

laws is critical for the survival of our cultural diversity.

#### HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, everyone here knows that we have spent the past several months working to craft legislation that will bring much-needed health insurance reform to the American people. Costs and premiums are spiraling out of control, and more and more families, working families, are being priced out of health insurance.

While Democrats have debated the best way to produce a reform package that will cut costs and ensure quality and affordability, our colleagues across the aisle have been playing hooky with their responsibilities to the American public.

It has been over 100 days now since Congressman BLUNT told us his party would be offering an alternative health reform bill. We've heard nothing yet. Representative CANTOR recently suggested to a constituent that she find "charity care" for an unemployed family member in need of surgery. Find a charity? Is that the full extent of Republican health care reform?

So I ask again, where is the GOP plan for health insurance reform? Or is it just to maintain the status quo?

#### IN PRAISE OF THE "BUDDY WALK"

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise the "Buddy Walk" being held this Saturday in State College, Pennsylvania. It is sponsored by the Centre County Down Syndrome Society. The society exists to be a resource for families with a child with Down syndrome and for those who are expecting a child with Down syndrome. Their goal is to educate friends, relatives and even communities that individuals with Down syndrome are energetic, capable and loving people who play, work and go to school just like the rest of us.

The statistics on their Web site change some of the preconceived stereotypes many people have. For example, half of all Down syndrome children go to mainstream school classes, one out of every five plays a musical instrument, and three out of five know how to operate a computer.

I am a member of the Congressional Down Syndrome Caucus who supports legislative activities that would improve Down syndrome research, education, treatment and promote public policies that would enhance the quality of life for those with Down syndrome.

The Centre County Down Syndrome Society does a great deal to educate

people that those with Down syndrome do lead productive lives, and they deserve to be commended.

#### POLANSKI EXTRADITION

(Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, the laws of the United States should stand for all. No one is above the law, whether it is the criminal laws or the extradition laws. That's why I ponder why some of the elites in Hollywood are now telling us that Roman Polanski should not be subject to the laws of the United States, the State of California or the international law that recognizes extradition.

What is it that suggests that fame excuses criminal conduct? What is it that allows some people in our society to say that a rape is not really a rape, or to suggest that because someone is a great film director that therefore they ought not to be brought to the bar of justice?

Thirty some years ago in the State of California, a crime was committed. Thirty years ago, someone admitted to that crime, and 30 some years ago, that person did not show up when his sentence was to be given to him. And now it is time for the laws of the State of California and the United States and international law to be followed.

Mr. Polanski should come home, and he should meet his justice.

#### AMERICAN TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN: COMMIT 100 PERCENT OR GET THEM OUT

(Mr. GOHMERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, we know that in the 1960s and 1970s we committed our troops to Vietnam. But we found out at the end of the war, after 2 weeks of constant carpet bombing of Hanoi when SAM JOHNSON was leaving the Hanoi Hilton, he was told, You silly Americans, if you'd kept bombing us for 1 more week like that, we would have had to surrender unconditionally.

The message of Vietnam should be either commit 100 percent or get out. Don't leave people out there to die without full commitment.

Now we have people on the left saying, get out of Afghanistan now. We have people on the right saying, do whatever it takes to win. And I'm here to say, Mr. Speaker, the President should not keep going on talk shows and going around the world while he has a report suggesting what to do. He needs to commit 100 percent to the war in Afghanistan, give them everything they need, or get out now.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### IT'S TIME FOR MORAL LEADERSHIP IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, President Obama has often said that America must restore its moral leadership in the world. He took a very important step toward doing that last week when he spoke at the United Nations. In his speech, the President called for a new era of engagement and diplomacy. He called for international cooperation to address such critically important issues as nuclear nonproliferation, climate change and economic recovery. He also spoke about banning the use of torture and his decision to close Guantanamo as examples of America's new desire to abide by the rule of law.

I welcome the President's words. They show that President Obama is committed to peace and human rights. Those are the foundations of moral leadership. But now the President is facing the greatest test of his moral leadership as he reviews his strategy in Afghanistan.

The generals are urging him to pour in more troops. I'm sure there are others who are telling him to escalate the fighting just so he can look "tough on terrorism." But as the President makes his next decisions about Afghanistan, I would urge him to make the tough choices. I would urge him to base his decision-making on the following facts: the American people do not believe the war in Afghanistan is worth fighting and want to draw down the numbers of troops there. Sending in more troops will cause the Afghan people to see us as occupiers. And history has told us that the Afghan people always resist foreign occupations and always succeed.

America cannot afford to pour billions of dollars more into a futile occupation when we are going through the worst economic crisis of the past 70 years. We cannot, in good conscience, ask our brave troops to take more casualties without a clear mission, and we don't have one. We cannot ask our military families to continue to sacrifice when they have already suffered so very much.

And finally, we have no exit strategy. After the disaster of Iraq, the American people will not stand for another endless foreign occupation, one that will cost many lives and not make our country any safer.

Afghanistan is a difficult problem, but the President still has good options. He can order the Pentagon to develop a troop redeployment plan and a timetable for withdrawal. At the same time, he can be bold and shift to a new mission that will be far more likely to succeed because it will actually have the support of the Afghan people.

This new mission in Afghanistan would include economic development, education, infrastructure, humanitarian assistance, better governance and improved local policing and intelligence to hunt down extremists. This is what the Afghan people want from America so that they can have hope for a better future and reject violent extremism.

Mr. Speaker, President Obama deserves credit for reviewing his decision earlier than expected to send more troops to Afghanistan. He is showing political courage, and he is showing an open mind by considering other alternatives. I urge him to choose a new course, one that will make our country proud and the world a much safer place.

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

(Mr. POE of Texas addressed the House. His 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 California (Mrs. CAPPS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, for 60 years our country has been trying to come up with a better way to deliver health care. Despite the lingering differences of opinion over how to achieve this goal, we really have come along further than we ever have before.

We all agree we need to put an end to insurance companies' most egregious practices. We need to lower the costs of health care for everyone. We need to better incentivize preventive and primary care.

These are all accomplished by the bill which has now passed out of our three House committees. Of course, it's much more interesting for the media to talk about the few areas where disagreements still exist rather than the accomplishments we have made so far. But the legislation before us means so much more security for America's hardworking families.

Right now, when you lose your job, it can mean your entire family loses access to health insurance. And if you are unfortunate enough to have a pre-existing condition, which in some States can be defined as having been the victim of domestic violence, then you may not qualify for any affordable health insurance coverage. Worse yet, when you buy health insurance on the individual market, there is a team of people ready to comb through your records to find a reason to drop you if you are ever diagnosed with a condition that is costly to treat. Now a few States have protections against these practices. But don't we agree that all Americans deserve access to these protections?

Ironically, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have often touted a supposed "solution" to our health care troubles by allowing insurers to sell across State lines. If anything, their proposal would essentially allow insurance companies to continue their very worst practices because insurers would simply begin a race to the bottom. They would move their operations to whichever State affords the least consumer protections and sell those policies across State lines.

I'm especially concerned because I come from California, a State with some of the strongest consumer protections from health insurance company abuses. Here are some examples: California law requires that insurers cover a minimum stay in the hospital after a mastectomy. Our neighboring States of Nevada and Arizona do not. California law requires that patients have the right to appeal decisions by insurance companies and receive an external review. Idaho and Mississippi do not. And California has stricter laws defining what may and may not qualify as a preexisting condition. In Florida and Georgia, there are no definable conditions that insurers may classify as "preexisting," which means that a pre-existing condition could mean pretty much anything.

So to my friends on the other side of the aisle who believe that selling insurance across State lines will solve all of our problems, I remind you that your suggestion would do just the opposite. It would strip away vital consumer protections that exist for many patients now at the very time our focus needs to be on increasing consumer protections for American families.

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We also agree that we need to lower costs. I'm very heartened by provisions in this bill that will achieve this shared goal.

For seniors, we're taking immediate steps to reduce their prescription drug costs by closing the doughnut hole. Since the rollout of Medicare part D, my constituents and seniors across the country have begged for relief from the doughnut hole. The doughnut hole is the period of time during which you pay an insurance company to not cover the cost of your medications. I have objected to this policy from day one.

Under our plan, seniors will see relief immediately. As we begin to close the doughnut hole, prescription drugs will be available at deep discounts. Eventually, the doughnut hole will disappear completely. This is the relief that America's seniors need, and we all can agree that they deserve it.

We will bring down costs by introducing a public option to compete with private insurers. Currently, private insurance companies have every reason to increase costs for patients and to reduce reimbursements to physicians in order to line their pockets.

Why? Because there's no competition. There's no one else in the market

offering consumers a choice. But the public option will finally bring greater choices to consumers in the individual insurance market. Once that happens, premiums will become more affordable as insurers compete for customers. Insurance companies will be enticed to reimburse physicians better in order to retain them in their networks. The necessity for more affordable choices is something we can all agree on.

We can also agree that we need to do a better job of improving preventive care and giving people the tools they need to be more personally responsible for their health and well-being. As a public health nurse, I spent decades educating people about the importance of adopting healthy habits. But too many people in this country don't have access to primary care and never see a health professional until an otherwise preventable disease has worsened. How tragic is this?

H.R. 3200 encourages better primary and preventive care. It does away with copays for preventive services. It increases primary care service reimbursements under Medicare and Medicaid. It makes smart investments in community-based prevention and wellness programs. These are the things we can all agree upon.

I urge my colleagues to join me in enthusiastically supporting H.R. 3200, supporting these principles on which we all agree.

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

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

#### YEMEN

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

Mr. WOLF. I want to talk about an issue dealing with our national security. CNN reported this morning that the security situation in Yemen is rapidly deteriorating, making a dangerous new haven for al Qaeda and terrorists.

This report is just the latest in a series of warnings about the security situation in Yemen. Earlier this week, Time magazine reported that "two-thirds of the country is out of government control," and that "al Qaeda is turning the lawless mountain areas of Yemen into a new staging area."

According to press reports today, U.S. counterterrorism officials believe that al Qaeda's "presence in Yemen threatens to turn the country into a dangerous base for training and plotting attacks."

In September 2008, al Qaeda terrorists in Yemen attacked the U.S. Embassy with vehicle bombs, killing 10 guards and civilians. Since that time, al Qaeda's posture in Yemen has grown