

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I am glad the gentlewoman brought up the community-based health clinics. I have some in my district, as well. The problem, of course, they face is scarce resources. In other words, increasingly the amount of money that has been made available to them has dwindled. That is another reason why we see the ranks of not only the uninsured but even people who have access to health care, because they are really dealing with the uninsured in many cases, but the access becomes more limited as resources become scarce.

I yield to the gentleman from New York, [Mr. SERRANO].

Mr. SERRANO. I thank the gentleman, Mr. Speaker.

My colleague, the gentlewoman from Texas makes an interesting point. That is, we should deal with the issue of prevention. You know, we Americans are really a very strange group of people at times. Who would not think of taking their car for an oil change or doing it themselves? There are some Americans who run the car into the ground, but most Americans know they have to do this. They either do it themselves in their driveway or somewhere, or they take it to a place to have it done. That is understood.

But the whole idea of taking a human being at the age of under 10 to a clinic to get some preventative health care, some wellness care, is beyond our scope of thinking. Yet, at the end of the game when we talk about dollars and cents, as the gentleman has so well pointed out, and the gentlewoman, we are saving lots of money by going in the area of prevention. So I would hope that in this package, and I agree, there has to be something that perhaps begins to tell us about the area of prevention.

As far as solutions, what is really sad about this whole argument is that the solution we already have. The bad news is that 40 million Americans are not covered. The good news is that if you do quick math, over 200 million Americans are covered. Therefore, under existing plans, through expansion and with the desire to do so, you can invent ways and bring about ways of covering the other 40 million. So we do not have to reinvent the wheel. What we have to do is simply look at what we have now and use it as the existing solution to move on to cover other people in the area where we should not allow disparity between different folks.

Because in other parts of the society we have these problems and we have to deal with them on a daily basis. The fact is that most likely the people that are on that chart will also be the people who will have less access to a computer in the home than other people in this society. We know that. But this one is a basic right at this moment that people all deserve and we should be dealing with.

So the solution, in answer to your question, which is an interesting point you bring up, because we certainly do

not want to end this hour having people say sure, they brought up the problem, they did not offer a solution, the solution is 200 million Americans, 99 percent of whom are not wealthy people, are covered under existing plans. It is now a matter of finding out how do we cover the other 40 million, how do we take care of people who may be unemployed, and how do we especially take care of children.

I would end today, again, by calling on Americans who may have health insurance, who may have a difficult, at times, life, but most of the time can as our colleagues said, count their blessings, to reach out to their Members of Congress and say that this is not something that can go on. Let us do something about it. Let us expand existing programs. Let us find solutions to this problem.

Once again, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for bringing forth this issue today. This is one that I think really begins to speak to what this Congress should be about. If this Congress and this society cannot take care of its children, then it will not take care of anything else in this society.

Mr. PALLONE. I agree, and I want to thank the gentleman. I know we are winding down.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Before we close, let me thank the gentleman as well for gathering us together on this special order, and hopefully our voices were heard in this Chamber as my good friend, the gentleman from New York, has said, on behalf of the children and the solutions that we have offered. We can get busy right now and get moving on an ounce of prevention that will certainly create the wall against the pound of cure that we may face with children who have not had health care for all of their childhood.

I thank the gentleman very much and look forward to working with him.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank both of the Members, and again issue our challenge to our colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle.

Once again, I think we had one vote today on the Journal, on the Journal of the previous day, and no other legislative business, and it is only Thursday. I personally, and I know all of us, are getting frustrated coming down here day after day and not really doing anything.

This is an issue, children's health care, that needs to be addressed immediately. We will continue to call upon our colleagues in the Republican leadership on the other side to address this issue this Congress, and as soon as possible.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my concern for the 10 million children in our Nation who are without health care insurance. I am here to urge each and every one of my colleagues to work toward guaranteed access to health care for all children. It is time for us to make America's children and their health and well-being our highest priority. We must make health care

available, accessible, and affordable for all of our children.

I am concerned that many of my colleagues have dismissed these children as the offspring of the same disadvantaged persons that they condemned last year during the welfare debate. If that was an accurate characterization of America's uninsured children, I would beg you not to blame a child, for their parents' misfortune.

But it is not an accurate picture, and so instead, I say you are wrong. Nine out of ten children who are without health coverage have parents who work. Nearly two in three of these children have parents who are employed full-time during the entire year. Two-thirds of these children live in families with income above the poverty line and more than three in five live in two-parent families.

It is clear that these children are not uninsured because their parents are not unemployed. Instead, most of these children are without coverage because their parents work for companies who have cut health coverage for children or who offer no health coverage at all. Each year since 1989, 900,000 fewer children have received private health insurance coverage. In other words, every 35 seconds 1 less child is privately insured.

Without private insurance, millions of working parents who labor to support their families cannot afford to provide health coverage for their children. The cost of health insurance when not purchased through an employer is often prohibitive. So while Medicaid helps our poorest children, and more affluent families can afford private coverage, millions of working parents in the middle cannot provide coverage for their children.

Insurance coverage is critical to the health of our children. Children without health insurance coverage often do not receive necessary treatment services or even the most basic care. Medical expenses are sufficiently high that generally their financially burdened parents will delay or forgo needed pediatric preventive or medical care.

Some examples—studies have shown that the majority of uninsured children with asthma never see a doctor. Many of these asthmatic children are later hospitalized with problems that could have been averted with earlier intervention. One-third of uninsured children with recurrent ear infections do not see the doctor and some later develop permanent hearing loss. Many children with undiagnosed vision problems cannot even read a blackboard. Finally, studies show that children without insurance do not receive adequate immunization, have higher rates of visits for illness care, and have more frequent emergency room visits.

It is obvious that to deny children health care coverage, denies them the opportunity to lead healthy lives and to reach their fullest potential. We, in this Congress, have a responsibility to ensure that all children have these opportunities. We must commit ourselves to coverage for every American child and promise to leave no child behind.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was on the floor talking about the

importance of a balanced budget amendment. Much to my chagrin, there was an announcement yesterday that probably certainly weakened the effort for a balanced budget amendment in the Senate.

In 1969, if you read the newspaper, you probably would have read about Charles Manson. The number one song was Simon and Garfunkle's "Mrs. Robinson." The Mets won the World Series. I was an 8-year-old boy growing up in western South Dakota and had the opportunity to watch on a black and white television, Neal Armstrong take one giant step forward for mankind by walking on the Moon.

Little did I know at that time that that was the start of our taking one giant step backward fiscally, because 1969 was the last time that Congress and our country has been able to balance its budget.

It occurs to me, it has been my long-held belief that every generation of Americans has an appointment with destiny. For my grandfather who came to this country from Norway back in 1906, it was to help build America. He worked on and helped build the railroad that went across our State of South Dakota. Later he went on to be in the hardware business.

For my father, his appointment with destiny was to defend America. As a decorated World War II fighter pilot, when the call came for him to defend America in World War II, he was there.

I believe that for this generation of Americans, it is our responsibility to preserve America for the next generation. I think we are failing in our duty and the obligation we have to make this a better place for the next generation of Americans.

When it comes time to vote on a balanced budget amendment, the issue really is about our future and what will we do for our children. A lot has been made, there are a lot of distractions and diversions in this whole debate about reasons why we do not need a balanced budget amendment. But the fact remains that 1969 is the last time that Congress has had the political will to submit a balanced budget and to do what is right for the future of this country.

If we look at where we are today and the burden we are passing on, the legacy we are handing on to the next generation of Americans, in my view it is immoral, it is wrong. We have an opportunity this next week to vote to do something that will be meaningful. It is the most important vote I think that we will cast for the future of our country.

I am hopeful that we will see, when the Senate votes on this next Tuesday, that there will be some of the people, some of the Democrats who are currently opposed to it, perhaps one of the two from my State of South Dakota, who will come forward and recognize the importance of this important move to the future of this country.

We cannot afford to continue to mortgage the future for our kids and

for our grandkids. So as we continue to engage the debate in this town and around this country, and as I traveled in my State of South Dakota for 9 days last week, I had the opportunity to raise this issue and to talk about it and its importance.

One of the questions that was repeatedly asked was what about Social Security, because they had heard a lot of radio ads that had been running in my State by opponents of a balanced budget amendment attacking me for my vote on it.

The point I come back to is if we do not do something to balance this country's budget, and if we do not impose the discipline necessary to do it, not only is Social Security jeopardized, but so is every other Government program. The only way we can protect Social Security for the long-term and make it a program that is there not only for today's seniors but for tomorrow's seniors is to pass a balanced budget amendment.

So, as I heard and listened to the discussion that was held last week in my State of South Dakota about this issue, I kept coming back to the same point. That is that as a young 8-year-old in western South Dakota in 1969, I had no idea of what was about to begin. But for the past 28 years, we have accumulated and amassed in this country \$5.3 trillion in debt, or \$20,000 for every man, woman, and child in America.

I am calling on, today, hoping that our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol, when this vote comes up next week, will look into their hearts and see if this is not the right move. It is not only the right move, it is the only move if we are to preserve a future for our kids and for our grandkids.

I hope we will have the opportunity in this House, if the Senate goes first and votes and will approve a balanced budget amendment, that we can do it in the House and make this a better place for the next generation.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS). The Chair reminds Members to refrain from references to Members of the other body urging action by the other body.

EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. HOEKSTRA] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, today I continue my series on talking about what works and what does not work in education and why it is such a needed focus. But before I do that, I just have a few miscellaneous comments on some issues that have been in the news over the last couple of days that I would like my colleagues to be aware of.

Mr. Speaker, in the last Congress I introduced a constitutional amendment. I introduced a constitutional amendment which would allow for a procedure where voters could recall their elected officials. So far in this Congress, I have not reintroduced that bill. But yesterday I decided that it was again time to perhaps make a few modifications to facilitate that process. But it is time to reintroduce the bill that allows public citizens, it allows the citizens of this country to hold their elected officials accountable for the promises and the commitments that they make during an election.

Over the last few days, we have seen where individuals who campaigned and were elected during the campaign process made a series of promises and commitments to the voters that said, if I am elected, this is what I will stand for. This is what I will do. And these are the kinds of actions that you can expect me to take as your elected Representative.

It appears that too often that is all they are, is campaign promises. They are a great way to get a vote, but when they get to Washington, they all of a sudden decide that maybe it is a lousy way to govern. Well, it is about time that voters started to recognize and have the opportunity to tie candidates to their performance, that when they run a campaign, they see a direct link between what an individual promises in a campaign and what they do once they get here. And that when they fail to see that link between a campaign and a performance, rather than just having to stand back and say, there is nothing that I can do about this, there is nothing that I can do about somebody that I voted for, somebody that I supported because they said they were going to do these things and then they go to Washington and they do something else. They now will be empowered with a tool that says, you said you were going to do that and you got to Washington and you decided that something else was going to happen and that your behavior was going to move in a different direction.

Well, as a voter in your State, I now have the opportunity to say I voted for you because this is what you were going to do and, now that you have decided to do something else, I would like the opportunity to clarify and to hold you accountable for breaking the promises and breaking your commitment to me. It is time that the American people or at least the States in this country, it is time that the States had the opportunity to design a mechanism which will more effectively and more immediately allow the citizens to hold their elected officials accountable.

It is unconscionable that we keep finding individuals on key issues who say one thing and do another. We are going to have a voter empowerment. In the States it is commonly known as the ability to hold elected officials accountable through a recall mechanism. We will have a recall bill. I urge my