

the economic well-being of our country.

Mr. Speaker, we have already passed a massive bill we called a stimulus, but which failed to create jobs, and a cap-and-trade bill which will cost us at least 2.5 million jobs. While every Member of this body wants to ensure Americans have access to affordable health care, it is vital we oppose a government takeover which destroys the ability to create jobs. Let's not kill jobs before small businesses even create them.

THE TIME FOR ACTION HAS COME

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, the American people voted for change last November. My New Jersey constituents voted for change. Now we have a historic opportunity to bring about change as we deal with one of the Nation's most daunting challenges, the need for health care reform for over 46 million uninsured men, women and children throughout our Nation. In addition, we need to help working people and middle class people who in many cases have to pay huge out-of-pocket expenses or have been dropped when facing serious medical conditions.

This debate has been going on for six decades, and the time for action has come. Here in the House of Representatives we have already held 79 hearings on health insurance reform in just over 2 years. We cannot put this problem off indefinitely.

I urge those who stand in the way of progress to either step aside or to join us in coming up with a solution to help mend a broken system.

JOIN THE REPUBLICAN PLAN

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

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States has said that if you like your health care plan, you can keep it. But that is simply not the case.

I was in Wyoming over the weekend in my home district, and I talked to small business people who have health insurance, who have calculated what will happen if the Democrats' plan takes effect. And if it takes effect, they will be able to pay the 8 percent penalty in the bill and shift their employees onto the government plan and save money. It will cost them less money to take their private insurance, jettison it, take their employees off it, pay the 8 percent penalty, and put them on the government plan. The government plan will be less comprehensive, and their employees will suffer.

Mr. Speaker, this is not health care reform. I ask you to join the Republicans with a plan that will address af-

fordability, portability, and accessibility in a way that will not cost the taxpayers trillions of dollars.

DEMOCRATIC PLAN: CHOICE, AFFORDABILITY, LOWER COST AND LOWER TAXES

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

Mr. WEINER. Ladies and gentlemen, you are going to hear a lot of people that are opposed to the Democratic plan to reform health care, and a lot of them are on this side of the House of Representatives. Why? They already have health care. They've got a pretty good plan, like all other Federal employees. They have choice already.

If you want to make a phone call, Mr. Speaker, dial 202-224-3121 and ask for your Congressman and say, Will you give up your health plan? You've got choice already. And some of them are old enough to have Medicare, which is, that's right, a government-run plan. Are you prepared to give up that? I don't believe that they are.

The fact of the matter is that some in the Republic Party don't want these problems fixed because they are already doing just fine. They've got choice, they've got the Federal plan—that I have, by the way—they have Medicare, a government-run plan, and the rest of the country can be damned.

Well, we in the Democratic Party are saying something else. We want the American people to get at least as good as my friends in the Republic Party have. We want at least the benefits that we have here in Congress—choice, affordability, lower cost and lower taxes for all Americans. That is the Democratic plan.

IT KIND OF MAKES YOU WONDER, DOESN'T IT?

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

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, as we all know here today, the Democrat leadership in this House is bringing forth a health care reform bill with a public option for the stated purpose of instituting competition with the private sector and making the private sector insurance business better. At the same time, they are bringing forward legislation to reform student lending.

Today, there is a private option preferred by 80 percent of the colleges and universities in this country and a public option, where the government takes over the student lending business. The legislation that we are going to bring up perhaps this week in this House eliminates the private option and leaves only the public option. It kind of makes you wonder, doesn't it, about the designs on the future of the public option in health care?

IT IS TIME TO ACT NOW FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. Speaker, we come here today and we continue to hear this important debate as it surrounds health care. Well, I hope that there is not any disagreement that the health care system we have today is broken.

We continue to hear from our friends on the other side of the aisle that we need to contain costs, that we need to extend coverage, that we need to be looking after people. Well, we have a plan, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan on this side of the aisle with our Democrats that has come forward that will say to insurance companies, No more taking away health care from those that are sick—that can happen today. No more keeping insurance from those that are sick today because they have something called a preexisting condition.

As I travel across the district, across the great State of New Mexico, and we get to hear from people, you look them in the eye and they tell you they're sick, they tell you that they can't afford their health coverage, they tell you that they lost their job. And where do they go today? What about their kids?

Well, it is time that we look those people in the eye, those people that have entrusted us to do a good job on their behalf, and tell them that we're here to act for them, that we are going to fight for that public option, we are going to fight to give them choice. We are going to help keep those health care costs down. It is time to act now for the American people.

HEALTH CARE PLAN OUGHT TO FIRST DO NO HARM

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, there is no one on our side of the aisle who would argue that we have necessary reforms for this medical health care system that we all enjoy and we are mostly all alive because of. The comments to the contrary that this is totally broken, totally unworkable, as you know, are hyperbole, simply done to try to set a riot, I suspect.

4.7 million jobs are estimated to be lost by this health care plan. That is a big number. But four or five of those jobs are at a long-term health care plan company in Llano, Texas.

Steven Lange sent me an e-mail that says if he is required to put this 8 percent tax on his business, because it is a low-margin business, because he gets Medicare reimbursement for 90 percent of his revenues, he will be unable to pass that 8 percent increase for the cost of doing business along to his major customer, i.e., the Federal taxpayer. Because of that, he will have to cut his employee base.

His employees take care of the most vulnerable, frail, and least capable people in our society, folks at the end of life, and cutting the service to them should be not something that we ought to do. Physicians in the group say “first do no harm.” I would argue that this health care plan ought to do the same thing.

HEALTH CARE BILL IS GOOD FOR YOU IF YOU'RE OVER 65

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

Mr. GRAYSON. Think about what this health care bill will do for you if you are over 65 years old, or if you love somebody who is over 65 years old. If you are over 65, or you love someone who is over 65, a mother or father, then take a minute to think about that.

Here is what it will do for you: First of all, it will dramatically reduce—and in most cases eliminate—copayments for you. That's right, for you. Because the Democrats understand that a \$10 or \$20 or \$50 copayment, that is a lot of money for you. And if it keeps you from going to the doctor when you need to get help, when you need medical care, that's a shame, it shouldn't happen. So this bill takes care of that.

The second thing that the bill does for you is that it eliminates the doughnut hole, that's right, the doughnut hole that torments people into choosing between paying for their rent or paying for the medicine that they need to stay alive. That will no longer be true. The doughnut hole is eliminated.

This bill is good for you if you are 65 or over; it is good for your mother or your father if you're not. That matters a lot because the Democrats care about you.

JOBS, JOBS, JOBS, JOBS: TAKE 2

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

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the administration and this Congress spent over \$1 trillion on a so-called stimulus bill, and they laid down a benchmark for what would constitute success. They did it. And according to their own benchmark, that was that unemployment would be capped at 8 percent, and that there would be an immediate creation of 3.5 million jobs.

So where are those 3.5 million jobs that we were promised? Not only have they not been created, an additional 2 million jobs or more have been lost since that bill was passed. And unemployment wasn't capped at 8 percent, it is over 9.5 percent. Again, their own numbers. So, what has been the response to this obvious dismal failure? More of the same, unfortunately; more borrowing, more spending of your hard-earned money.

Now, their health care bill will cost Americans an additional \$1.2 trillion, additionally, cut Medicare for senior citizens by hundreds of billions of dollars—that's in the bill—and will result in the loss of an additional 4.7 million jobs.

You know, again, common sense; it's time to stop wasting taxpayers' money, stop irresponsible borrowing. It's time to focus on jobs creation.

HEALTH CARE EFFECT ON SMALL BUSINESS

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

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, skyrocketing private health insurance costs are already crippling small businesses. Last week, I sat down with one of my constituents to hear about her situation. Kristine Effaldana is a small business owner and employs nine workers at her company. She has been paying the full cost of premiums for her employees because she knows how important health insurance is.

Unfortunately, Kristine recently got a call from her broker saying the premiums for covering her nine employees are going up 20 percent in August. Now Kristine is forced to pass on part of that cost to her employees, hire fewer employees, or stop offering them health care altogether. That is the status quo we're dealing with, and it is unacceptable.

We must do more to help small business owners who are trying to do the right thing by providing for their employees. Congress must pass comprehensive health reform to ease their burden.

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A MISGUIDED HEALTH CARE EXPERIMENT

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly oppose efforts by the majority to rush through this Chamber a misguided health care experiment that will cost jobs and put the government in charge of health care. The Democrats' bill will tax small businesses, raise already sky-high unemployment in my State, and cut health care for seniors to pay for government-run health care. This will limit consumer choices, lower quality, increase wait times and imperil the doctor-patient relationship by empowering Federal bureaucrats to make health care decisions. The trillion-and-a-half pricetag will increase the already crushing debt some in Congress have been piling on our children and grandchildren over my objections.

The best way to help expand health coverage to the uninsured is to make

health care more affordable. Two of the easiest and most effective ways to do that would be to encourage preventive care and enact medical liability reform. I urge my colleagues to reject this government takeover of health care.

AMERICA'S RECOVERY

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, many commissions who have advised Congress advise that the unemployment rate would continue to climb even after the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act were approved, simply because neglect and measures that put us into a deep hole where an administration spent down a surplus into a deep deficit was going to take a while to recover from. And so now with the investments made through that Recovery Act, I am very hopeful that in my district we will get good news, as GE, which is corporately headquartered in my district, has made application for some of the DOE moneys.

Because of accountability and transparency, the President is right to make certain that all of these moneys being released are greatly accounted for. Battery investment, battery advance manufacturing in battery worlds, will allow for a diversity of battery manufacturing that will allow us not only to have these batteries used for energy generation purposes, but for actually providing for the resources for transportation fleets, both large and small, and certainly working on investments that will restore intermittent energy supplies.

COMPROMISE ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, the Democratic leadership is reportedly trying to find a compromise on health care reform. The only problem is they're compromising with themselves rather than with Republicans. Democrats have been trying to blame their failure to find broad consensus on health care reform on Republicans, but this ignores the facts. The facts are three committees and the House Democratic leadership sat down and drafted a bill with no Republican input. These same Democratic leaders have then made changes to the bill based on concerns raised by other Democrats. Now, Democratic leaders are continuing their negotiation with a different group of Democrats in an attempt to secure 218 votes in their own caucus.

Since Republicans aren't invited to these negotiations, here's some free advice from the House floor: If you're having this much trouble getting the majority of your conference to support