty of time, Mr. Speaker, passing votes on naming post offices in the middle of the day and doing important controversial votes at night.

Mr. Speaker, this abuse of power has to stop.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PENCE). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, President Bush quickly stopped in on Westfield, New Jersey, to talk to a bunch of his supporters about his Social Security privatization proposal. The Westfield, New Jersey, stop was part of a 6-week push to convince Americans that the Social Security program faces an immediate crisis. The President did not do as well as he wanted, and so now he has hired a couple of public relations experts to run a war room at the Social Security Administration. The administration is also beginning a 60-day push to convince voters that his privatization plan is the best thing for both seniors today and young people tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, President Bush has failed in convincing Americans that his plan is the way to go because he has even admitted that privatization does nothing to fix the solvency problem Social Security faces in the year 2052. As the President goes around the country pitching his privatization plan, he continues to exaggerate Social Security's current fiscal state. Last Friday in Westfield, he claimed, "The safety net has a hole in it," and he continues to say that the whole system goes broke in 2042.

That is simply not true. Based on the most current estimates from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, Social Security is fully solvent until 2052, meaning that every benefit that has been promised to seniors, the disabled, and survivors can be paid through that year. Imagine that. There is no other government program that is fully funded for the next 47 years. And President Bush calls this a crisis?

The President is also wrong when he says the program goes broke in 2042, because, as I stated, it is not only fully solvent another decade after that, but what exactly happens in 2052? When President Bush says Social Security goes broke, most would believe there is no money left after 2052 in Social Security. After all, if you look at Webster's Dictionary, it defines "broke" simply as "penniless." Again, this is another