

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today in America we spend \$2.5 trillion or 17 percent of our economy as measured by the gross domestic product on health care. Yet we are 37th in terms of quality out of 192 countries. We are 41st in infant mortality out of 192 countries. We are dead last among industrialized countries in preventable deaths.

Health care premiums have doubled in the past 10 years. They will double again in the next 10 years. Fourteen thousand people lose their coverage every day. They are not older people, because they qualify for Medicare. They are not poor people, because they qualify for Medicaid. It is individuals who get up every day and go to work, but, because of the skyrocketing cost of health care, their employers are forced to cut coverage and, in some cases, close altogether.

This is a uniquely American problem with a uniquely American solution. We should support health care reform now.

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HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, with almost 16 million people unemployed and looking for work, with an unemployment rate of over 10 percent, something we haven't seen in 26 years, with countless Americans asking, Where are the jobs, why is the Democratic leadership ramming through a health care bill that will not add one net job to the American economy?

In fact, the majority's bill will do the exact opposite. It will impose \$729 billion in new taxes, crushing small business. For those small businesses that manage to survive the new taxes, their employees will be required to have insurance or face yet another tax. Mr. Speaker, this has got to stop. Americans do not want higher taxes. Americans do not want higher premiums, and Americans do not want this massive government health care takeover bill.

ARE YOU LISTENING?

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

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of this country want to know if the people who work for them, who were hired last November to serve here the people's House are really listening to what they've been saying.

Appropriately enough, this started back on tax day, April 15. Tens of thousands, perhaps millions, began to speak with one voice about the spending, the borrowing, the rising unemployment as well as the ever-expanding role of the Federal Government into our daily lives.

In August, even yesterday they turned out en masse, speaking as loud

as they could from the very steps of this grand old historic building, begging, pleading, please honor the freedoms and liberties that generations of Americans have fought and even died for. Republicans have heard that message, and we agree with you. We know you are right.

Mr. Speaker, your party is in control of this Congress, but the American people will have the final say. Are you listening?

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with you comments from my constituents in the First Congressional District of Virginia about H.R. 3962:

Elizabeth from Williamsburg says, My business ends up with an 8 percent margin so an 8 percent of payroll contribution rate would be significant.

Esther from Williamsburg says, Keep our government small. Bigger isn't better.

Sandra from Seaford says, I want to choose my own health insurance.

Beverly from Woodford says, I am happy with my health care right now and do not want to see it changed. I do not want the government involved in my health care.

Diana from Yorktown says, Don't vote for a bill that would unfairly burden many generations to come.

Bruce from Warrenton says, The health care legislation now pending will surely break the bank of this country in addition to destroying the finest health care system in the world.

Connie from Dumfries says, I am concerned that some legislation in Congress will create a new government-run health plan that will cause me to lose my current employer coverage. I want to be sure that I can keep my current coverage, and I urge you to oppose any new government-run health insurance plan.

Chester from Williamsburg says, I object to the government taking control of my private health care decision.

PELOSI BILL WILL FUND ABORTIONS

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

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, health care reform should not be used as an opportunity to use Federal funds to pay for elective abortions. Health reform should be an opportunity to protect human life, not end it. House Speaker NANCY PELOSI is proposing a 2,032-page government takeover of health care that directs the new government-run plan to cover elective abortions. There is no getting around it. Under Speaker's PELOSI's government takeover of health care, Federal funds will be used to pay for abortions

under the government-run plan and to subsidize individual plans that include abortion.

As an alternative to Speaker PELOSI's bill, House Republicans are offering a commonsense, responsible solution that would reduce health care costs and expand access while protecting the dignity of all human life. The Republican plan would codify the Hyde amendment and prohibit all authorized and appropriated Federal funds from being used to pay for abortions.

Under the Republican plan, any health plan that includes abortion coverage may not receive Federal funds. As a doctor with more than 30 years' experience, I will be voting "no" on the Pelosi health care bill that will destroy life instead of protect it.

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, I rise today in support of the Republican health care bill. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates the Republican alternative will decrease health insurance premiums up to 10 percent. Compare that to Speaker PELOSI's government-controlled health insurance plan, which CBO estimates will have higher premiums than those currently available in the private health insurance market. Higher premiums than currently available.

The medical liability reform Republicans are offering will reduce health care costs for Americans by \$54 billion over 10 years by reducing junk lawsuits. This, again, according to the CBO. What's more, the Republican alternative will reduce the deficit by \$68 billion without increasing taxes by one red cent. We have a clear choice—\$700 billion in new taxes, 118 new bureaucracies and higher health care costs or the Republican bill which will take meaningful steps toward the true health care reform that we know we need.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. AUSTRIA. Mr. Speaker, this week marks a defining moment for this Congress and our Nation. With an \$11.9 trillion debt that continues to grow as government encroaches into every aspect of our lives, we're being asked to vote on a 1,990-page health care reform bill that has a nearly \$1 trillion price tag, adding to the government's long-term deficit problem which will be passed on to our children and grandchildren.

It includes a government option in which bureaucrats in Washington will decide what health care Americans may receive. It would increase the

health care costs for millions of Americans who are satisfied with their current health care coverage. It cuts Medicare and reduces benefits for seniors, such as Medicare Advantage, and will raise taxes on families and small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, we all agree that our health care system can be and should be improved; but, unfortunately, Members of Congress are not listening to the American people, and that is, more government is not the answer.

HEALTH INSURANCE FROM THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Republicans are craven in their obeisance to their health industry patrons who are so generous at campaign time. They are saying that they're going to offer a new national policy; they're going to free up the insurance industries to offer new national policies with no antitrust law from the Federal Government, no regulation by the States. They've come up with a new loophole for abuses. They have defined on page 122 of their bill, the Northern Mariana Islands—that is Jack Abramoff's lobby client—with their sweat shops and sex shops as a State so insurance companies can go to the Northern Mariana Islands and the only consumer protections that will apply for a policy you buy—one of these new, great, cheap national policies—will be the laws of the Mariana Islands. Buy a policy in Oregon, call the Mariana Islands insurance commissioner, whoever that might be—maybe Jack Abramoff when he gets out of jail—and they'll help you out.

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, yesterday the American people from across the country came to the people's House to oppose a government takeover of their health care. They said, Washington, no politician or bureaucrat should interfere with our choice. And I agree.

My colleagues and I have an answer for their calls by putting forward a commonsense reform, legislation that reduces the deficit, lowers the insurance premiums and improves coverage for those with preexisting conditions. As a result of the House Republican bill, the CBO now confirms that families will see their health care premium reduced by 10 percent. Hardworking taxpayers can expect deficits to decrease by \$68 billion in the next decade.

The American people deserve choice. One size fits all does not work for them. Speaker PELOSI, the American people have said one thing yesterday. I hope you were listening. They said, Kill this bill.

TORT REFORM WOULD PAY FOR UNINSURED

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Budget Office has determined that tort reform would save Americans \$54 billion over the next decade. But reducing frivolous lawsuits against doctors and hospitals is not in the health care bill. That is because, according to former Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean, White House officials "don't want to take on the trial lawyers." Tort reform eliminates the billions of dollars spent on meritless lawsuits and defensive medicine.

If Congress enacted tort reform, we could then provide catastrophic health care coverage to the long-term low-income uninsured. To reduce health care costs and help the uninsured, tort reform should be the first item in any health care bill.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, Speaker PELOSI's latest attempt at a government takeover of health care adds an extra \$730 billion in new taxes onto the backs of American small businesses and families. It cuts \$500 billion out of Medicare, which our seniors know is only going to lead to rationed care for them, and it will take away another 5.5 million jobs out of our economy.

You wonder, today, on the day that we broke the 10 percent mark that President Obama set right here when the stimulus bill was passed, the bill that he said would stop unemployment from exceeding 8 percent, unemployment went to 10.2 percent. Now that we're over 10 percent, when are the liberals running Congress going to realize that it's their policies, it's their taxing, it's their spending, cap-and-trade, card check. It's policy after policy that puts a target on the backs of business, and it is running millions of jobs out of this economy. When will it stop and they actually go and work with us Republicans who want to put commonsense reforms in place to lower the cost of health care and avoid preexisting conditions?

PELOSI-CARE KILLS JOBS

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, this morning we received grim news. More Americans have lost their jobs, and we now see the unemployment rate at 10.2 percent, the highest in over 25 years. The stimulus bill has done little to prevent rising unemployment, only creating a

handful of jobs in each of our congressional districts. Only 67 in mine, in the 16th Congressional District of Pennsylvania.

Now, instead of concentrating on how we can restart our economic engine, we start to consider a health care bill that could cost millions of more Americans their jobs in the next decade. Ways and Means Committee staff, working with the Congressional Budget Office and Joint Tax Committee figures, estimate that Speaker PELOSI's bill could cost 5.5 million American jobs over the next 10 years. It is inconceivable that this House will consider killing jobs during a recession.

A government takeover of health care will only employ more tax collectors and bureaucrats. We need real health care reform, the kind that focuses on reducing costs, improving quality of care and expanding access.

CLOSED HEALTH CARE RULE

(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, despite the fact that Republicans continue to offer constructive ideas to improve the health care bill, Democrats still insist that we are the party of "no." Earlier today I submitted an amendment to improve the Medicare waste, fraud and abuse enforcement provisions in H.R. 3962, and Democrats will say "no" to even allowing my amendment to get an up-or-down vote.

According to a recent report by "60 Minutes," Medicare loses over \$60 billion a year to fraud. My amendment would strengthen the Medicare enrollment process, expand certain standards of participation and reduce erroneous payments. There is no excuse for continuing to make payments to empty buildings and businesses that have never existed.

Mr. Speaker, this closed process has prevented me and many of my colleagues, both Republicans and Democrats, from offering intelligent and well-constructed amendments that would save taxpayers money and improve health care access for all Americans.

I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this government takeover of health care.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Our President said, "Our health care is too costly," and I agree. Yet before us in Washington are bills that tax wheelchairs, heart monitors, pacemakers and your insurance. These taxes make a family's health insurance cost \$4,000 more. The President said that defensive medicine may be contributing to unnecessary costs, and I agree with the