

make sure the system is fair and that all Americans have access. When it comes to health care and retirement, we have to have commonsense rules.

We must finish the job on health care, and we are going to do it beginning tomorrow at the White House. The Republicans have shown the public their plan, and it is not the solution. They are a rehash of old theories that make things much worse. Instead, we have to pass the commonsense health reform that is on the table and protect Social Security from crazy theories.

AND NOW IT'S ASSASSINATIONS?

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

Mr. PAUL. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What have we allowed ourselves to become? Are we no longer a Nation of laws? Have we become instead a Nation of men who make secret arrests? Are secret prisons now simply another tool of Federal Government law enforcement? Is secret rendition of individuals now permitted, out of misplaced fear? Have we decided that the writ of habeas corpus is not worth defending? Is torture now an acceptable tool for making us safe? Unfortunately, the single answer to all of these questions from the leaders of our country and to many of our citizens appears to be "yes".

And now we are told that assassination of foreigners as well as American citizens is legitimate and necessary to provide security for our people. It is my firm opinion that nothing could be further from the truth. Secret arrests, secret renditions, torture, and assassinations are illegal under both domestic and international law. These activities should be anathema to the citizens of a constitutional Republic.

The real threat doesn't arise from our failure to torture. Rather, desensitizing our Nation to the willful neglect and sacrifice of our civil liberties, fought and died for over the centuries, is the threat.

The concept of habeas corpus existed even before King John of England was forced in 1215 by his rebellious barons to sign the Magna Carta. This basic principle and expression of individual liberty, which has survived 800 years, greatly influenced the writing of our Constitution and our common law heritage.

Today we hardly hear a whimper, either from the American people or a stone silent U.S. Government as our cherished liberties are eradicated. Instead, we have a government that deliberately orchestrates needless fear and makes people insecure enough to ignore the reality of their lost liberties.

The latest outrage is the current administration's acknowledgment that we now have a policy that permits assassination not only of foreign suspects, but of American citizens as well.

Of course the CIA has used secret assassinations in a limited fashion for decades, despite international, domestic, and moral law. When done secretly, as in the past, our government at least recognized that assassination was illegal and wrong. Frighteningly and astonishingly, however, the policy is now explicit.

National Intelligence Director Dennis Blair, in open testimony before the House Intelligence Committee on February 3 of this year, acknowledged that American citizens can indeed be assassinated at our government's discretion. The U.S. Government attempted to assassinate Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen without even charging him with a crime. We are told this evidence is secret, that he does not deserve any constitutional rights, and that some unknown individual in the administration has the authority to declare him a threat, and therefore a legitimate target for assassination.

Yes, I know, he is probably a very bad person. Yes, I know that only a few Americans are on the assassination hit list.

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Yes, I know that artificially generated fear makes a large number of Americans inclined to applaud this effort which supposedly will make us safe. But if this becomes standard operating procedure and a permanent precedent is established, let me assure you that this abuse of the law will spread.

It's time for Congress and the American people to wake up to the realities of the dangers we face. We must remember, as Members of Congress, that we have taken an oath to protect and defend the Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic. It should not be that difficult to distinguish the difference between the danger posed by the underwear bomber and the danger posed by a government that endorses secret prisons, torture, and assassinating American citizens.

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

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HEALTH CARE SUMMIT

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Tomorrow is an extremely important day here in Washington, D.C., and across the Nation. Tomorrow's a day in which the President will hold a summit on health care. The outcome of that meeting is of extraordinary importance to individuals, to families, and to millions upon millions

of Americans, indeed, the entire Nation. A successful outcome would be one in which we have bipartisan consensus on the critical issues of health care, on how we're going to provide coverage for all Americans, how we deal with the pernicious and all too common insurance company practice of terminating policies when a person becomes ill or denying coverage because of some preexisting condition.

Tomorrow's summit is extraordinarily important in that the outcome of that summit may very well give us insight into how we control the extraordinary increase of cost in health care, a cost that is not sustainable either for individuals or for this economy. We're currently spending somewhere in the range of 17 percent of our current GDP on health care. Compared to the rest of the industrialized nations, that's nearly 60 to 70 percent more than they spend of their wealth. Most every other industrialized nation spends 10 percent or less. We're giving away an extraordinary advantage to our competitors.

Now, if our health care system actually produced extraordinary outcomes for all the population, we might say it was worth it, but the fact of the matter is that our health care system does not. Our population statistics, which are the statistics on how well we are, how long we live, how well our children thrive, how many of them die at birth and in early childhood, all of those statistics would indicate that this Nation's health care system is very, very poor. In fact, we rank below Colombia and other emerging nations around the world.

So what are we going to do?

This House passed a very important piece of legislation that goes to address many of these issues—the issue of how we contain our costs, how we improve our system, how we provide for wellness rather than just sick care—a very complex bill, but one that also provided a very, very important element, the element of a public option.

I'm from California, and 2 weeks ago the largest insurance company providing policies, more than 80 percent of the single-person policies, said, well, I think we're going to increase our rates by up to 39 percent, and that was on top of a similar rate increase in the previous year; some 60 percent increase for those individuals that are not in a group that have to go out and buy insurance on their own, a totally unaffordable situation. And they also announced that in the intervening year, or the year after these increases went into effect, they would willy-nilly, and at their own will and their own desire, increase the cost of those policies, an extraordinary and new event.

Those individuals, in fact, every individual in America needs a public option, a place to go to get a competitive health insurance policy that provides real benefits at an affordable cost. This House passed such a public option.

Hopefully, at tomorrow's summit, that issue will be renewed. But the papers in this town say that that issue is dead. I think not, because in America we do have public options today—they're not readily available to all of us unless you happen to be 65—and that public option is Medicare. If you happen to be a Federal employee, like I and others in this room, you have a public option available to you. If you're in the military, you have a public option available to you, a military family.

Public options are widely available in America. We need to provide that option for every American. We need real competition. We need WellPoint Blue Cross of California to have a competitor. They have none today.

Fortunately, this House, today, took a step to end the monopoly, to end the antitrust exemption that the health insurance companies have. It will help, but it will not provide the solution that we need. We need that public option. We need the health care reform that this House passed. And hopefully tomorrow, at the President's summit, the outcome will say, follow the lead of the House; give us a public option, give us the controls on prices, give us the steps toward staying healthy, and let's finally put this Nation into a universally available health care system.

GREATER FLEXIBILITY FOR FLORIDA FISHERMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, this week I met with commercial and recreational fishermen from my Congressional district of the Florida Keys. These hardworking men and women have taken time out of their busy season to travel up here to Washington, D.C., to protest the latest round of onerous and unfair Federal fishing regulations and closures.

Florida's recreational fishing industry is the largest in the Nation. It's economic impact to our State exceeds \$5.3 billion, and more than 54,000 jobs are generated by this industry. Similarly, Florida's commercial fishing industry is nearly 13,000 strong and contributes a staggering \$1.2 billion to our economy.

Our fishermen understand that maintaining a robust, healthy fishery through appropriate regulation is the key to their economic success. However, the recent fishing bans on red snapper and shallow water grouper enacted by the South Atlantic Fisheries Council are devastating to our Florida fishing industry. The bans not only threaten the jobs of recreational and commercial fishermen, but also the small business owners that support and economically benefit from these industries.

Local restaurants will look to carry more cost-affordable fish from countries such as Mexico and the Domini-

can Republic, as opposed to featuring fresh, Florida-caught fish, crab, and lobster. Hotels, dive shops, and other tourist attractions will also continue to suffer as fishing enthusiasts decide to travel elsewhere.

The impact of this multibillion dollar industry on the State of Florida cannot be overstated. And yet, one by one, these fishermen are being regulated out of business.

I'm a cosponsor of a bill known as the Transparency in Job Loss from Fishery Closures Act, and this is a bill introduced by my colleague, Congressman HENRY BROWN. This bipartisan bill instructs NOAA to reverse the harmful fishing closures and calls for stricter policies before implementing further closings.

In particular, this bill requires that NOAA conduct a comprehensive review of recent fishery closures and provides sufficient updated research showing that a closure is the only option to maintain the fishery. In this review, NOAA must consider the impact of each closure on the coastal communities being regulated, including the impact on their small businesses and the losses of the jobs that would entail these closures.

I also support efforts to increase fisheries research to improve enforcement systems and to reform the flawed Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Act.

I'm a cosponsor of a bill introduced by Congressman FRANK PALLONE, which would amend Magnuson to provide greater flexibility to State regulators and fishery managers.

The process of collecting data utilized by Federal regulators in determining fishing closures also needs to be revisited.

The Scientific and Statistics Committees need to conduct their business in an open, transparent forum that also considers input from the fishing industry. What a concept. Opening up this committee to stakeholders' feedback and congressional oversight will go a long way in repairing the trust between regulators and local fishermen.

In this stagnant economy, Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that we do all that we can to protect a historic and much needed industry from economic disaster. Our Nation's fishermen deserve and require our immediate action.

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

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IN MEMORY OF THE HONORABLE JOHN MURTHA

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

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to speak to the memory of one of my close friends, one of my colleagues, my partner, and a man with whom I have spent so many hours, so many days and for so many years as we've worked together on the National Defense Appropriations bill, and I'm speaking of the late Chairman Jack Murtha.

In keeping with his legislative management style, I'll be brief because, as we presented our Defense Appropriations bills, the last meeting that we would have somewhere in the Chamber here would be, Hey, look, this is a good bill. It's not controversial. Let's pass it quick. We ought to be able to get it done in 8 or 10 minutes, which we normally did.

Jack was a good leader, a good chairman. When we had discussions on the hundreds and hundreds of issues in that bill, his concern always was what is best to keep America safe, what is best to keep Americans safe, and what is best to give our soldiers the tools that they need, the technology that they need to do their job, to carry out their mission, and to protect themselves while they're doing that.

I expressed my condolences and my sadness to his wife, Joyce, and their children. I know of the sadness that they experienced here a couple of weeks ago as Jack left the Congress, left the family, and left this life. I really was saddened and regretted and felt extremely bad that I was not able to attend his funeral, but Beverly and I had a tragic event of our own during that same period.

But I wanted to mention that Beverly, my wife, knew Jack Murtha very well because we would oftentimes be at the same military hospital with him visiting troops, wounded troops and their families. And I remember the first day that my wife ever ran into Jack Murtha at Walter Reed Hospital, and she had been talking with the wife of a soldier who had serious physical problems, but the family had financial problems.

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She said, Hey, Mr. Murtha, give me your wallet. And Jack Murtha took out his wallet and handed it to her, and she took out all of the money and handed it to the soldier's wife and then gave Jack back his empty wallet. And so she also had a special relationship.

But we were not able to attend Jack's funeral. During that same period of time, my son Billy and his wife, Ashley, had become pregnant some time ago, and everybody was excited about that. And then one day, they picked us up at the airport coming back from Washington, and we had lunch together. And they announced that they had just been to the doctor, and we were going to have twin granddaughters. You talk about being excited and cheers and tears. But that was not to be. Twenty weeks into the pregnancy, something happened.