

taking it away from States and citizens. For example, it creates 111 boards, bureaucracies, and commissions and has \$730 billion in taxes.

This government-centered plan won't work. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office says that it increases the cost to patients and taxpayers.

The patient-centered alternative offered by Republicans will save patients money, save taxpayers money, and expand access to quality care.

#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, later this week we will be voting on legislation that dramatically revamps our Nation's health care system. The 1,990-page, \$1.055 trillion Democratic health care proposal is a measure that raises individual and business taxes and reduces funding for Medicare.

The bill, if signed into law, will be harmful to New Jersey's taxpayers, senior citizens, and businesses. And as such, I will be voting against Speaker PELOSI's health care bill.

Instead, I will be supporting a fiscally responsible alternative that includes medical liability reform, small business insurance pooling, and letting families and businesses buy insurance across State lines, ideas that have strong bipartisan support but are absent from the Democratic plan.

The Republican alternative is the only health care reform measure that improves what is working in our health care system and fixes what is broken in a fiscally responsible manner without raising taxes or increasing our ever-growing debt and deficit.

#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, as we're up here discussing this, there are folks in the Democratic caucus trying to better understand the support that exists for this bill.

This bill is not Speaker PELOSI's bill, and it's not the Democrats' bill. Mr. Speaker, this is America's bill. We are the only industrialized Nation in the world that doesn't have a plan to take care of health care for its citizens. America is catching up to the 21st century to where other countries have been in the 20th.

In my community our emergency room at our public hospital is about to close because they're so far in debt because they have so many people that don't have insurance and can't afford to pay. They take them, but they can't afford to pay it with the property taxes that are ever-rising.

This bill will help keep emergency rooms and trauma centers open. It will say to people that have preexisting conditions in America, and that's peo-

ple give or take my age and older, 60 and up, in that area, and even younger people can get insurance, that there won't be a limit on the amount of monies that you had before. And it will say to the insurance companies they don't make the rules, the people make the rules. And we will have insurance that's affordable and available and save our country economically and save individuals as well.

#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, my friend from Tennessee has just described this as America's bill, not the Pelosi health care plan.

It is, in fact, Americans who are going to have to shoulder the burden if, God forbid, it becomes public law.

The American people, when they think about health care reform, are not thinking about taxpayer funding of abortion on demand. They're not thinking about a \$500 billion cut in Medicare. They're thinking about greater transparency. These are the kinds of concerns that rank-and-file Democrats have joined with Republicans in raising.

The American people want many of the things my friend from Tennessee has just advocated. They want us to deal with preexisting conditions. They want us to ensure that there's an opportunity for children, young people up to the age of 25, to continue to be on their parents' plan. They want people to buy insurance across State lines. They want us to bring about a step-by-step approach. That's exactly what the American people want. That's exactly what our alternative does. That's what this House should do.

#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, 85 percent of the American public are happy with the insurance they have; 80 percent of them know that it costs too much. But all of them understand that when you try to do what the Democrats are talking about doing and adding a trillion dollars of expense, they understand we can't afford it.

I have 30 grandchildren. I'm concerned about passing this cost on to my children and my grandchildren.

This is a bill that we start paying for now, that the taxes start paying for it now, and it doesn't even start covering people for 4 years.

What's the rush? Why don't we do something that's good? Why don't we have a Republican solution for improving and portability for American health care?

We support tort reform that curbs frivolous lawsuits. We support allowing

negotiating across State lines and group purchasing power, which will lower the cost of insurance. We support choice of coverage without the government forcing people into government-run health care.

I strongly oppose the Democrat big-spending health care bill.

#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, Washington is attempting to take over our health care system, roughly 16 percent of the economy.

In the shadow of an approximately \$12 trillion national debt, I am deeply concerned about the financial direction our country is taking. Our annual deficit set an all-time record this year of \$1.4 trillion, three times the previous record. Our future obligations are over \$50 trillion, and we have no plan to pay any of it back. This is unsustainable.

While people in my State of Colorado and all over the country are struggling, the Federal Government has the audacity to propose raising taxes by another \$730 billion for health care. Besides higher taxes, the health care plan is largely paid for, if you can call it that, by raiding Medicare, another entitlement program that is nearly insolvent.

If Congress were a publicly traded company, it would be looking at huge civil and criminal penalties for shoddy bookkeeping.

#### HEALTH CARE

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

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, over the course of this last year, I've had many meetings with constituents and heard their views about health care reform. Among those with whom I met were Dash and Cathy Sokol of Lorain, Ohio. Dash is 56; his wife, 53. In February of 2007 Dash was diagnosed with prostate cancer. And as he fought that cancer, Cathy was diagnosed with breast cancer.

The Sokols have health insurance coverage through his job at the steel mill; but as both were receiving treatment, the costs nonetheless began to add up. Their out-of-pocket spending became overwhelming, and they're now using their pension funds to pay for the medical bills instead of having funds for retirement.

Cathy told me how guilty she feels about all of that and that their family has to pay out of this because their insurance coverage isn't adequate. And there are a lot of Americans who need better health care insurance.

When the Sokols came to my office, they brought stacks and stacks of invoices, explanations of benefits. They talked about how they're trying to pay their bills, and they are doing it, slowly but sure. But he worries and he lives

in fear that his job will go away at the mill and he won't be able to get coverage. That's why we need health care reform.

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#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, health care reform should be focused on lowering the cost of health care and health insurance. Yet Democrats are pushing a bill that would increase costs by having the government take over our Nation's health care system.

Under the Democrat bill, seniors will be forced to pay more for fewer Medicare benefits. Families will pay more out of their pockets for health care, and it will be more expensive for small businesses to offer health benefits.

On top of these higher individual premiums and prices, the Democrat bill increases government spending by over \$1 trillion in the first decade.

We need to lower costs and give families and individuals more choices, not increase costs and restrict choices through a government takeover.

One of the clear ways to reduce costs is to end lawsuit abuse. Frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care for everyone. Yet on this issue Democrats are on the side of lawsuits.

Mr. Speaker, legislation that increases spending over a trillion dollars while increasing the costs paid by seniors and families is legislation that I cannot support.

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#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, Americans hate being told what to do. It's just part of our collective DNA. We like freedom. We like the ability to choose. We like the ability to make decisions on our own. And what most Americans find troubling about this bill is it's 2,000 pages of the government getting between them and their family and their doctor.

Mr. Speaker, you're probably familiar with the old line: for most Americans when they're traveling down the highway and they see the sign that says 55, for most Americans that's not the limit; that's the challenge. That's just the way we look at things. And here we have this bill that's now going to tell us how we as individuals and as families and small business owners are going to get our health care. That's what Americans find troubling. That's why they're opposed to that. And that's why we need real reform and not this 2,000-page takeover of health care in our country.

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#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, millions of Americans are concerned with spending; and the spending contained in this bill and the more than 3,000 references to the word "shall" concerns Americans, especially as it relates to their tax dollars. This tax on medical devices, in my reading of the bill, looks like the sicker you are, the greater the tax you will pay. That is a huge concern to me.

When I look at the challenges that we face with needing to streamline government, with needing to first streamline Medicare and Medicaid and find this fraud that's out there first before we go about depending on the money that we find, we can make a lot of progress, rather than implementing 111 new agencies, commissions and bureaucracies in general. Mr. Speaker, we owe Americans better than this; and we can do better.

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#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BARTLETT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday a member of the Mennonite Amish community called my office very concerned that if this bill passes, they're going to be fined because of their religious conviction. The members of this community do not buy health care insurance, and they don't cost the taxpayer anything. This community takes care of all of their health care needs. There is a conscience clause on page 300 of the bill. I read that. It's not clear to me whether they'd be protected or not.

But one thing is very clear to me: that those who wrote this bill didn't communicate with this community. This is a big community. We know there are problems. We know there are issues. This is just one more reason to reject this bill, start over and get it right because clearly they didn't get it right here.

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#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, the majority of my constituents believe the United States has the world's best delivery of health care services. I concur. These same constituents are not averse to reform, but they fear the Pelosi health care plan will leave the gate wide open for the introduction of an overwhelming governmental involvement. I believe that fear is well founded.

Our health care system, Mr. Speaker, may well need some adjusting, some fine-tuning. What it does not need is a major overhaul. The Pelosi plan is, indeed, a major overhaul and should be rejected.

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#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. PUTNAM. Well, the verdict is in. The Speaker's health care bill accounts for nearly 2,000 pages and \$1.055 trillion. It raises \$730 billion in new taxes. Businesses who cannot afford to cover their employees and individuals who cannot afford insurance would face \$167 billion in new taxes, and \$500 billion in new taxes would be on the backs of mostly small businesses. The bill would slash Medicare and Medicaid services to home health care providers, to nursing homes, to hospitals, to doctors, and it would impose a \$5 billion unfunded mandate on our States in the form of a new Medicaid burden at a time when our States can ill-afford it. The State of Florida alone would have a price tag of \$5 billion.

This bill is bad for the consumer. It's bad for patients. It's bad for our health care professionals. It is an expensive, unfunded burden on our States, and it is a stripping of freedom that is uncalled for in this era.

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#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, during such tough economic times, I find it incredible that the majority party insists on passing a health care bill that could destroy small businesses, the very backbone of our American economy. But that is exactly what this proposed legislation is going to do. It would institute a surtax of 5.4 percent on high-income earners, and over half of this tax is going to be paid by small businesses. The surtax would push the highest marginal tax rate to 45 percent of income, a rate we haven't seen since 1986. It requires small companies to provide a health plan that meets government standards. If a business can't afford it, the government will charge yet another tax of up to 8 percent.

It is destructive for American small businesses; it's dangerous for American taxpayers; and it's a disaster for the American people. And now we learn—no amendments to the bill. Shame on you, NANCY PELOSI. Americans deserve better.

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#### HEALTH CARE

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