

about the consequences of the majority party's proposed health reform to the members of our Greatest Generation.

As my colleagues have stated over and over today, the bill under consideration in the House would pose a major threat to our senior citizens. I'm especially troubled by the legislation's consequences for the more than 10 million Americans who rely on Medicare Advantage for their health care coverage.

In my home State of Minnesota, more than 230,000 senior citizens rely on Medicare Advantage. More than 17,000 of these men and women live in my district. And as their Representative, I simply cannot abide limiting their choices, let alone stripping them of their coverage completely. These are Minnesotans who, if they like their insurance, can't keep it.

Mr. Speaker, we can do better. Let's push the reset button and start over in a bipartisan way to write legislation, not behind closed doors, but out in the open.

HEALTH CARE REFORM FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

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

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Mr. Speaker, I came to Congress in January to make a difference for my community, to make a difference for my district.

Today, I heard from one of my constituents who owns a small business, a printing company in northwestern Pennsylvania. This small business owner received notification that health care premiums for his business are increasing by 51.1 percent this year. That dwarfs the 14 percent increase of last year and the 20 percent increase from the previous year and dwarfs the 28 percent increase that I saw in my own small business when I was still working there.

Anyone who has ever worked in a small business knows that these costs are unsustainable. This small business owner told me that his business' new family rate will be in excess of \$1,700 per month. He wrote, "I don't know what can be done, but it is small businesses like mine that cannot afford these increases."

Mr. Speaker, we must not allow our small businesses to suffer so unnecessarily when something can be done. This is a clear and urgent need to pass health care reform legislation. I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to embrace reform.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, if we were really debating health care, you could wonder if some of these things could be said with a straight face.

This isn't about health care; it's about control. Who's going to control

these decisions? This entire debate could be put on a bumper sticker that says, simply, "Who Decides?" The majority wants Washington decisions and we want individual decisions.

Mrs. Clinton summed it up best 15 years ago in the last health care debate. She said, We can't trust the American people to make these decisions.

But the majority can't keep their hands off this trillion dollar decision; so they put into one of the bills things like \$1.6 billion for streetlights. How many people are going to get insured with that? Or \$10 billion to shore up union—their friends—insurance funds? I wonder how many people are going to get insured with that. Or the payoff to the trial lawyers, who cause us to spend \$200 billion a year in defensive medicine to prevent being sued, who's helping them?

Mr. Speaker, this is about control.

THE PARTY OF "NO"

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

Mr. DOYLE. Well, I guess all day we're going to hear from the party of "no," no health care plan, no ideas for America.

To the people who have lost their jobs and can't get health insurance because the insurance companies said, No, you have a preexisting condition, they say "no." Well, our party has an answer for that. Our health care plan will stop that.

For people in this country who have filed bankruptcy because insurance companies stopped paying on their chronic conditions, this party over here says "no." Well, Democrats say "yes." Our health care bill will cure that.

For our senior citizens who need help with their drugs and closing the doughnut hole, the party of "no" doesn't have a plan. This health care bill will help close the doughnut hole.

So I say to my friends over there, the negative nabobs of negativity, "no" is not a solution for America. Democrats have a plan that will cover all Americans and provide health care and reform this insurance industry that has abused so many people in this country.

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HEALTH CARE

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

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, for the first time since 1975, seniors will not be receiving a Social Security cost-of-living increase in fiscal year 2010. And now on top of that, seniors are worried about their Medicare plans. In almost every senior center that I have visited in my district in the last few months, 50 percent of the residents have told me

they are on Medicare Advantage plans. These seniors like the plans that they have, and they want to keep them.

The administration has said many times that if you like the health care plan you have, you can keep it. That will not happen with Medicare Advantage, and seniors are upset and angry.

Let's support health care reform for all Americans that doesn't harm the plans that seniors rely on. Let's help all Americans.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing today is terribly disappointing. Health care reform is necessary and it is urgent. There are powerful forces in this country who are determined to keep 47 million Americans without health insurance, and this same group is opposed to giving competition to the insurance industry.

If we don't reform health care, Medicare costs will surely bankrupt our Nation. That is a fact. If we don't reform the cost of employer-sponsored insurance, we will bankrupt companies and families. If we don't act now, uncompensated care will close the doors of rural hospitals in my district and your districts across the country.

We are ready to move forward. Democrats are ready to make this bold and visionary decision. I am disappointed we don't have help from the other side.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to another job-killing proposal that only Washington could dream up. Only here would people proclaim to lower the cost of health care by taxing it and making it more expensive.

Just today it has been reported that House leadership is now likely to include a \$20 billion excise tax on medical devices as part of their health care reform bill. This new proposal will halt innovation and ultimately make health care more expensive for patients.

One week ago I held a field hearing in my district about the impact of this innovation tax. I heard from companies both large and small that there will be resultant job losses and cuts to research and development.

Mr. Speaker, these proposed taxes are a very wrong-headed approach. Let's get back on the right track and remove this tax so we can keep the jobs we have and make sure that we continue the innovation that is alive and well in both Minnesota and in our Nation.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, in these delaying tactics that we see from the other side, let's not lose track of the big picture. The health care reform legislation taking shape recognizes the different ways that Americans get their health care and helps each one. Those who get their health coverage through their employment will find that insurance companies cannot yank them around, or cut them off if their health treatment becomes expensive, or discriminate against them for pre-existing conditions.

Those who get their health care through Medicare will keep the Medicare they know and love; only it will be better. Closing the gap in the coverage of prescription medicine, the so-called doughnut hole, and moving toward a more patient-based, less procedure-based system. And those not well served by today's existing system, small businesses, employees and employers, people between jobs, individual contractors and consultants, can get their coverage at lower group rates and can get assistance in paying those premiums. And overall, this will hold down the rising cost of health care in America.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, do we have good doctors in this country? Do we have good surgeons? Do we have good hospitals? And do we have reasonable access to that care? The answer is clear that we do.

Do you believe that a government takeover of our health care system will make health care better or worse? Do you really trust the Federal Government to take over this important part of our lives? The last thing that we need is to have some government bureaucrat standing between you and your doctor on making these important decisions.

Finally, the Democratic health care plan will hurt seniors by cutting Medicare. This Democratic plan will push unfunded mandates to my home State of Mississippi in the average amount of \$360 million a year for the next 10 years. My district and our country simply can't afford this.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SCHAUER. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I am from the State of Michigan, where people are losing their health insurance every day. Businesses are struggling to pay for health insurance for their employees.

I rise today to give voice to one of my constituents, Mike Gossett, who

works for Apollo Express, a trucking company in Jackson, Michigan. He says he is a partner in this company of 70 full- and part-time employees. They have 42 employees on their health insurance program. Just this year, they received notice of a 15 percent increase in their health insurance rates for next year. He tells me this happens each and every year, and they are looking for answers. He fears that they will be forced to continue to decrease their coverage where they will just be able to offer catastrophic coverage for their employees.

Our families and our businesses are paying more and more every year and getting less and less. He is calling upon us, Democrats and Republicans, to fix this problem. That's why I am here in Congress, and I hope we can work together to pass health care reform.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it happened last week. Who would have thought that in the United States of America, a Federal government pay czar, a Federal government bureaucrat, would tell a private American citizen how much money they can make. But it happened last week.

And now if the majority party has their way, coming soon to you and your family, a Federal takeover of health care with all of the taxes and all of the bureaucrats getting between you and your family.

Mr. Speaker, pay czar, car czar, energy czar, a \$1.4 trillion deficit, sometimes I actually think the other party won't be happy until government runs everything. Sometimes I actually think the other party won't be happy until they have an IV hooked up to the taxpayer wallet and they can hit the drip button every time they want.

What we need is common sense, what we need is real reform, not more government.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of a bill that obviously some people in this room haven't read. And some people in this room don't realize that in order to get results, you have got to do the positive. You have to work hard and you have to vote "yes." Voting "no" doesn't provide any leadership; it just keeps the status quo.

But remember, part of this bill is going to have everybody in America have the same kind of insurance that we in Congress have. They don't want to admit that. They don't want to give up that insurance. They won't say "no" to that insurance. They won't say "no" to the TRICARE insurance that spouses and children of military folks

get. That's what we are going to open it up to. That is the Medicare rates. They won't say "no" to Medicare for senior citizens. They just say "no" to the bill that is going to try to solve it for everybody else who doesn't have access to health care and can't afford health care and has preexisting conditions and can't get health care.

Also, insurance companies are raising premiums right now, all over this country, including the rates that we here in Congress will have to pay. And the party of "no" has said nothing about that. Read the bill. Yes, read the bill.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would ask Members to respect the gavel and allow each Member the opportunity to have their say.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, 57 percent of Americans believe the majority's health care plan will raise their health care costs. Only 18 percent believe it lowers costs. Fewer than 1 in 4 Americans believe this plan will improve the quality of health care in America. And according to the Rasmussen poll out yesterday, this is a fact.

So what is Washington's response? To press on. The omnipresent defenders of the nonexistent problems of 80 percent of Americans are crafting another plan, in secret, one they haven't even read yet.

The American people have given this plan a vote of no confidence. Given the hundreds of billions of dollars in budget shortfalls for health plans Washington already runs—Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP—is it any wonder the American people don't believe what they are being told about this?

It is time to go back to the drawing board, and we on this side of the aisle stand ready, willing, and able to work with you in a bipartisan fashion for the best interests of the people of this great country.

HEALTH CARE

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

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the important responsibility in front of us on health care reform. We are at a momentous time in our history. For the first time, we have a bill that has been approved by all five committees of jurisdiction. And although there are still details to be worked out, for the first time the majority of us have consensus on the structures and goals of this bill. We have never gotten this far, and I feel