

would their best benefit be derived? Where can they most adequately get the type of care that they want and, of course, there does have to be quality data published alongside that.

It can't just simply be the cheapest care at the cheapest cost. You want the best care at the most reasonable cost, or, as Dr. McClellan, former administrator of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services always talks about the four Rs, the right care for the right patient at the right time and the right price.

These are going to be critical aspects of any health care policy that we craft in this House. We simply have to keep those basic tenets in mind.

One of the speakers yesterday talked about in education the fundamentals of the three Rs, reading, writing and arithmetic. He went on to say in health care the fundamentals should be risk, responsibilities and reward, because, indeed, the risks are those that must be balanced against the possible benefit.

The patient needs to be an active participant in that. They can no longer simply be passive passengers on the journey through the health care system. They actually have to play a role in taking responsibility for their own care. The rewards, the reward aspect, the incentive aspect is often given. Well, while we are real good about being punitive in this body, we are pretty stingy when it comes to rewards or incentives. I could give you several examples of that.

One that comes to mind is the bill that was introduced late December as far as trying to encourage physicians for e-prescribing. The reward was a 1-percent increase in Medicare fees for a physician who participated in e-prescribing. The penalty 4 or 5 years later was a 10-percent reduction if they don't.

On a \$100 procedure, and I will tell you there are not many office procedures under Medicare that pay \$100, but let's use that number because it makes the math easy. In a \$100 procedure administered in a physician's office if they utilize an e-prescribing module to administer that patient's care, they are going to get \$1 extra for that \$100 procedure or interaction, visit, whatever it was. That's okay, \$1 is \$1, and it's better than nothing.

But if you don't participate in 4 years time, 5 years time, that's going to be a 10-percent reduction. That same \$100 procedure or test or interaction now will pay \$90.

We are so focused on the punitive in this body, and we never focus on the front end of the problem, which is assigning the appropriate dollar amount or the appropriate incentive.

Now, go back to my earlier example of that large insurance company, and again an insurance company in the past which I have had great difficulty with, but what innovative thinking they have. They are offering a patient the ability to reduce from \$5,000 to

\$1,000 their risk, their cost, on a deductible with no increase in premiums if they will do four simple things, lose a little weight, stop smoking, exercise regularly.

If you have asthma or diabetes you participate in a disease management program, and your deductible falls from a \$5,000 deductible down to \$1,000, and, oh, by the way, that premium that was less because you had a \$5,000 deductible, it doesn't go up. It doesn't go up when that policy changed. That's the kind of innovative thinking I am talking about when I say we must balance the risk and rewards, because we haven't been good about doing that.

Everyone likes to quote the Rand study when they talk about information technology and programs like e-prescribing. The Rand study says that if we go to electronic prescribing in our health care system in this country, we are going to save \$77 billion in 15 years, a tremendous amount of money.

Now, most of that savings is, in fact, out toward the end of that 15-year time. They don't really talk very much about who is going to pay for the cost of the implementation, putting the software, the hardware, the training, the upkeep of the software, the maintenance of the software, the time spent on the learning curve for all of these small offices across the country that have to make that investment. That's just going to be a given, but it will be worth while because we get a \$77 billion savings at the end.

□ 2230

What is missed so often in this study is the last paragraph. At the end of a very large study, it talks about the incentives to make this happen, to get us to this happy place where we are saving \$77 billion with e-prescribing.

The incentives have to be early. The late innovators are going to be rewarded, so you have to have the incentives arrive early, and they have to have a time limit otherwise people will wait and see if the technology doesn't improve because, after all, they know they will have to pay for the hardware, software, the training, the upkeep and maintenance of the software.

Finally, the third thing is the incentives must be substantial. And again, on both sides of the aisle, we forget that very important point. So while we hear the Rand study quoted over and over again, please remember the incentives are early, they are time limited, and they are substantial. That was the economic modeling that got them to the happy place where they were saving \$77 billion in the 15th year of that study.

If we concentrate on the fundamentals, getting back to the fundamentals, focusing on the risk, talking to our patients about responsibility, that is not so hard to do; but we should obviously compensate the health care professional for their time, for counseling about that responsibility, so that we don't forget the reward for the pro-

vider, to be sure; for the patient, to be sure; for the taxpayer, the American taxpayer if it is on that 50 percent of every health care dollar that is spent in the largest single-payer, government-run health care system in the world, which is Medicare and Medicaid today.

So the right prescription for health professionals has to be focused on these three areas when it comes to providing the real direction for health care reform.

I know I am not alone when I say that I am going to use these principles as my guiding star as I continue to work on health care policy. I hope I can convince my colleagues both in committee and here in the House of Representatives to focus on those same issues as well.

## IRAQ WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PERLMUTTER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor once again to come to the floor of the House as a representative of the landmark class of 2006 known as the majority makers, a group of 41 Democrats elected from 23 States who were sent here by the American people to change the direction of the country.

Of course one of the primary issues that was at the heart of the campaign in 2006 was our involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. And this week that effort, national effort, has taken greater significance because we once again heard from General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker about the progress or the situation, I should say, in Iraq. They testified before two congressional committees, two Senate committees yesterday and the House committees today. Their testimony, I think, raises two issues that I want to address tonight.

Of course the first is what the situation is in Iraq and what the prospects for success are in that part of the world. And, secondly, what is the cost to the American people and to the American economy because as we all know, the costs are varied and they are significant. They rise to magnitudes that we are not used to discussing in this country, both in human cost which of course is our top priority, and also the economic cost. And then there is the future cost as well because what we are doing is incurring obligations for our future generations that are real, that are incredibly large, and that the American people need to focus on because as we go forward and try to establish policies and have a national debate about what the appropriate course of action is in Iraq, we have to discuss again not just the human costs but also the cost to future generations of the American people, juxtaposed against the benefits and potential benefits of our continued involvement.

There are two things I think we need to say from the outset that really underlie all of these discussions and that is everyone in this body, in the Congress and in the country wants the United States to be successful, wants there to be a peaceful and beneficial result in Iraq. We all want a stable Middle East. We all want a stable, peaceful world. No one in this body or anywhere else that I know of is rooting for us to be unsuccessful in Iraq.

The second thing that we need to focus on is that it is unavoidable that we have to talk about economics and it is sad that we even have to talk about money because already we have lost 4,000 American men and women in Iraq. We have had virtually 30,000 wounded, many seriously, many with life-altering injuries; and the cost to the Iraqi people, of course, is also extraordinary with 2 million people having left Iraq, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, Iraqi civilians dying, and many more displaced throughout the country, families torn apart and lives ruined.

So the human cost of the U.S. involvement in this effort in Iraq and also in Afghanistan cannot be minimized, and nobody is trying to. That of course is the ultimate cost. But we do have to talk about the economic cost of this war because we are looking at a situation in which we have potential exposure throughout the world. We have a military that will be called on to be deployed in other situations, not just in the Middle East. We have by almost everyone's estimation a much more serious and ominous threat in Afghanistan and Pakistan that will require continued involvement of American forces, and where it is clear to everyone that terrorists, including particularly al Qaeda, are much more active and we need to focus much more intensely on Afghanistan and our involvement in Iraq is, of course, preventing us from doing as much as we could and probably should in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

These are all of the dynamics that we face as we discuss these issues. Two things in particular concern me about the testimony of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker yesterday. And, of course, everyone quite justifiably honors their service and their commitment to their duty, and they are certainly fulfilling their obligations well.

But two things in particular disturb me greatly, and one was when asked continuously by a number of Senators and House Members to describe the conditions under which we might be able to withdraw a substantial number of our forces from Iraq, General Petraeus basically said we will know them when we see them. He could not identify them. And he said, Well, we will look at it again in a few months. We will look at it in September. Maybe we can start withdrawing them then; maybe we can't.

What's the measure for success? He wouldn't specify. He couldn't specify. And I don't think he was being coy. I

think, in fact, his unwillingness to specify or identify the conditions under which we might be able to leave was purely a function of the fact that we don't know what the conditions are, and we have never known exactly what we were trying to accomplish in that country.

The goalposts have been moved continuously. There have been dozens of different reasons for our involvement mentioned over the last 5 years. And it is, I think, quite indicative yesterday when asked on numerous occasions again what would you see, what would you have to see before you would recommend withdrawing more troops, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker said, Well, we'll know it when we see it; it is a matter of what the conditions are.

That is an important point to make.

Another answer that he gave to a question asked by Senator BIDEN, I think, was quite revealing. When Senator BIDEN asked when you come back and make your evaluation and assessment in September of this year, at that point do you think there is any chance that we could be within 30 days of having troops withdrawal?

General Petraeus said at that point, Well, it might be that very day. Of course he went on to say it could be a month later, it could be many months later, it could be years later.

When I heard him say that it occurred to me if he was willing to say there was a possibility that we could be out, be able to start withdrawing significant numbers of troops in September, if that was a possibility, he should know what the metrics are, what the conditions he would have to be looking for in September to allow us to do that. And yet when asked what are the conditions, he couldn't identify them.

So again, I think all of these points, reading between the lines, indicate that we are not getting the full story about what we should look for as a measure of success in Iraq because the people on the ground don't know what the measures are. I think they would tell us if they knew, but I don't think they know. And that is a pretty frightening thought because we are being asked to carry the burden of an incredibly large cost as a society.

Now many of us are not asked, unfortunately, I think in many ways, we are not asked to bear any of the burden. Most of the burden is being borne directly by the military families and the soldiers who are overseas in deployment, many for several deployments. They are bearing the hardest burden; but we are also bearing a serious cost, and it mounts by the second.

As a matter of fact, every minute that I spend speaking here, we are spending, the American taxpayers are spending \$230,000. Every minute, \$230,000 is being spent in Iraq; \$4,000 a second. That mounts up. It becomes real, real money. It becomes \$14 million an hour; \$340 million a day; \$2.5

billion a week, \$10 billion a month; and while some estimates are higher, \$125 billion a year, and that is just in Iraq.

Now I know, believe me, that many people have a hard time grasping what a billion dollars is, what \$120 billion are, but there are a couple of easy ways to describe it. With \$120 billion in 1 year, you could give every teacher in the United States a \$20,000 a year raise. Every teacher. Every one of our 6 million teachers in the United States, and I think most people agree teachers are drastically underpaid, we could give them a \$20,000 a year raise with what we are spending in Iraq.

We could pay for the health care of about 16 or 17 million people every year. That 47 million people we have uninsured, we could cover 16 or 17 million of those people with that \$125 billion that we are now spending in Iraq.

We all know we have huge infrastructure needs in this country, bridges to repair, highways to repair, schools to rebuild. Throughout the country we face trillions of dollars of needed repairs and new construction on our infrastructure. This would make a considerable investment in that seriously needed national agenda. But that is going overseas. And, unfortunately, it is going to where it is not an investment, it is money that is irretrievably lost.

We could also, and this is taking what we spend every day, that \$340 million or so we spend every day in Iraq, we could hire 2,000 more Border Patrol agents; 18,000 more students could receive Pell Grants to help them attend college for an entire year; 48,000 homeless veterans could be provided a place to live; 317,000 more kids could receive recommended vaccinations for a year; almost a million families could get help with their energy bills. The list goes on and on. This is the cost of this war in economic terms to the American people. This is the lost opportunity, the lost opportunity for our American people.

What is even worse is it would be one thing if we had this money, but we don't have this money. We know we are running a deficit of almost \$500 billion this year, so we are borrowing this money. We are not just saying we have \$125 billion lying around, we can allocate this to Iraq, no problem. We are borrowing it. At least half of it we are borrowing from foreign countries. So we are having China and other nations who are financing our debt, who are actually paying for this war, but it is not free. China is going to want to get paid back some time, and that is going to be on future generations. So again, whatever we feel about this war, we have to understand the cost, and the cost is real. The American people understand that this cost is real.

A recent New York Times CBS poll, 89 percent of Americans surveyed said that the war in Iraq is a drain on the U.S. economy; 66 percent said it is a big drain, and 22 percent said it is some drain.

□ 2245

So the American people understand this. The American people understand that while we have a housing crisis, while we have a crisis in our financial markets, where we're having trouble actually making, having funds made available to make student loans, we understand that there's a connection between the economic problems we face and our involvement in Iraq.

And again, I don't think any of us would argue if this were a war where there were clearly defined goals, and if there were an existential threat to the United States, our security. But our national intelligence estimate, our 16 agencies said no, that's not the case, that we don't face an existential threat in Iraq. We are, essentially, refereeing, as we know, a sectarian dispute.

And I think what is most frustrating, again, reading between the lines, listening to General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, is that there was never a mention that I heard of anything that we could do to change the outcome there; that the implication was we were just sitting there, and that we had to wait until they decided that they were going to make it okay for us to leave. And that's a very, very frustrating position to be in.

And I wish somebody, maybe somebody did ask that and I didn't hear it, but I wish that they had been asked that specific question; is there anything we can do to change the dynamics there to improve the conditions that would allow us to begin withdrawing our troops and to reduce this incredible cost to the American people?

So I would hope that as we go forward, and you hate to say, as we go forward, because we've been going forward, now, for 5 years, and the outlook is not any brighter. The prospects for resolution in Iraq are not any greater.

And unfortunately, listening to General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker yesterday, I think it's, unfortunately, true that the people who are in charge don't know where we're going and most importantly, why we're going.

So these are things, as the months roll by, while the cost accumulates, and while, unfortunately, we will suffer, no doubt, as we have suffered, just in the last few days, 13 new American casualties, that the American people understand and demand, both of us and the administration, that we get a clear picture of what the objectives are, what the cost is, and will be, because we have estimates, Professor Joseph Stiglitz has estimated the total cost of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, ultimately, of \$3 trillion.

But we need to understand what our goals are, what our objectives are, what the possibilities are, what the risks are, what the potential benefits are, and of course, what the costs are, because we're not playing with small numbers. We're not playing with insignificant lives. And this is the greatest challenge facing this country.

And I hope that we can have the type of dialogue, continuously, which focuses on these points, because the

American people, rightfully, are looking for leadership and progress on Iraq.

So once again, I thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been a great privilege to stand in the House and represent the freshman Democrats who came to Congress to change the direction of the country, who are, in many ways, changing the direction of the country. And I think we will continue to ask the questions that need to be asked, and try to bring a much quicker resolution in Iraq and a new direction for the American people.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and the balance of the week on account of a family health matter.

Mr. BUYER (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of a death in the family.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. CUMMINGS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFazio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. MCHENRY, for 5 minutes, today and April 10.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, April 16.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, April 16.

Mr. WESTMORELAND, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCCOTTER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PENCE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CONAWAY, for 5 minutes, April 10.

(The following Member (at his request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BROWN of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

#### SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced her signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 550. An act to preserve existing judge-ships on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 50 minutes

p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, April 10, 2008, at 10 a.m.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5924. A letter from the Chief, Programs and Legislation Division, Department of the Air Force, Department of Defense, transmitting Notice of the decision to conduct a standard competition of the Civil Engineer Function at Schriever Air Force Base, Colorado, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2461; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5925. A letter from the Chairman, Department of Defense, transmitting the 2008 report on vulnerability assessments for FY 2007 and military construction requirements for the FY 2007 to FY 2012 Future Years Defense Plan, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2859; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5926. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs, Department of Defense, transmitting the Annual Report of the Activities of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation for 2007, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2166(i); to the Committee on Armed Services.

5927. A letter from the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting authorization of Colonel Norman J. Brozenick, Jr., United States Air Force, to wear the insignia of the grade of brigadier general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5928. A letter from the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting letter on the approved retirement Admiral William J. Fallon, United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5929. A letter from the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement Vice Admiral John G. Morgan, Jr., United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5930. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General William E. Mortensen, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5931. A letter from the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting authorization of the enclosed list of officers to wear the insignia of the next higher grade in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5932. A letter from the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting notice of the intention to convert the combined commissary and exchange store at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida, to an independent Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) store; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5933. A letter from the Acting General Counsel, Department of Defense, transmitting a copy of legislative proposals as part of