

today. He is going to make one final effort to try to convince my Republican colleagues who voted for the Dingell-Norwood-Ganske bill in the last session to come off that bill and to vote for what I consider a very weak alternative sponsored by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER), one of my Republican colleagues.

Let me stress again that there is a real difference between the Patients' Bill of Rights that almost all Democrats and a significant number of Republicans support that we voted on 2 years ago and would make the real reforms that are necessary to correct the problems and the abuses of HMOs, as opposed to this alternative bill that the Republican leadership is putting up sponsored by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER), which is a lot weaker and does not really achieve HMO reform.

Let me explain that a little bit. The two main focuses of HMO reform, one is to make sure that decisions about what kind of care you get, what kind of medical care you get, whether you are able to have a particular medical procedure, whether or not you are able to stay in the hospital for a certain length of time, these kinds of medical decisions should be made by the physician and the patient, not by the HMO, not by the insurance company. We need to switch that around.

Right now, unfortunately, many Americans are denied the care that they really need that is medically necessary because the HMO is not willing to pay or denies the care.

The second point that we are trying to achieve with true HMO reform is to make sure that if your care has been denied, if your doctor says that you need an operation and the HMO says we are not going to pay for it, that you have a way to redress that grievance, which is that you can go to an external review board quickly that can overturn that decision that can make sure that you get the procedure or operation; or, ultimately, if that does not work, that you can go to court.

The problem is that the Fletcher bill, the bill that the Republican leadership wants to bring up and supports, really does not guarantee those two points, does not achieve what is necessary for HMO reform in those two major areas. Let me explain why.

The decision about what is medically necessary, about whether or not you are going to be able to get a particular type of treatment, well, unfortunately, the standard of review for what is medically necessary in the Fletcher bill is a lot weaker. It allows for the HMO to use all the kinds of bureaucratic tricks to make sure that they still control the process or the standard as to what kind of care that you get.

The Dingell-Ganske-Norwood bill, the real Patients' Bill of Rights, guarantees that that standard of review is one that is the normal practice by medical practitioners, by doctors in

your community, and also with regard to specialty care.

For example, if you need a cardiovascular procedure, if it is a child and a pediatrician has to come into play, that that specialty care, the standard of review of what is medically necessary is made by the physicians by the standard in the medical community, by the standard in that specialty care community. You do not have that guarantee under the Fletcher bill.

On the second point, which is that if you are denied the care that you have the ability quickly to overturn that decision. Once again, the Fletcher bill falls short. It does not have the guarantee that we have in the real Patients' Bill of Rights that says that you have to be able to act quickly. That if you need an operation and you are being denied or you are in an emergency room and you are being denied something, that you can quickly go to an outside review board and have that overturned.

There are so many procedural roadblocks to your ability to overturn the decision in the Fletcher bill that you really do not have the ability to effectively address your grievances and to overturn that denial of care.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want anybody to be confused about what is going on here. What is going on here is that, once again, the Republican leadership is trying to deny the majority, most Democrats and enough Republicans that make up the majority for the real Patients' Bill of Rights, the opportunity to have a vote, a clean vote on that bill. That is what we want. That is what we demand. That is what we hope the Committee on Rules will achieve when we vote on this bill later this week. My greatest fear is we will not have this that clean vote, and I would ask that that be accomplished.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning hour debates, pursuant to clause 12, rule I, the House will stand in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 20 minutes a.m.) the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CANTOR) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Timothy N. Armstrong, Crossroads Community Church, Mansfield, Ohio, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God and Heavenly Father, we come to You this day, conscious of our own shortcomings, but nevertheless with great confidence, knowing

that our trust in You is a faith well founded.

You alone understand the difficulties and hardships of these men and women who serve You and our country. You alone understand the weight of responsibilities, both personal and professional, which they must carry. You alone know of the private sacrifices which Your servants have bore in their pursuit of patriotism.

I ask that You bless them. Watch over them and their families. Strengthen them with courage and peace. May they be endowed, above all things, with Your sovereign grace and wisdom.

On this day, at every chair in this Chamber, may there be the whisper of Your wisdom. May these men and women hear Your still small voice and follow Your guidance for the good of all people.

Empower these representatives to be the relentless crusaders for righteousness in the lives of the people of our Nation. For whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, whatever is excellent and praiseworthy, may they be passionate about these things.

We ask this in the strong name of Jesus Christ, for His sake and for His glory alone. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ISRAEL led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING PASTOR TIMOTHY N. ARMSTRONG, CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CHURCH, MANSFIELD, OHIO

(Mr. OXLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to welcome one of my constituents as our guest chaplain, Pastor Timothy N. Armstrong of Mansfield, Ohio.

Pastor Armstrong is the founding and senior pastor of Mansfield's Crossroads Community Church. He started this interdenominational, independent evangelical church in a school gymnasium in 1996. With only 30 people in attendance initially, the church

swelled to 200 within a month. Today, after less than 5 years, Crossroads welcomes more than 1,700 people per week-end.

Pastor Armstrong is an inspiration to the Mansfield community, bringing a unique and meaningful preaching style to his congregation. Through practical application of the Bible's truths to everyday living, he reaches out to the unchurched in and around Mansfield in a most effective way.

A graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, Pastor Armstrong initially pursued a business degree in college, ultimately realizing his calling to the ministry. He and his wife, Michelle, are the proud parents of twin girls, McKenna Kate and Isabelle Grace.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Father Coughlin for giving Pastor Armstrong the opportunity to open today's session; and on behalf of my colleagues, I want to thank Pastor Armstrong for his spiritual guidance as we begin our work today.

REFLECTING ON OUR FALLEN FRIENDS

(Mr. DELAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago have now passed since the hot, sad day that an act of senseless violence took our friends, Detective John Gibson and Officer J.J. Chestnut, from us. The tragic shock of their loss is gradually receding and the weight of their absence is settling on us more deeply. It weighs on us because of the special men that they were.

And when we reflect back on our lost friends, their bearing, conduct and commitment reminds us of David's words to Solomon. He said, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid nor discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you."

As we know, David charged his son Solomon to build a great temple for the Lord. Officer Chestnut and Detective Gibson were the protectors of a great tradition: open and accessible democracy.

Our fallen fellows and friends served their country and the cause of freedom in the United States Capitol, a building that stands as the world's foremost temple of liberty. But the Capitol could never have been built without an older American tradition of sacrifice and defense of the core freedoms that support our society. No less than other heroes who fell far from American soil, J.J. Chestnut and John Gibson are a part of that noble group.

Three years ago, hundreds of people were in grave danger. And as they operated under dire circumstances, Officer Chestnut and Detective Gibson stood tall for all of us. When America needed them to be courageous and strong, they were. And I know that they are with the Lord now.

They have our deepest respect and our deepest gratitude. We will never

forget them or the values that they embodied. Today our hearts and prayers go out to the Chestnut and Gibson families. God bless them.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair desires to make an announcement.

On July 24, 1998, at 3:40 p.m., Officer Jacob J. Chestnut and Detective John M. Gibson of the United States Capitol Police were killed in the line of duty defending the Capitol against an intruder armed with a gun.

At 3:40 p.m. today, the Chair will recognize the anniversary of this tragedy by observing a moment of silence in their memory.

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM IS SECURE

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, this is a \$5 billion Treasury Note. More than \$1 trillion of these are on deposit. Let me read from it: "This bond is incontestable in the hands of the Federal Old Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund," Social Security. This bond is supported by the full faith and credit of the United States of America. The United States of America is pledged to the payment of the bond with respect to both principal and interest. More than \$1 trillion is on deposit.

Americans will pay \$93 billion this year more in FICA taxes than is necessary to support the system, with the idea they are being deposited to pay for their retirement. In 2016, there will be \$6 trillion on deposit, and Secretary O'Neill of the Treasury and the Bush Privatization of Social Security Commission is downtown right now like a hive of termites trying to undermine the system and say we might not honor that \$6 trillion of debt.

Well, if the bonds on deposit backed by the full faith and credit of the United States of America will not be paid for Social Security, what other debts will this government default on?

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

(Mr. ARMEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to go on record as saying I, for one, do not believe that former Senator Moynihan is a termite.

Mr. Speaker, I am worried about the left wing of the Democrat party. Mr. Speaker, I think they are losing it. In all corners of the Washington liberal establishment, there is panic. War has been declared on the people's tax relief.

Just as the checks are in the mail, dire predictions and horrifying stories are being told about a government doing without, catastrophe for the economy, all because we sent a small portion of record surpluses back to the taxpayers who sent their money to Washington.

Good grief, Mr. Speaker. What are we to do with this kind of panic on the left?

Over the weekend, they put their foot down. A very distinguished Member of this body announced with pride his belief that the tax increases of 1993 were the right thing to do and that he would do it again.

Mr. Speaker, in a fine bit of revisionist history, the Democrat leadership has proclaimed that 1993 budget, Bill Clinton's first budget, as a huge boon to the American economy and the American people.

Let me say this about that budget. It did do three very important things: it did raise taxes on energy; it did raise taxes on seniors; and it raised taxes on the working middle class, that is, Mr. Speaker, working moms trying to move up the economic ladder. And this Member said he would do it again. I give him credit for brutal honesty, that is, it is honest and it is brutal.

What a view of the world. What a denial of basic economics.

Tax relief is good for the American economy, good for American families. The refund checks being delivered today to American homes even as we meet will help buy school clothes, help pay bills, maybe even help with home improvement projects to make a house more energy efficient.

Mr. Speaker, I call on my friends from the other side of the aisle, reject this view that the Government needs this money more than real people do. Come out into the light. Reject this war on tax relief and embrace the sunshine of economic opportunity for the 20th century. Try it once. Try it once. Cut taxes for real people; and I bet you will feel so good you will say, I will do it again.

SUPPORT THE GANSKE-NORWOOD-DINGELL PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

(Mr. PASCRELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I have always been a strong advocate of the Patients' Bill of Rights and am proud to be part of cosponsorship of the Ganske-Norwood-Dingell bill, which is the bill that we will be debating this week, and no other bill.

There are protections within the Patients' Bill of Rights. The Patients' Bill of Rights creates an external appeals process that, once exhausted, allows the patient to pursue claims against the HMO in State or Federal court, depending on the cause of their harm.

What is getting those opposed to patient protection all hot under the collar? Because opponents do not want