

Obama administration has said, the 2,600,000 Americans who have lost jobs since January is a clear sign that their Recovery Act has not done its job. Instead of more rhetoric, Democrats should work with Republicans to put in place commonsense proposals that will rein in the wasteful spending and focus on job creation.

Our economy will grow strong again thanks to individuals and small businesses that create the majority of jobs in this country. It will not be due to the billions in Big Government borrowing perpetrated by this administration. We should focus our time on helping small businesses grow and provide relief to those who are suffering during these tough economic times.

Republicans have offered a plan to do just that, and we will do so without adding trillions in additional Big Government, liberal spending, and actions such as the new health care taxes that will destroy jobs.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR EVERY AMERICAN

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, we have a critical role in reviewing the specific details of health care reform. Access to health care is something we owe to every American family across this Nation. Everyone should have coverage. Everyone should have access.

There is no question that we must have comprehensive reform to our health system. Critics to reform are failing to get the message and only talk about rhetoric. Doing nothing for a broken system is not the answer. They do not understand the fear and devastation families face while on trips to the emergency room. They do not understand the severe ramifications faced by families when they receive the doctor's bill or hospital bill.

Families must have access to health care. Never again will you have coverage be denied. Never again will you have to make a decision between life or job decision based on coverage.

I urge my colleagues to support comprehensive health reform.

TAXPAYER DOLLARS SHOULD NOT FUND ABORTIONS

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

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, as it stands now, the Democrat health plan equals taxpayer-funded abortions. Let me repeat that. As it stands now, the Democrat health plan equals taxpayer-funded abortions.

If unamended, the Obama health plan restructuring will be the most massive abortion expansion since Roe v. Wade and every insurance premium payer

and every taxpayer will be forced to pay for every abortion. The taking of innocent life is not health care. I know; I'm a physician. Yet, without an abortion exclusion, this reform bill will be the platform for thrusting abortion into every aspect of health care in this country.

The Secretary of HHS and the so-called Benefits Advisory Committee will determine the specific mandated services. Abortion will be included in the minimum benefits unless it is excluded, and the Democrats refuse to do that.

This bill does an end run on current abortion funding restrictions by containing language that both authorizes and appropriates.

IMPROVING HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICANS

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, we have an historic opportunity to finally improve health care in America, to finally bring access and quality of care to all Americans, not just the lucky few.

I'm so proud to support the bill introduced by the three committees of jurisdiction and to play my part in seeing us pass legislation in both the House and Senate before the August recess. What's great is that there is something for everyone here. There is affordable access to coverage for people who've never been insured before; there is help for seniors stuck in the dreadful part D doughnut hole; there are consumer protections against longstanding egregious practices by insurance companies; there is amazing investment into our health care workforce, including physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals; and there is finally an incentive to practice wellness-based health care instead of illness-based disease treatment.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing America's Affordable Health Choices Act and enacting the health care reform our constituents so desperately need and Americans deserve.

AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT IN GOVERNMENT-RUN HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as we debate the best way to reform our health care system and ensure that all Americans have access to quality health care, some Members of Congress insist that a government-run option must be included. Yet, in one proposal, Members of Congress are curiously exempt from the public plan.

For those who are convinced that government-run health care won't sacrifice quality and won't lead to ration-

ing, I back a resolution saying that if a Member of Congress votes to support the public option, then that Member must be automatically enrolled in it. If Members are convinced that the government-run public option will deliver the same quality of care as their congressional health plans, then they ought to be the first in line to enroll.

Members of Congress should stop asking the American people to make sacrifices they are not willing to make themselves.

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM REFORM

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

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak of the pressing need to fix our health care system. Every day, Americans not only worry about getting well, but whether they can afford to get well or stay healthy. They are not the only ones who worry. All too often small businesses are forced to choose between coverage or layoffs.

We have the most expensive health system care in the world, spending almost 50 percent more per person on health care than the next most costly nation; yet we're not healthier for it.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad that Congress and the President are working together on a plan to reform our health care system, a plan that will reduce costs, provide choices, and guarantee affordable quality health care for all. We must act now, for it is evident that the status quo is simply not working.

WHERE IS THE WEB SITE

(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, when Congress passed the \$787 billion so-called stimulus bill, the White House promised to set up a Web site where people could go to learn how the money was being spent. Recovery.gov has since been criticized for how long it took to get going and how forthcoming it has been with the information people need; yet it seems doubtful that what critics had in mind was an \$18 million overhaul. That's exactly what this administration is planning.

The General Services Administration, the agency that manages Federal Government property, announced Wednesday that \$18 million in additional stimulus funds is being spent to redesign the recovery.gov Web site. A cost estimate from www.designquote.net makes the \$18 million figure even more outrageous. According to the site, the top-end estimate for a premium Web design from a professional firm flush with all of the bells and whistles comes out at \$192,740.

One has to wonder what the other \$17,807,260 in taxpayer money will be used for.

NO DISCRIMINATION IN HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, today, much of the conversation is about the health care system. It's a very personal matter to me, as it is to every man, woman and child in American. I have a daughter with epilepsy. She is not insurable. We have a system in place today that denies her coverage, that excludes her from coverage. That's wrong, and it's probably unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

There should not be discrimination in health care. There shouldn't be denial of coverage because of a pre-existing condition. We need to change the system that exists so that there is coverage for all Americans with chronic illness and the like.

The bill that we have in Congress will change that coverage, ladies and gentlemen, and I urge its passage.

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SOCIAL SECURITY EXECS HAVE FUN AT THE BILTMORE HOTEL

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Social Security Administration executives recently enjoyed a luxury retreat at the expense of the American taxpayer. They flew 700 of their managers to the picture perfect, swanky Arizona Biltmore Hotel for what they called "organizational training."

It cost the taxpayers \$750,000. These bureaucrats enjoyed golf, musical entertainment, dancing, skits, catered food, cocktails and even a casino night. Sounds like a vacation for the rich and famous.

Meanwhile, seniors are worried about even getting their monthly Social Security checks.

There was a near riot when taxpayers found out AIG spent half that amount for their luxury retreat by using taxpayer bailout money. But the Social Security spokesman, Peter Spencer dismissed the comparison with AIG by saying, Well, it's different taxpayer money. I'm glad he cleared that up for us.

The arrogance of the Social Security execs to be jet-setting around the country, going to a luxury spa, and then making people paying into Social Security pick up the \$750,000 tab is disgraceful. I guess the spendacrats never heard of teleconferencing or even the Motel 6.

And that's just the way it is.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH INSURANCE OPTION—CONTROLLING SKYROCKETING HEALTH CARE COSTS

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

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we had the historic introduction of our health reform act. This bill is going to fundamentally improve care for Americans, for people that have insurance but also for people that don't.

Importantly, this legislation includes a robust public health insurance option. The cost of health care insurance is just too high for people that have it and businesses that are paying for it, and the public health insurance option is going to be one of our most effective ways to bring the cost of insurance down.

Don't take my word for it. Take a study by the Commonwealth Fund that shows that premiums for individuals can be reduced by 25 percent by the pressure put on private insurers by a public health insurance option. That's why studies show that 70 percent to 80 percent of Americans want the option to purchase a public insurance option because it will lower their costs, both as individuals and as employees of businesses throughout this country who are paying far too much for health care.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage us to take a serious look at a very, very important health care bill that's been introduced before us.

DEMOCRAT HEALTH REFORM

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

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, yesterday House Democratic leadership held a press conference to introduce their health care reform legislation. As a physician who has practiced medicine for more than 30 years, I have major concerns that this plan will ultimately put a government bureaucrat in between patients and their doctors and eventually lead to a one-size-fits-all health care system where the government decide what treatments are necessary for patients. When money gets tight, this leads to rationing of care and long waiting lists for patients. We've already seen the pilot of this program. It's called TennCare. Just ask the Democratic governor of Tennessee what it's done to the budget in their State.

I want to read just a sentence of testimony from a Canadian doctor who has seen firsthand the consequences of a single-payer system on his patients.

"What we have in Canada is access to a government state-mandated wait list. And the wait lists are long, the patients are languishing and suffering on wait lists. Our own Supreme Court of Canada has stated that patients are actually dying as they wait for care in Canada."

Mr. Speaker, this is not the sort of health care reform that the American people want or need.

MENTAL HEALTH PARITY IN HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, anyone ever heard the expression, "the proof is in the pudding"? Well, when the private health insurance companies found out that there may not be a government option, you know what happened to the health insurance stocks on Wall Street? They went through the roof. Profits skyrocketed because, you know why? The health insurance companies make money off of the consumers when they don't have competition, when they're able to cut your health care and make profits out of denying you health insurance. That's how the private marketplace makes money, by denying you health care. They only want to cover the healthy and well.

We have the government option, the public option, to guarantee the American people that they get the health care that they paid for. * * *

We're on the side of the American people. We want to protect the people so that they can get their health care, irrespective of a preexisting health care condition.

I'm proud that this health care plan covers all preexisting conditions, including mental health parity as covered by the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act that was passed and signed by President Bush.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, the words were just said that the Republicans, pointing over here, are bought and paid for. I would ask that those words be taken down.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members will suspend. The gentleman from Rhode Island has taken a seat.

The Clerk will report the words.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I did not mean to impugn the reputation of any individual Member. I was merely speaking about the party that was representing the insurance companies.

I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the words.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Rhode Island?

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my request that the words be taken down since they are withdrawn and I appreciate my friend doing so.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the words are withdrawn.

There was no objection.

DON'T HURT LOW-WAGE EARNERS

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

Mr. GOHMERT. I know we have disagreements on some of these issues and I know what the intent is of the Democratic-proposed health care bill. And I know the intent is not to hurt the lower-wage earner. But this bill that's