Byron Burris of WFFA in Dallas reports that the San Antonio Aerospace facility in Texas has hired 767 foreign airplane mechanics over the past 2 years without a real background check. These mechanics come from 45 countries, including Vietnam, Ethiopia, Egypt, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, Jordan, China and Sudan. These people work on American airplanes.

The State Department says it does a "criminal" background check, but reports indicate those checks are of poor quality and sometimes are left up to a third party.

We are ignoring the obvious when it comes to airline safety. Foreign workers with shady or unknown backgrounds should not have access to American aircraft.

And that’s just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, just a moment ago I heard the minority whip express concern about the need to work with the Democrats to reform the health care system. Yet, I'm sad to say that the minority whip, the minority leader have been part of an effort to deal with fear and misinformation, attacking bipartisan legislation that would have done precisely that, reform the health care system.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, there are some here who simply are not expressing the sense of urgency that most of us feel from the American people, a sense of urgency about fixing a broken health care system that costs too much, that produces wildly uneven results, and leaves too many outside the system of coverage, and others, with health insurance, at risk. We cannot continue along this path. Americans are not getting the help they need, even if they have insurance coverage. I was, I must say, disappointed, to say the very least, to see the attack on bipartisan legislation that we have worked on to help reform the health care system.

In a speech from the minority leader, and with the whip, and Mr. McCOTTER, there is an allegation that somehow there is legislation in the health care draft that may place senior citizens in situations where they feel pressured to sign end-of-life directives that they would not otherwise sign that may start us down a "treacherous path towards government-encouraged euthanasia that is law." Well, Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Had the minority leader, and his whip, and the conference Chair bothered to check how that legislation came to be enacted into our health care law, they would have found out that it was work of a bipartisan group of Ways and Means Committee members. There were Republicans cosponsoring it along with Democrats. We had spirited discussion dealing with the fact that too often senior citizens and their families are not given the information they need to be able to cope with the most serious situation any of us will ever face as we have a loved one move into the end of his or her life.

We discussed how Medicare would pay for tests to hook people up, to poke them, to run them through machines, to have them on ventilators, to do all sorts of things; but it will not pay a health care professional to sit down with the family, walk through their lives, and let them know what they expect, answer their questions, help them know what their choices are. We had examples of committee members talk about their loved ones, and I would say, Republican committee members, talk about how their loved ones didn't get that type of help at the end of life and actually were subjected to things that they thought were not in the best interests of their loved one. If they had a choice, they wouldn't have done it over again, and it didn't prolong their life, it actually made them less comfortable.

We're seeking to change that, to be able to adjust Medicare so that it pays health care professionals to sit down with senior citizens and their families, that they're given the attention they need to prepare for this difficult period of time. There's nothing in this legislation that would force people to have consultations. There's nothing that would force them to sign advance directives. It's not going to choose a health care professional by the government and force them to sign advance directives. It's the type of sad, inflammatory rhetoric that people aren't serious about health care reform, not serious about meeting the needs of American families, but, rather, they're playing political games. Mr. Speaker, I can't tell you how disappointing I was to see this type of reaction to a carefully crafted piece of legislation that we've been working on for more than 6 months that is bipartisan and that speaks to the needs of American families.

The American people, especially our senior citizens, deserve our best efforts to meet their needs, not treat them like political football. I hope the Republican leadership will reconsider, and that we'll be able to enact provisions like this to help our senior citizens.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, back in November, Hank Paulson, the Secretary of the Treasury, and President Bush came to Congress in a rush that the financial sky was going to fall out if we did not pass the financial bailout for Wall Street. Now, we were told that if we didn't do it, that stock portfolios and savings of Americans all over the country would decrease, maybe as much as 30 or 40 percent. Well, in that spirit of panic, we frequently have in this town, we did pass TARP. And what happened to your IRA back home? What happened to your savings account? What happened to your stock portfolio? Unless you're extremely lucky and unadventurous, your assets dropped by 30 or 40 percent. So much for the $700 billion bailout.

And then in January, President Obama, using the same panic tactic, came to us and said, we have got to pass a second stimulus program. Keep in mind we had already passed one under President Bush in May of 2008. But we had to pass, in a hurry, something big, something dramatic, $790 billion for a stimulus program. Why? Because the unemployment rate was 8 percent. But this would give us immediate results, President Obama promised. And so that was passed by Congress.

And yet, now, unemployment is approaching 10 percent, and in States like Michigan, as high as 15 percent; 2½ million Americans have become unemployed since the passage of the stimulus program. And now we have the same Washington-knows-best experts telling us that we have to pass major health care reform by next week, August 1.

Now, I want you to think about this. This is 17 percent of the economy, and we would put it in the hands of the Federal Government. It would set up a Federal Government, you would compete against a government option
Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, this government option, that it takes twice as much for the government-run health care system. And when you hear somebody say, Why did it take so long? He said, The one thing that's clear is that Orwell and Big Brother looking into everyone's lives was 25 years early, because this is going to be so Orwellian with Big Brother in the United States of America.

Well, once I saw that, I realized, boy, there is a way for the first time in 40 years, something to give seniors control over their own health care and over their own lives. You give them $5,300 in their health care, that they control. You give them a debit card. They have exclusive control. No insurance company can tell them what to do with it. Then you buy them private insurance, and they won't have to do with their money and buy supplemental insurance on top of that. You buy them good insurance. They don't need to do that. On top of that, you save the country hundreds of billions of dollars a year. Now, that puts control in seniors' hands, and it saves the country money.

This isn't about that. It is about control. This health care bill is about control. It's about taking charge of people's lives.

We had the EPA already say, since carbon dioxide is a pollutant, this body has the right to control any entity that puts out carbon dioxide. Well, maybe there are people here in the majority who can pick out individuals and say, You know what? I'm tired of them putting out carbon dioxide. It's time for them to stop. I mean that's how ludicrous it gets, except that, once you can control whether people put out carbon dioxide, you can control whether they live or not. Once you can control their health care, you can have the right to say, You know what? I noticed on your credit card purchase you bought some Twinkies last month, and therefore, we're not going to provide health care unless you quit buying those. I mean that's going to get so intrusive.

The one thing that's clear is that Orwell was 25 years early, because this is going to be so Orwellian with Big Brother looking into everyone's lives and having the right to do so once they pay for their health care. This will allow seniors to die, waiting in line for lists. Do you think that's over the top? I had a Canadian man tell me that just a few weeks ago. His dad got put on a list for bypass surgery, and he had to wait 2 years. I said, Why did it take so long? He said, Well, the bureaucrats kept moving him back.

Well, you know, I'd rather have my mom make that decision as my dad, who is now dead. I'd like to have her make that decision just as he did, with his doctor, not bringing in a government bureaucrat, and not having to have that sighted by some government bureaucrat. That should scare anybody who's parents are alive or any senior citizens.

Indeed, there are better ways to do this thing: association health plans that do not require a senior citizen to have a consultant with their doctor and the government bureaucrat every 5 years, on their end-of-life plan, they're wrong because that is in the bill. Every 5 years senior citizens are supposed to go to some bureaucrat and say, here's my 5-year end-of-life plan, and as President Obama said himself, and we are going to strongly encourage hospice.

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