

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, if the government's handling of the outbreak of H1N1 flu, known as swine flu, is any indication of how it will administer a public health care option, we should all be greatly concerned. With the media reporting that lines of hundreds of people wait for H1N1 vaccinations, it took a Presidential national emergency declaration just to cut through the bureaucratic red tape.

If this Congress is serious about health care reform, why not start with simple principles on which most of us can agree, such as prohibiting insurance companies from denying coverage based on preexisting conditions, portability of health care coverage, investing in medical research to ensure quality care, deductibility of health insurance premiums, ensuring access to health savings accounts, limiting frivolous lawsuits which raise health care costs, and allowing small businesses to group together to negotiate insurance plans.

Instead of the President's sweeping overhaul, which will likely result in pitfalls, we should look at simple reforms to adhere to mutually agreed upon principles ensuring that those who have health insurance can keep it and those who don't can obtain it.

PROTECT COWORKERS FROM ASSAULT AND ATTACK

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

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, many of us have heard the terrible story of Jamie Leigh Jones, the employee of a U.S. defense contractor who was brutally attacked and sexually assaulted by coworkers while working in Iraq in 2005. Instead of being allowed to seek justice, Jamie Leigh was held in a shipping container by company employees so she couldn't report the crime.

When Jamie Leigh returned to the United States, she learned that a clause in her contract barred her from taking her case to court. Instead, it forced her into a company-run arbitration process; the same company that failed to protect her in the first place.

It is our responsibility to make sure that this horrific story can never happen again. No American citizen should ever have to sign away his or her rights to justice in order to get a job. Not a dime of taxpayer money should go to companies that would rather sweep an assault under the rug than allow our justice system to work.

The Franken amendment will forbid Federal dollars from going to companies that engage in these practices. If we fail to enact this measure, we have failed to protect the rights and values we were sworn to uphold when we took

our oath of office. We cannot let this happen again.

U.S. DOLLAR ALARM BELLS

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

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, for decades the U.S. dollar has been used to price virtually all of the world's commodities, with nearly every country having U.S.-backed securities in reserve; yet this could all change.

There is growing evidence suggesting that foreign investors are losing faith in the dollar as a secure instrument. Several important countries like China, India, Russia, France, and the Arab States voiced their concern over the role of the U.S. dollar as the reserve currency in world trade. Many have suggested a new world currency take its place.

A primary concern for those investing in the United States is the growing U.S. debt and staggering deficits. Yet, despite this, the majority party continues to push ahead with an agenda that taxes, spends, and borrows, including a health care proposal that could cost as much as \$800 billion to \$1 trillion over the next decade.

How many alarm bells must be set off before Washington gets serious about tackling our ever-growing debt and budget deficits?

BREAKING THE STALEMATE ON PUBLIC OPTION

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, we need to stop ranting and start reasoning. Health care providers have pushed against the public option, citing payment as one of their primary concerns. Instead of seeing the issue within the lens of payments based on Medicare rates versus negotiated ones, I believe we can attract health care providers to the public option with a new incentive to break the stalemate. Malpractice is a primary psychological, emotional issue with doctors, dentists, hospitals, administrators, and pharmacists.

Additionally, it is a principal issue of economic obsession with providers who bitterly resent paying for liability insurance. When it comes to you, it is not petty. If there is malpractice, you certainly want to contact an attorney.

Progressives have always championed community health centers. My proposal expands the liability program used by these community health centers.

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

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, there is an old saying, common in south Ala-

bama, that we need to practice what we preach. Well, if reports are accurate, it sounds like Congress will be moving forward with health care legislation that contains a government-run public option, no matter how hard the Democratic leadership might try to rebrand this poison pill.

Well, I am going to oppose with every ounce of me a Federal takeover of our health care system. I couldn't agree more with our friend Dr. JOHN FLEMING of Louisiana, who has introduced a resolution that says that any Member of Congress who votes for a public option should be the first one to sign up for it. After all, if a public option is good enough for you, Mr. and Mrs. Taxpayer, then your elected Representative should be the first to try it out.

This is especially true for our seniors who are looking at draconian cuts to Medicare, cuts to Medicare Advantage, and, according to the CBO, a 20 percent increase in their prescription drug premiums over the next decade, not to mention higher taxes for all Americans, just to help pay for this major step towards socialized medicine.

Practicing what we preach means just that. Congress won't ask the American people to take any poison that we don't take first.

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, our Republican colleagues continue to amaze me with the creativity that they display in finding new ways to say "no" to health care reform.

First, a few weeks ago, it was Senator JOHN ENSIGN who said in the Finance Committee in the Senate, I am against the public option because—get this—it might work; people will like it. He was against it because people will like a public option.

Now, when we find out that the Senate has proposed an opt-out for the States, we are hearing from our opponents who say, well, they won't opt out, they just won't opt out. I wonder why. Probably because it would be effective in providing competition and choice for their constituents, for citizens of America who need affordable, secure health care.

That's what our efforts are for. That's what this bill is about. We need Republicans to stop saying "no" and to say "yes" to the health care that Americans deserve.

DON'T ROB SENIORS OF THEIR HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, as a family physician for over 30 years, I could have never imagined that the Democrats would come up with such a crazy idea as ObamaCare paid for on the backs of the American seniors.

As it stands today, \$162 billion will be cut from Medicare Advantage, forcing seniors to buy Medigap insurance like that sold by AARP, one of the many special interest groups the President cut a sweetheart deal with behind closed doors. There is also another \$350 billion that will be cut from the regular Medicare, which will directly remove access to medical care for this, the Nation's Greatest Generation.

In rural areas like much of my district in Louisiana, seniors will lose access to critical medical care as home health, doctors, and hospitals—they will all be closing their doors.

I call on Speaker PELOSI to stop this horrible attack on the health and welfare of our senior citizens now.

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, the mantra of our Republican colleagues here in the House is "Just say 'no.' We like the status quo."

Well, that was their mantra when it came to the Recovery Act, which has now helped improve the stock market. Housing starts are up, and, in Colorado, unemployment is down from 7.8 percent in July to 7 percent today. The trend is right.

In Colorado, we have some 42 projects, transportation projects, as a result of the Recovery Act. We have increases in energy. We have wind companies coming. We have solar companies coming to Colorado. It has been a success, to their chagrin.

Now we hear "Just say 'no.' We like the status quo" when it comes to health care. This country can't stand the status quo when it comes to health care. Premiums are up, deductibles are up, discrimination exists against people with prior illnesses. That's got to change.

We are going to vote "yes" and stop this inequity in health care.

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

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an issue of great importance—health care. The potential bill before us should concern all Americans. While I have numerous issues with this bill, I will highlight two.

The first is abortion. There is no language to exclude abortion coverage in this bill. An overwhelming majority of Americans are against Federal tax dollars paying for abortion; yet this bill opens the door to do just that.

Second, cuts to our seniors. This bill is paid for out of the pockets of our seniors, with \$162 billion coming from Medicare Advantage, a plan millions of our American seniors, including 17,000 in my district, enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, we can do better than this. Let us not pass a bill that could harm our most vulnerable, our infants, and our elderly.

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

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, my patients' health care reform should not be written behind closed doors.

When Democrats came to Congress, they pledged, led by Speaker PELOSI, the most open Congress in history; yet, now, they are planning a costly government takeover of health care in the dark of night without any public input.

Mr. Speaker, a \$1 trillion, 2,000-page blended plan that will dictate how Washington will run our health care system deserves real transparency, not just empty promises about openness.

Speaker PELOSI, my patients deserve better. Your legislation is going to tell them what type of health care their family can receive and what Medicare benefits will be cut from our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, even if the Democrat majority is going to prevent minority participation, my patients deserve to know what's going on behind these closed doors in the dark of night. If this bill really is the right prescription for reform in the health care system, then it will stand up to the light of day.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded that House Rules require that they address their remarks to the Chair.

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

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, when I was home recently, I spoke to a constituent who had lost his job because he had contracted gall bladder cancer. He was using every dime of his unemployment benefits to pay for the treatment necessary to keep him alive.

He is an example of the millions of Americans who have either lost their health care because they got sick and lost their job or the millions more who are just one paycheck or one illness away from losing their own. We have to have an answer for those individuals and for those families.

The Republican strategy of stopping health care reform at no cost provides no answer for the people of this country who have been waiting too long for a solution. It's time for this House to get beyond politics and start to provide real answers for the millions of individ-

uals and families like that gentleman, who has his life put at stake by his lack of health care, and come together. Put politics aside and pass health care reform that will lower costs and expand access for the people of this country.

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

Ms. JENKINS. Mr. Speaker, Republicans have health care solutions, but our solutions don't involve breaking promises to America's seniors. Our solutions don't involve slashing Medicare Advantage, a program that 7,400 seniors from my district rely on day in and day out. Our solutions don't involve massive cuts to Medicare that will go far beyond reducing waste and do real harm to current programs that Kansas seniors enjoy.

One of the President's stated goals for health care reform is to increase choice and competition in health care. Rather than moving forward with a plan that will reduce choice and have harmful effects on our seniors across the Nation, it is time to sit down and have an honest discussion about how we can extend health care coverage without a government takeover and without cutting Medicare.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, my mother is 83 and not in the best of health. When I see what is being proposed in this House, health care agendas that take away from seniors like her, I get a cold shiver down my spine. Medicare and Medicare Advantage are lifelines for many elderly Americans, especially in my area of south Florida.

How can this House justify \$162 billion in cuts to Medicare Advantage? Why in this economic recession are we limiting the choices for seniors or causing many to lose their current health care coverage? For seniors in my congressional district, cuts to Medicare Advantage would be disastrous.

The Congressional Budget Office says that Medicare prescription drug premiums will increase by 20 percent because of the Democrat plan. I know, and my constituents know, that seniors simply cannot afford this.

The health care reform bill makes it tougher on seniors to get the coverage and the treatment they deserve after a lifetime of hard work and sacrifice. Of course we need health care reform, but reform should not be on the backs of our seniors.