

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Americans are growing tired of having to speculate about what is in a 1,000-plus page bill that is still being drafted in secret behind closed doors. The American people want transparency in this process, and they want real bipartisan reform. They want a step-by-step approach.

Why don't we work together out in the sunshine and add even a few of the elements Republicans have presented in our 53 health care alternatives?

One of these alternatives is my OPTION Act, H.R. 3889, that among other things would, number one, make the purchase of health insurance more affordable to more people. It would allow transparency in health care pricing; make all health care-related expenses tax deductible for everybody; and allow for individuals to keep their health insurance once they leave their jobs or shop across State lines.

We must bring health care reform back from the partisan abyss and give the American people real bipartisan health care reform.

RECOVERY ACT AIDING UPSTATE
NEW YORK

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

Mr. MAFFEI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about some of the recent investments that the Recovery Act has made in my home district in upstate New York.

A few weeks ago, Secretary of Energy Steven Chu came to Syracuse to tour some of our innovative renewable energy research facilities. When he was in town, we announced more than \$1.4 million in funding for energy efficiency programs in the city of Syracuse alone. The doors, windows, heating and cooling system at City Hall will be switched to a high efficiency, energy saving model. This is a great investment, because not only does it provide for lower carbon emissions, it will actually reduce the energy bills that Syracuse taxpayers will have to foot.

This weekend, I announced energy efficiency funding for the town of Irondequoit. Irondequoit has already had an impressive energy plan in place, so they will make the most of the \$440,000 grant. Irondequoit will pursue projects like replacing lightbulbs at often-used public parks and creating a Deputy Commissioner of Public Works for Sustainability.

In my district, Mr. Speaker, the Recovery Act is making smart short-term and long-term investments. It is giving communities in my district the flexibility of making improvements and creating jobs.

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

Mr. REHBERG. This Saturday, as Americans celebrate Halloween, we should learn a valuable lesson from the frightening results Dr. Frankenstein's medical experimentation had.

Today, Congress is debating its own dangerous health care experiment. Stitched together in hidden laboratories from parts of at least five different bills and countless special interests, the final health care monster will ultimately hurt American seniors.

In Montana alone, more than 26,000 seniors choose to use Medicare Advantage. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office warns of \$162 billion in cuts to this popular program. Those will hurt those Montana seniors. Worse, this plan will increase the cost of prescription drug premiums for seniors by 20 percent over the next 10 years.

When it comes to America's health care system, the stakes are too high for reckless legislative experimentation. No one will remember how the monster was made, but they will remember the damage it did.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, we are treated this afternoon to a steady stream of people rising, despite what they say, in opposition to fundamental health care reform. This long line of speakers, what do they have in common, apart from their party affiliation? They have really good health care, and they have got jobs guaranteed until January of 2011.

What about the millions of Americans who find themselves without jobs today and who, as they think about what the future holds, also think about what they should do about and are terrified by the fact that their child may not be able to see a doctor when that child needs to?

We should talk about tort reform. We should talk about interstate competition of insurance. But only the bill being discussed now, not in secret, only the bill being discussed now provides for the coverage of those many millions of Americans who have lost their job in this recession. That is serious business, and that is what this House should continue to focus on.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, the people of my district are frustrated and they are scared. They feel like their Federal Government is out of control.

Now Speaker PELOSI is playing a game of hide-and-seek with a health care system that comprises one-fifth of our GDP.

The American people would like to know what you are hiding as they seek to find out what is in this bill, this massive, government-run health care bill. Perhaps you are hiding the fact that this will lead to government bureaucrats taking over control of seniors' health care.

Maybe you are hiding the fact that this bill is designed to include \$163 billion in cuts to Medicare Advantage. These cuts will have an exceptionally harmful impact on seniors in rural areas, forcing many seniors into a one-size-fits-all government-run health care plan.

I would like to know, but I haven't seen the details of the bill because I don't know where they are hiding today. If you claim that it is true that the American people want government to take over health care, why is this process so closed and secretive, Madam Speaker?

The American people and our seniors deserve to know better. Madam Speaker, where are you?

OPENING OF THE JAMES A.
FARLEY MEMORIAL BRIDGE

(Mr. HALL of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I attended the opening of the James A. Farley Bridge in Stony Point, New York. Eight months ago, that bridge was 80 years old and structurally deficient, one of 13 deficient bridges on the list issued by DOT after the I-35 bridge collapse in Minnesota.

This Monday, just yesterday, thanks to the hard work of so many, we celebrated the early opening of its replacement. This project is more than just a bridge; it is an investment in our community, in our country and in our future. It created jobs that cannot be outsourced, while strengthening the local communities.

The new bridge will hold three lanes of traffic and sidewalks on either side, keep our communities connected, reduce congestion, and strengthen the Route 9W corridor, providing faster response times for local EMS and less noise for neighborhoods with reduced detoured traffic.

We should celebrate the cooperation between Federal, State and local government officials, especially the supervisors, Howard Phillips and Phil Marino from Stony Point and Haverstraw, the two towns joined by the bridge. I would like to congratulate them and all the workers on a job well done.

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(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, we have been told that the public option is now back on the table, but we have to call it by some other name. Well, I have done a little work on the criminal justice side, and we used to have something called prior acts evidence. You look at what someone has done in the past and you see how that allows you to interpret what they are doing now.

So let's look at what we have done with the issue of student loans. Oh, yes, we got rid of the private option for student loans this month, because the President and the Democrats said the government has to take it over. And now we have in this bill an effort to try and get rid of the only private option in Medicare. It is called Medicare Advantage.

But forget about that, because when they tell us now the private option is just an option for competition and they are not going to take over by government the health care system, trust them with that. Forget about the prior evidence. Give them the benefit of the doubt.

The American people aren't fooled. They look at what they have done before, they look at what they are doing now, and they are telling us, help us stop them. Help us stop them.

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, you know, I will tell you what is scary. What is scary is the woman who came into my office a few weeks ago who shared her story with me to tell me about her breast cancer experience that she had just been through for the third time. She told me how I as a breast cancer survivor was fortunate because when I was diagnosed all I had to worry about was fighting the cancer. When she was diagnosed, she also one day later lost her job and, with it, her health insurance. So not only did she have to battle breast cancer, but she also was faced with battling how she was going to get her health care taken care of so she could get well from breast cancer and continue to be the survivor that she has been for many, many years.

Americans are tired of the party of "no." Americans are tired of obstacle after obstacle standing at that podium insisting on making up things that just aren't true.

There are bills out there that are available and accessible to anyone to look at. This has been an open and transparent process. But the bottom line is there are 46 million people that don't have health insurance. We need to provide stability and security to those that do and bring the costs down.

I challenge our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to work with us

on true health care reform, instead of being the party of "no."

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

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I come from northwest Ohio. I know that many of my colleagues from around this House go home every weekend, and it wasn't very long ago I was home and I was speaking with one of our small business owners.

He came up to me and said, Bobby, I have a question to ask you. He said, Where are we on this health care?

I told him. I said, This is where it looks like we are going.

He said, Do you think it is going to pass?

I said, I am not really sure right now. But he said, You know what? I am going to tell you something. I have been trying to read these bills to the best of my ability to find out what is in them. I am going to tell you right now, if this bill passes, there is no way I can survive. I am going to have to close up.

We are talking about people and their health care, and it is very important. There is not one person in this Chamber that would say we should not be doing something about health care in this country. But we also have people out there trying to put jobs out there so people can work. And when I looked around that business where he was, you start saying, Where are these people going to go after this? We have over 10 percent unemployment in Ohio, and it is getting tougher. The worst is yet to come.

Mr. Speaker, the American people want health care reform, but we have to do it responsibly.

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the people may be wondering what is going on here today. Well, you are watching the charge of the light brigade. The Republicans believe that they can just throw themselves into it and they will stop it. But they are not going to stop it.

The other night, Tuesday night, New York City, a friend of mine had a problem. He called a doctor's office and got the first question, which is always, What kind of insurance do you have?

He said, Well, I don't have any insurance. I am from out of the country.

They said, Oh, well, you can come in and see the doctor, but you have to bring \$250 in cash or the doctor will not see you.

He said, I don't have that kind of cash.

They said, Well, tough luck. Go to the emergency room.

Now, that is the health care system that my colleagues in the light brigade want to protect. Keep trying to protect it, guys. It ain't going to work. The American people want a change, and they are going to get one.

□ 1300

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded that the rules of the House require that Members address their comments to the Chair.

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

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. Speaker, as a substitute for a plan that actually controls health care costs, the Senate majority leader has devised a gimmick. Under the plan announced yesterday, the Federal Government imposes billions of dollars of taxes on all 50 States, imposes billions in unfunded mandates via the Medicaid program, increasing the debt load of every citizen, creating a new government-run insurance program that, according to the CBO's official analysis, is more expensive than the status quo. Individual States can opt out, but their citizens cannot opt out of the taxes, and they can't opt out of the debt, and they can't opt out of the job losses that will result from these higher taxes and debt.

Real reform will not require gimmicks or job loss. States should not have to pass laws to save themselves. Real health reform lowers costs by empowering patients. If we give patients direct control over health care dollars and the information they need for value-conscious decisions, we will have reform.

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, the debate we're having today is between two groups—those who believe we can improve America and those who believe we can't improve America. We believe we can improve American energy; they believe we can't. We believe we can improve health care; they believe we can't. We believe we can stop insurers from preventing us from having coverage because we have a preexisting condition; they believe we can't. We need some more Republicans and fewer Republican's because saying we can't improve America is not up to the standards that America was built on. We can stop insurance companies. Let's get some more of these Republican's to become Republicans and help us reform health care in this country.