

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 504

By Turner M

A RESOLUTION relative to Congressman Paul Ryan's budget proposal entitled, "The Path to Prosperity."

WHEREAS, in 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law landmark legislation, creating Medicare and promising the citizenry that "No longer will older Americans be denied the healing miracle of modern medicine...No longer will illness crush and destroy the savings that they have so carefully put away over a lifetime so that they might enjoy dignity in their later years"; and

WHEREAS, for nearly half a century, senior citizens and the permanently disabled have relied upon Medicare, secure in the knowledge that they would no longer be forced to forgo basic medical care while living in the most prosperous nation in the world; and

WHEREAS, Medicare healthcare spending has historically risen at a slower rate than private insurance spending;

WHEREAS, Congressman Paul Ryan of Wisconsin recently introduced a proposal, which he nicknamed "The Path to Prosperity," under which Medicare would be replaced by health care vouchers for seniors; and

WHEREAS, under the Congressman Ryan's proposal, the federal government would no longer guarantee healthcare for seniors; and

WHEREAS, instead of providing guaranteed benefits backed by the United States of America, Congressman Ryan's proposal would dissolve the Medicare system entirely for those under fifty-five years of age, forcing future retirees to purchase private insurance through private insurance companies; and

WHEREAS, the value of the vouchers distributed under Congressman Ryan's proposal would be based on the value of Medicare at the beginning of the plan's life and would be

increased only at a rate indexed to inflation, which is growing at a fraction of the pace as health care costs; and

WHEREAS, because of this rate disparity, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office has reported that, under the Congressman Ryan's proposal, most elderly people will pay considerably more for their health care than they would pay under the current Medicare system, with a typical sixty-five-year-old being liable for 61% of his total health care costs in 2022 and 68% of the costs in 2030; and

WHEREAS, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office has determined that under Congressman Ryan's proposal, seniors would pay twice as much for healthcare out of their own pockets as they would under Medicare; and

WHEREAS, under Congressman Ryan's proposal, the typical sixty-five-year-old American would receive, instead of guaranteed healthcare under Medicare, \$8,000 annually to buy a health plan, starting in 2022; and

WHEREAS, according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, the \$8,000 voucher a sixty-five-year-old would receive under Congressman Ryan's proposal will fall short of that senior's \$20,510 annual healthcare costs by an estimated \$12,510, which the sixty-five-year-old senior will have to pay; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby support the Medicare program of guaranteed healthcare for seniors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we oppose Congressman Paul Ryan's Budget Proposal entitled, "The Path to Prosperity."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.