



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2009

No. 95

House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 23, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable SHEILA JACKSON-LEE 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.

CELEBRATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALLEGHANY COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 105th anniversary of Alleghany County, North Carolina. Alleghany County was created by an act of the North Carolina legislature in 1859. The county sits astride the Appalachian Mountains and the North Carolina High Country and boasts some of the most beautiful mountain scenery in North Carolina.

Since its creation in 1859, Alleghany County has been called home by countless hard-working North Carolinians, from farmers to small business owners who know the value of a hard day's work.

One of Alleghany's most notable native sons, Robert Doughton, served here in the House of Representatives for 42 years, from 1911 to 1953. Congressman Doughton was chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee for 18 of his 42 years in Congress. He also played a decisive role in creating the Blue Ridge Parkway, which we all know as one of the most beautiful scenic roads in America.

Today, Alleghany hosts the 6,000 acre Doughton Park named in his honor and known for its excellent wildlife viewing. The Blue Ridge Parkway itself also cuts a scenic path through Alleghany County, just a stone's throw from the county seat, the town of Sparta.

Alleghany County is a place of unique beauty and character, right off the beaten path. From the pristine waters of the New River to the distinct sounds of its local Blue Grass musical heritage, it is a one-of-a-kind place found only in the great State of North Carolina. The people here are friendly and welcoming, good-natured and full of common sense. I am proud to represent them in Congress and proud to join them in celebrating the 105th anniversary of this fine county.

CONTROLLING RUNAWAY FEDERAL SPENDING

Madam Speaker, I would also like to speak briefly this morning about the runaway Federal spending that we are seeing occurring in this Congress.

Here are the facts on spending from this year:

A \$2 trillion deficit for FY 2009;

The second tranche of the TARP allowed to be spent, \$350 billion;

The stimulus package, H.R. 1, \$787 billion, but over \$1 trillion with debt costs;

The omnibus appropriations bill, \$409 billion.

President Obama's budget increased total spending to \$4 trillion in 2009, or 28 percent of GDP, the highest Federal spending as a percentage of GDP since World War II. Federal spending is out of control.

Republicans in the last week or so have offered many, many amendments, most of which were designed to cut Federal spending. However, the Democrats don't want to hear those amendments. They say they would take too much time. Apparently, the Democrats can't spend the people's money fast enough.

Republicans believe Congress has the time to practice fiscal discipline. Republicans are going to stand up for the American people and fight runaway Federal spending.

TRUE FACTS ON THE STATE OF HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA

Madam Speaker, the other issue that needs to be addressed is the misleading comments made almost every day on this floor about the uninsured in this country. We hear over and over and over again a figure that 47 million Americans don't have health care. That is not true.

First of all, the number of people who are uninsured in this country is only 45.7 million: 9½ million of them are illegal aliens; 12 million of them are eligible for public programs, but they choose not to participate; 7.3 million have incomes of \$84,000 a year and choose not to purchase insurance; and those only temporarily uninsured, 9.1 million. That brings us to 7.8 million who are American citizens, lower income and long-term uninsured.

We have to continue to correct the misleading numbers given on this floor every day by our colleagues across the aisle, and we are going to continue to do that.

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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



Printed on recycled paper.

H7089

THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight the economic need for health care reform. Indeed, as my friend from North Carolina just indicated, there are a lot of misleading statistics on health care. In fact, we just heard a few from her.

We have heard a great deal about the human costs of failing to reform health care. Forty-six million Americans lack health care insurance. A child without insurance, for example, is 5 times more likely to die of appendicitis than a child that has access to health care insurance.

The loss of any life is truly incalculable. However, there are those who would rather avoid talking about that child. They prefer to discuss the dollars and cents of health care. For those who worry only about the cost of reform, I would like to discuss the tremendous economic cost of doing nothing.

We know the cost of doing nothing. Without reform, small businesses will pay \$2.4 trillion in health care for their employees over the next decade. Reforming the system and controlling costs could save those small businesses \$800 billion by 2018 and save 168,000 jobs, unless we do nothing.

Currently, 46 million Americans lack health insurance. We know the economic costs of that. In 2008, Federal, State and local governments paid \$442.9 billion to reimburse the uncompensated costs for visits to health clinics and hospitals by the uninsured. That places a tax burden on every American of \$627 a year, Madam Speaker. If we continue doing nothing, the tax burden in inflation-adjusted dollars will nearly triple by 2030.

As health insurance costs continue to rise, and they will, and as more Americans find themselves unable to afford insurance, and they will, those reimbursement costs will, of course, skyrocket. We know the cost of doing nothing, and we cannot afford that cost.

Americans have the most expensive health care system in the world. True, the quality of care at the highest levels is second to none. However, the dramatically rising costs each year render more and more people unable to access that quality care.

As chairman of Fairfax County, Virginia, Board of Supervisors, one the primary concerns I heard from county retirees was the rapidly rising cost of health care. Senior citizens and those on fixed incomes were especially concerned that the ever-growing premiums were forcing them to choose between health care and other necessities. Private industry is also feeling that pinch. Companies such as IBM have begun to eliminate retiree health care benefits altogether, precisely because of rising health care costs.

In 1960, health care costs in the United States were 5 percent of our

Gross Domestic Product. Today, they represent 18 percent, and if we do nothing, the costs will rise to a staggering 34 percent of our entire GDP by 2040. Madam Speaker, our children will be paying seven times more for health care costs than we paid in 1960. That level of cost increase is unconscionable and unsustainable.

Workers currently receiving employer-provided health insurance are increasingly faced with two devastating scenarios; either the level of care they receive is reduced to counter the costs, or their health care costs rise each year, far outpacing their rise in wages. For many workers, they see both in a double whammy of paying more for less. This is evident in the growth in the average employer-sponsored health insurance family deductible. In just 7 years year, Madam Speaker, from 1999 to 2006, the average deductible grew 50 percent. For firms with less than 50 employees, the deductible increased from roughly \$1,300 in 1999 to over \$2,000 in 2006.

Currently 43 percent of those smaller firms offer their employees health care coverage. As costs continue to rise, this number will shrink and more Americans will find themselves uninsured and unable to afford affordable options. If we can continue to do nothing, government spending on health care will suffer equally. Spending on Medicare and Medicaid, currently 6 percent of GDP, will rise if we do nothing to 15 percent by 2040.

Studies have shown that slowing the cost growth in health care by 1.5 percentage points a year will result in dramatic decreases in the Federal budget deficit. By 2030, Federal deficits would be 3 percent of GDP smaller than it otherwise would have been, saving us hundreds of billions of dollars a year, something my friend from North Carolina just indicated she was concerned about. If we do nothing, we condemn our future to rapidly increasing budget deficits and a dearth of funding available for other essential government functions.

Madam Speaker, I support comprehensive health care reform.

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. CARNAHAN) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord, the summer solstice has already passed. So quietly and relentlessly daylight grows shorter. The full expression of family joy on a weekend holiday or a brief summer vacation is abruptly ended with the news of a Metro train crash. The bright light is suddenly dimmed when the cloud of fragile life passes by.

Lord, we lift up in prayer all those who died or were injured in yesterday's tragedy here in Northeast Washington. Be with their families, neighbors and friends.

As You restore confidence and peace to the fragile systems of routine in our workaday world, Lord, we bless You and praise You for all of the good days and the good times we try to hold onto as best we can, because they carry us through the times that are not so good.

Lord of the ages, it is You who hold all together and oversee the seasons of everyone's life, even as summer days grow shorter. Both now and forever. 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. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1777. An act to make technical corrections to the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2967 STOPS LOOPHOLE ABUSE

(Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2967, a bill I introduced to save 324 jobs in my district and save American taxpayers billions of dollars.

Kraft paper companies have abused a loophole in the alternative fuels mixture tax credit to claim billions of dollars of subsidies with no benefit to the taxpayer. Their gimmicks have not encouraged alternative fuel use, and they