

It means it will be against the law for insurance companies to drop your coverage when you become sick.

It means insurance companies will no longer be able to place an arbitrary cap on the amount of coverage that you receive.

It means there will be a yearly limit on how much you can be charged for out-of-pocket expenses because no one should go bankrupt because they get sick.

It means 35 to 40 million additional Americans will be covered with health insurance. That is virtually every legal resident of America.

This set of health insurance reforms means that America will finally get the health care coverage that it deserves.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, if you listen to America's senior citizens and ask them what they want with respect to Medicare, I think this is what you hear. Seniors want to continue to have their benefits left alone and be able to choose the doctor and hospital they want. Under our plan, they do.

Seniors want to pay less for their prescription drugs which are rising at a rapid pace. Under our plan, they will.

Seniors want to be sure that their doctors will continue to provide quality care for them because they trust and rely on those doctors so much. Under our bill, doctors will get more of what they richly and fairly deserve. They will get paid what they deserve.

Now, the other side has engaged in a scare campaign to scare America's seniors. I think what most scares America's seniors is the irresponsibility of proposing nothing about America's health care crisis. That is what the minority offers.

We offer a better way, a brighter way, and a safer way for America's seniors.

CHARITABLE GIVING

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the unwise proposal made by the White House earlier this year to lower the tax deduction for charitable giving. Independent studies have concluded this proposal could result in a drop of as much as \$4 billion in charitable donations.

Charities in the Tampa Bay area have recently indicated the threat of this proposal becoming law has already contributed to a sharp decline in donations, forcing some of them to shut their doors down.

Every year, Americans give hundreds of billions of dollars to charity. In

turn, they provide funding to shelters, food banks, health care clinics, and a host of other charitable programs which benefit the needy. During this recession, their services are needed more than ever. Limiting charitable contributions is the wrong course of action and will end up hurting those who need it the most, particularly as we approach the holidays.

□ 1030

OLDER AMERICANS LACK HEALTH INSURANCE

(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, it has been 133 days since the Republicans promised to present their health insurance reform legislation, and we still have no alternative plan from them.

The fastest growth group of uninsured Americans is older Americans age 50 to 64. Saying "no" to health insurance reform hurts millions of Americans who lack health insurance.

There was a 36 percent increase in the number of older Americans without insurance from 2000 to 2009. It used to be if you worked most of your life here in America you could retire to someplace warm and sunny like my home State of Florida. There were 7.1 million uninsured people age 50 to 64 in 2007. How can we allow more than 7 million Americans over 50—many who have worked their entire life—to go without health insurance? They certainly can't afford to retire when they're worried about how to pay for their medical bills.

Republicans point to a bunch of different solutions offered by their Members, including dismantling or privatizing Medicare. So which plan do they stand behind? Americans deserve to know.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, we are entering the final stages of crafting a health care bill that gives the American people what they want—more choice in health care options, lower cost for families and small businesses, and insurance that's fair to American families once again.

We've worked long days and nights here in Washington to craft a bill that addresses the challenges that people in Connecticut and across this country face. And the American people have been able to read our bills and monitor the debate on television and on the Internet and be able to interact with us when we come back home. Meanwhile, where have our Republican colleagues been? Sitting on the sidelines, talking

about solutions, but sharing nothing with the public. And they have kept us waiting for the last 133 days without a bill.

Well, it's time for Republicans to get in the game because health care struggles of the American people aren't getting any easier, and they can't afford to wait.

IT'S TIME TO END "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL"

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend our former colleague and current Secretary of the Army, John McHugh. He rightly stated last weekend that the United States Army—the proudest and most professional fighting force on Earth—is fully capable of accepting openly gay and lesbian Americans into service and ending the unworkable and unconscionable policy of "don't ask, don't tell."

We have all heard the tired arguments of why all Americans who choose to serve should not be allowed to serve, but those arguments belong to an intolerant past. The men and women who make up today's Armed Forces are modern, highly informed Americans who have grown up in an era more accepting of individual differences. As Secretary McHugh said, "The Army has a big history of taking on similar issues with predictions of doom and gloom that did not play out."

At long last, the United States military is ready to be representative of all the people of the United States. It's time now for Congress to act and send legislation to the President asking him to end "don't ask, don't tell" once and for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR of Arizona). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

ADDITIONAL TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1929) to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. ADDITIONAL TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF PROGRAMS UNDER THE SMALL BUSINESS ACT AND THE SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT ACT OF 1958.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1 of the Act entitled “An Act to extend temporarily certain authorities of the Small Business Administration”, approved October 10, 2006 (Public Law 109–316; 120 Stat. 1742), as most recently amended by section 1 of Public Law 111–66, is amended by striking “October 31, 2009” each place it appears and inserting “January 31, 2010”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on October 30, 2009.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

The legislation before us will extend the Small Business Administration’s broad array of critical programs until the end of January. This will allow small businesses to go on using the valuable services of the SBA while the House and the Senate continue our work to comprehensively reauthorize the Small Business Administration.

Already this year we have made important progress toward reauthorizing the SBA. In May, the House passed legislation reauthorizing the agency’s entrepreneurial development programs. In July, we approved a measure to update the Small Business Innovation Research Initiative. And later this week, the House will consider H.R. 3854, a bill to comprehensively update the SBA’s capital access initiatives. Passing the bill before us today will let us complete our work on these measures and conference them with our counterparts in the Senate.

The SBA clearly needs to be modernized in order to meet today’s challenges. I look forward to sending legislation to the President’s desk that will bring all of these various initiatives up to date. In the meantime, this bill offers the appropriate amount of time to continue our work while ensuring the agency can continue serving small businesses.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the chairwoman’s

request to suspend the rules and pass S. 1929, as amended.

The bill is very simple. It is a clean extension that prolongs the authorization of all programs authorized by the Small Business Act, the Small Business Investment Act, and any program operated by the Small Business Administration for which Congress has already appropriated the funds. This extension is going to last until January 31, 2010.

This extension is essential because the authorization of various programs operated by the SBA ceases on October 31, 2009. Over the past two Congresses, our committee has worked in a bipartisan fashion and reported out a number of bills to reauthorize and extend the programs operated by the SBA. Despite our efforts to come to terms with various differing aspects of our and the other body’s legislation, the extension passed earlier this year will expire before the legislative process can run its course.

The work needed to help America’s entrepreneurs revitalize the economy simply cannot be accomplished within the timeframe outlined in the current legislation. We not only need to reauthorize these critical programs, but also update them to respond to the reality that is the 21st century. The extra time contained in this legislation allows us to fully explore and implement the ideas that will give our Nation’s entrepreneurs the tools they need to be successful.

Without enactment of this extension, a number of vital programs that the SBA operates would cease to function. Given the continued importance that small businesses play in the revitalization of the American economy, we cannot allow the SBA authorization to run out. Passage of this legislation will enable the House and Senate to continue to work in an industrious manner to address necessary changes to SBA programs.

I urge all of my colleagues to suspend the rules and pass S. 1929, as amended.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WU).

Mr. WU. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1929, as amended by the House. We have been working diligently on reauthorizing key programs of the SBA, including the Small Business Innovative Research and the Small Business Technology Transfer programs.

While progress has been made, a temporary extension of SBA programs is necessary to provide more time for us to continue working and provide stability to the SBA. S. 1929, as passed by the Senate, would extend SBA programs through April 30, 2010.

While I believe it is important to provide stability for SBA, 6 months is simply too long of a time to extend the programs because we need to keep our focus on a comprehensive reauthorization of SBIR and STTR. By extending

the program for 6 months, we would delay this process. We would be putting off important work that needs to be done, such as permitting technology and venture capital participation in SBIR to a larger extent, changing grant sizes and other important things to turn the program into an innovation program as well as a small business program.

S. 1929, as amended by the House, will provide a 3-month extension that will provide stability to the SBA but also ensure that we continue to work expeditiously to pass reauthorization bills for SBIR and STTR.

I commend the chairwoman for her leadership on the Small Business Committee and working to keep small businesses in their important role as we work toward an economic recovery. Small business is the heart of our innovation economy, and we have to have the tools to keep them active and thriving in a 21st century economy.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge a “yes” vote on this vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1929, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ALLOWING FUNDING FOR THE INTEROPERABLE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GRANT PROGRAM

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1694) to allow the funding for the interoperable emergency communications grant program established under the Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005 to remain available until expended through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1694

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PUBLIC SAFETY INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS GRANTS.

(a) Notwithstanding section 3006(a)(2) of the Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005 (47 U.S.C. 309 note), sums made available to administer the Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program under section 309(j)(8)(E) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 309(j)(8)(E)) shall remain available until expended, but not beyond September 30, 2012.

(b) The period for performance of any investment approved under the Program as of the date of enactment of this Act shall be extended by one year, but not later than September 30, 2011, except that the Assistant