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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GARAMENDI).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 7, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN GARAMENDI to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as we listen to the debate in the other body, there are two missing factors that would create the momentum for reform and revitalization of our health care. There is a stunning disconnect between the two sides on the nature of the problem and the impact of government's involvement in health care.

Opponents argue, with apparent sincerity, that America has the best health care in the world and it would

be "destroyed by Federal involvement undermining the quality of existing care", while supposed cost increases would make health care unaffordable for individuals purchasing insurance and ultimately for the taxpayer as well.

What opponents describe could not be more different from what my research, my constituents and my personal experience tells me. For many in Congress, there is no sense of urgency to compel action because Members of Congress are perhaps the most health care secure people in the world and all can enjoy the finest health coverage in the world.

No one in Congress is likely to go bankrupt this year, or the next, from their preexisting conditions. It doesn't matter because all are eligible for participation in the Federal employees health benefits program. They are able to access the House physician. When they travel overseas, they have military doctors. About a quarter of the House and Senate are eligible for Medicare and for veterans' programs. No wonder there's no sense of urgency, and Senators and Congresspeople can be sincere in their conviction that America has the best health care in the world.

The disconnect is my colleagues' failure to recognize the government's role in all that they enjoy. There is a simple solution to break this deadlock—support my bill to end government involvement in the health care of Members of Congress. I propose, until comprehensive health care reform is signed by the President, there be no Federal investment in health insurance for Members of Congress. No Federal involvement in negotiating their Federal Employees Health Benefits. They would not be eligible to be participating in the dreaded government single payer program—Medicare. There would be no veterans, no House physicians, no military doctors. Those, after

all, are socialized medicine. Members of Congress would be in exactly the same position as over 200 million Americans who are currently underinsured, uninsured, or are relying on the good intentions of a spouse's employer, or their ability to negotiate insurance on the private market, contending with their preexisting conditions and the fine print.

Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely confident that within 6 months of Members of Congress experiencing the health care world of most of America, dealing with the fine print, the preexisting condition, the uncertainty, the bureaucracy, we would have the consensus necessary to be able to move forward with the comprehensive health insurance reform that Americans want, need and deserve.

I would urge my colleagues to join me in sponsoring this legislation to get government out of the health care of Members of the House and Senate until all Americans can enjoy such health security.

JOB CREATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 2 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, a headline in the Wall Street Journal last week read, Job Cuts Loom as Stimulus Fades. Therein lies the jobs problem. The Democratic stimulus plan was poorly designed as a job creator. Government money doesn't do a very good job of stimulating the private sector to invest. The American people know that true economic stimulus starts with tax relief for working families and small businesses. They know that burdening those same families and businesses with an expensive health care program with unknown consequences is a job killer. They know that placing additional energy taxes on

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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the public through the cap and trade system makes businesses pull back on any new investments for the fear of the unknown costs they will face. A stable economy with no surprises looming in the future will give confidence to businesses, and they are the true economic engines of our country. Tax relief promises more capital in the hands of those who invest in the future.

At the time of the stimulus vote, Republicans wanted more funds put into highway construction and Army Corps projects, but that didn't happen. The President has acknowledged that jobs are a problem by holding a jobs summit just this last week. He knows that more than 15 million Americans are looking for work. Let's hope he chooses a new and better path.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 41 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LARSEN of Washington) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: The first touch of snow startled Washington as Your soft whisper of winter upon us, Lord. Not enough to stall the driving force in the Nation's Capital, it melts like political words on the air; yet penetrates the grounding of all future plans.

Lord, this thin white curtain fell on our scene, a seeming call for purification of intentions. Quite unsure if we are ready to be fully clothed with Your victory of total transformation, we beg for more time as if it were not already given freely.

Send us more gentle snow, Lord, if it will awaken within us the hidden child who accepts Your surprising sky with a quiet smile. Brighten our shortened days, Lord, that we may take delight again in Your creation and prepare to celebrate the approaching day of Your visitation, when You embraced all our limitations and kept loving us anyway. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SMITH of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

HARVARD MED DEAN FAILS HEALTH CARE BILL

(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, here is what Jeffrey Flier, dean of Harvard Medical School, has to say about the administration's health care bill: ". . . The people who favor the legislation are engaged in collective denial.

"Speeches and news reports can lead you to believe that proposed congressional legislation would tackle the problems of cost, access and quality. But that's not true.

". . . There are no provisions to substantially control the growth of costs or raise the quality of care. So the overall effort will fail to qualify as reform.

"Whatever its shape, the final legislation that will emerge from Congress will markedly accelerate national health care spending rather than restrain it . . . The legislation would do little or nothing to improve quality or change health care's dysfunctional delivery system.

"Worse, currently proposed Federal legislation would undermine any potential for real innovation in insurance and the provision of care."

Dean Flier has good advice: Congress should start over and do it right.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

RECOGNIZING ECHO COMPANY OF 100TH BATTALION OF THE 442D INFANTRY

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 199) recognizing the 10th Anniversary of the activation of Echo Company of the 100th Battalion of the 442d Infantry, and the sacrifice of the soldiers and families in support of the United States, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 199

Whereas Company E, 100th Battalion, 442d Infantry Regiment of the United States Army was redesignated on February 16, 1999, on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, Rota, Guam and protects the citizens of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam;

Whereas the soldiers of Company E and their families are active community volunteers supporting the local community and participating in community events;

Whereas Company E has served with great honor and distinction for two tours in Iraq in 2004–2006 and 2008–2009;

Whereas Army Staff Sergeant Wilgene T. Lieto, Army SPC Derence W. Jack, and Army Sergeant Julian F. Manglona of Company E made the ultimate sacrifice for the United States while they served in Iraq; and

Whereas Company E commemorates one of the original companies of the 100th Battalion, 442d Infantry Regiment, which served with distinction during World War II, and continues to live by its motto "Go For Broke": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) recognizes the valuable, historic, and continued contribution of Company E, 100th Battalion, 442d Infantry Regiment of the United States Army to the citizens of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the United States;

(2) commends the efforts and contributions of the soldiers and sacrifices of the families of Company E, 100th Battalion, 442d Infantry Regiment to the United States;

(3) recognizes and reaffirms the commitment of Congress to support the mission of Company E, 100th Battalion, 442d Infantry Regiment; and

(4) honors the lives of the soldiers of Company E, 100th Battalion, 442d Infantry Regiment who made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of the United States.

Amend the title so as to read: "Concurrent resolution Recognizing the 10th Anniversary of the redesignation of Company E, 100th Battalion, 442d Infantry Regiment of the United States Army and the sacrifice of the soldiers of Company E and their families in support of the United States."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROONEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Guam.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of House Concurrent Resolution 199, introduced by my colleague, Congressman SABLON, from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

House Concurrent Resolution 199 recognizes the valuable contributions of