

health care bill we will consider later this week effectively eliminates the popular Medicare Advantage health plans that millions of seniors rely on for medical, vision, and dental care.

In my district, nearly 30,000 seniors are enrolled in one of these plans. The average enrollee saves \$800, they have a lower hospitalization rate, and they report greater satisfaction with their plan. The Congressional Budget Office maintains that these cuts could "lead many plans to limit the benefits they offer, raise their premiums, or withdraw from the program."

There are a total of \$500 billion in cuts to various Medicare programs. I don't think seniors would call reducing their benefits health care reform. I don't think seniors would call cutting home health care, cutting hospice care, cutting nursing home care health care reform. We don't need to destroy Medicare Advantage to reform health care.

This week, Republicans will offer a simpler, better proposal which offers real health care reform without taking benefits away from our Nation's seniors.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, Prime Minister Angela Merkel was in this Hall just a few hours ago. She represents a country where they have had health care security for 126 years. Americans have been waiting for 100 years; and when the Republicans took over the last time, they knocked out Mrs. Clinton's plan and they bragged about it. And for 12 years, they made not one single proposal that they would bring to the floor for a vote. They want the status quo. They like what is going on. And if folks back home like what is going on, stick with them, because they are never going to change anything.

What they say about this is, Not so fast. One hundred years is too fast? Well, they say, But we have something we're just about to bring out here on Thursday. Not so fast, right. Wait until the last minute after all of the debate, and then say, Not so fast. The American people want it done now.

WHO WROTE THIS BILL?

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, we should pay special attention to the sections drafted under the supervision of the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

Chairman CHARLIE RANGEL supervised the drafting of 70 pages of this bill, pages 296 through 366. This is the same Congressman under investigation by the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct on five separate counts: using official resources to raise money;

problems with apartment leases; undisclosed ownership in Dominican Republic Yacht Club; compliance with the storage rules of the House; and problems with his financial disclosure and income tax.

This bill raises your taxes, but ethics is investigating whether RANGEL paid his. Leaders may respond with two spins: Chairman RANGEL had nothing to do with writing this bill, or, he has no ethics problems.

A 2,000-page bill and a coming manager's amendment that will be a chamber of horrors of special deals, supervised by a Congressman under five separate ethics investigations, that is what we will vote on this week.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Affordable Health Care for America Act. This bill lives up to its name. Most importantly from my perspective, this bill does justice to the 4.4 million American citizens living in Puerto Rico and the other U.S. territories. Too often in the past, the territories have been treated as an afterthought in important legislation. Thanks to the efforts of leadership, that is not the case with this bill.

While the legislation is not perfect, it constitutes a giant step forward. The bill addresses the unprincipled funding disparities that the territories have always faced under Medicaid. It also provides funding to enable Americans of modest means residing in the territories to purchase subsidized coverage through the health insurance exchange. It makes my constituents eligible for the worthy consumer protections established in the bill.

I hope the Senate will follow the House's lead, and I will continue to work with our allies in that Chamber to ensure that their bill treats American citizens in the territories in a fair and just manner.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, if you get dressed in the dark, you are probably going to make some poor clothing choices that will open you to ridicule. Well, the same rule applies when you write bills in the dark.

President Obama said last year that the health care reform negotiations would air on C-SPAN. That way, he said, Americans could see who was fighting for them and who is siding with the special interests.

Based on the President's very own formula, we must assume that the Democrat-only, closed-door dealmaking on health care must have put the special interests at the fore-

front. It appears certain that one of those special interests at the table behind the closed doors was the trial attorneys. Maybe that is why the negotiations were secret. They can claim attorney-client confidentiality.

But those trial attorneys must have charged by the hour, because the Democrats gave them quite the payoff in this legislation. This bill will override States' malpractice reform laws and it will prevent States from capping attorneys' fees or damage rewards.

Isn't it ironic that it was President Obama who warned us that this would happen.

□ 1345

REPUBLICAN PARTY IS ON THE WRONG SIDE

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans controlled this Chamber from 1993 until 2006, they controlled the Presidency until 2008; and now, 11 months into a national health care debate, they are just figuring out that we have a health care crisis in this country. How long will it take them to shake the grip of the insurance industry before they even come up with a realistic plan?

Let's look at what our friends on the other side of the aisle are going to vote against. They're going to vote against us increasing the age to 27 where kids can stay on their parents' insurance. They're going to vote against citizens of the United States not being denied health care coverage because of a pre-existing condition. They're going to vote against us saying that no one in America will ever go bankrupt again because of a health care catastrophe in their family. That's what they are going to vote against.

It's very simple: once again the Republican Party is going to be on the wrong side of the vote, on the wrong side of health care reform, and on the wrong side of history.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3962 states in section 1 that the legislation builds on what's broken in today's health care system and repairs at the same time. I agree that improvements need to be made in the existing health care system, but placing individuals under one umbrella doesn't build on what's working or repair what's not.

The bill includes a government-run public option that cuts Medicare and Medicare Advantage programs and raises taxes on middle class families. In addition, the bill does not protect the interests of small business, nor

does it adequately address defensive medicine. And in the midst of States struggling with financial constraints, it will burden them with more unfunded mandates from the Federal Government.

This latest proposal may be a different name, but even with a new name, the legislation remains a government takeover of health care.

FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYERS TAX CREDIT

(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, last week, we received news of our first GDP growth we've had in a year. Our GDP increased by 3.5 percent last quarter, which was better than expected. This is welcome news and shows that our economy is finally moving in the right direction.

We still have a long road ahead to reach economic recovery. We must continue to help our families and communities find immediate relief. That's why I support an extension of the First-Time Homebuyers Tax Credit. This \$8,000 tax credit has helped produce more than 130 sales in Erie County in my district alone, and many more throughout western Pennsylvania.

I hope to see this tax credit extended so we can continue to give a boost to the housing market and help more Americans reach the dream of homeownership.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern about the consequences and costs of the majority party's proposed government takeover of health care.

Despite the lack of bipartisanship and the absence of the transparency promised by Speaker PELOSI, the House is poised to vote this week on a bill that will give control of one-sixth of our economy to the Federal Government. Sadly, the \$1.3 trillion price tag is not the only cost of this risky proposal. The bill also saddles Americans with 111 new boards, offices, commissions and programs, all of which will be required to implement Speaker PELOSI's takeover.

Further, this bill imposes hundreds of billions of dollars in new taxes on small businesses, individuals who cannot afford health coverage, and employers who cannot afford to provide coverage that meets Federal bureaucrats' standards.

Mr. Speaker, these costs are far too much to ask the American people to bear. It is time to press the reset button and come together to create a

health care proposal that meets the needs of every American and saves our economy from additional burdens we cannot afford.

WE ARE GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION

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

Mr. TERRY. It is about the spending. People back home are asking me, How much is enough for you? Another \$1.2 trillion bill in this national takeover of our health care. I think this is the third \$1 trillion bill of this year at a time when we have almost a \$2 trillion deficit this year.

Now, we can't raise enough tax dollars, we can't cut Medicare enough from our seniors to cover this cost. Everyone but the best Kool-Aid drinkers around know this bill is going to add to our national debt. Soon—and maybe by next year at the rate that this Congress is spending—our national debt will equal the size of our GDP, which is what the economists say is the tipping point that is going to drag our economy down. What does this mean? It means that my children and your children are going to pay this off with fewer opportunities than we have today.

We are going in the wrong direction for the dream for our children in America.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, we've heard lots of stories today, and it has touched our hearts. We know there are people out there suffering because we've got some major problems with our health care system. We know that there are uninsured people because the costs are just too high, they're priced out of the market, or they've got a pre-existing condition. We know that, for example, there is not interstate competition that goes on that boosts up the cost, along with the fact that we have excessive litigation in our society.

We could have fixed these issues so that everybody could be covered. The Republicans were willing to do it, but we were frozen out of this whole system because the Democrats didn't want to reform the system; they wanted to transform our current health care system into a government-run, bureaucratic Federal program.

And they are doing that at the expense of seniors, where \$400 billion is being taken out of their Medicare funds at the expense of small business and, yes, at the expense of all those people who are currently insured who will be thrown into this government-run system which will be inferior to the ones they have now in the private sector.

This is a travesty. We should have worked together on this, but the Democrats wouldn't do it.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my serious concerns about the health care bill that's being rushed to the floor. This 2,000-plus-page bill has hundreds of new pages that no one yet has had a chance to read, much less understand.

There are over 110 new Federal programs and bureaucracies, each with its own new costly mandates. This bill taxes you if you have health insurance, it taxes you if you cannot afford to have health insurance, and it taxes you if you are a small business and you cannot afford to give health insurance to all of your employees. It has over \$730 billion in new job-killing taxes.

What Americans need today more than anything else is new jobs, but this bill will result in the loss of another 5.5 million jobs. Congress can't even figure out how to make its own workweek, much less change the whole health care system. Let's use a little common sense around here for a change.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. OLVER. We often hear that America has the best health care system in the world; but the cold, hard facts don't agree. Between 1997 and 2002, when researchers compared preventable deaths from diabetes, cancer and heart disease, among others, in 19 industrialized countries, the United States placed last, dead last. 75,000 lives could have been saved had the United States achieved just the average preventable death rate of its counterparts. Since 2002, another 75,000 deaths could have been prevented.

The Affordable Health Care for America Act will reduce preventable deaths. H.R. 3962 completely bans preexisting condition exclusions by 2013 and ends copays and deductibles for preventive care under Medicare and Medicaid. And H.R. 3962 will train many more primary care providers and pay them better for their service.

Our current health care system is failing us. We need health reform now.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, everyone in America understands the need for health care reform, and so do I. Unfortunately, the new \$1.2 trillion, 2,000-