

The GOP plan provides for guaranteed access regardless of preexisting conditions.

The Republican plan lets Americans who like their coverage keep it.

It expands Community Health Centers that are critical points of access that provide health care services based on an affordable sliding scale.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican plan reins in junk lawsuits and will bring down health care costs. We need health care access, affordability, quality, and choice that Americans deserve. Americans deserve the Republican health care plan.

THE FORECLOSURE CRISIS

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

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, during the upcoming work session, I will return to southern Nevada, which is ground zero for the foreclosure crisis that triggered our current recession. During my time at home, I will be working with constituents who need help with their mortgages, many in homes that are underwater.

Families throughout my district are struggling to make their mortgage payments, and one out of every 16 homeowners in Nevada has faced a foreclosure filing. Folks in District Three clearly need assistance to stay in their homes and avoid foreclosures.

Tonight in kitchens across the country and in every congressional district, families worry about losing the roof over their heads. I'm sure that every one of my colleagues in Congress will hear from such families during the upcoming district work period. I hope they will bring their stories back to Washington. And when Congress reconvenes in September, let us place a renewed focus on helping families stay in their homes and providing them the assistance they need.

There is much more that Congress can and should do, and I commit to working on this issue when we come back after Labor Day. I hope you will all join me in this effort.

IRAN'S MARTYRS OF FREEDOM

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

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, recently we have seen the end of Islam's 40-day period of mourning for the martyrs of freedom that were killed on June 20, Neda Soltan, Taraneh Mousavi.

And what did the regime do in response? They prevented people from attending their grave sites. They removed people who wanted to lay flowers. And in the end, as reported by msnbc.com, Brigadier General Abdollah Araghi warned against any further gatherings: "We are not joking. We will confront those who will fight against the clerical establishment."

Yes, Mr. Speaker, they will fight against rape and murder, martyrs such as Neda and Taraneh. But the world will mourn these martyrs, and soon Iran and all the world will rejoice when these murderers are brought to justice and the Iranian people breathe free.

UTMB EMERGENCY ROOM OPENING

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the folks in Galveston, Texas, who have worked to make the reopening of the University of Texas Medical Branch emergency room possible.

Last September, Hurricane Ike hit Galveston, swamping parts of the island and forcing thousands of residents to evacuate. The emergency room's floor is at one of the highest physical elevations on the island, more than 30 feet above sea level. Yet the power of Ike's damage delayed the reopening of the emergency room until last week. Southeast Texas lost one of three level one trauma centers, putting a strain on the whole region.

But thanks to tremendous community support, the emergency room will begin receiving patients and eventually offer the same level of trauma care it did before. Every minute counts in a life-threatening emergency. And the reopening of this facility will help provide timely emergency medical services to the area residents.

As a member of the House Homeland Security Committee, I am committed to continue to do all I can to ensure complete recovery for the impacted areas of Texas by Ike. This is a tremendous step forward for the recovery of Galveston and the neighboring communities devastated by Hurricane Ike.

I wish UTMB, its doctors, its nurses, and its staff a successful future. Welcome back.

THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONTINENTAL AIRLINES

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 75th anniversary of my hometown airline, Continental Airlines. I would like to thank all of the employees, past and present and those in the future, who have continued to serve our community and the Nation. We thank them for their original beginnings with great history and great leadership.

I'm reminded of one of their transfer names, Eastern Airlines. I'm reminded, of course, of the uniforms and the admiration that children would give the pilots and flight attendants. We still do that today.

Continental Airlines is in my district, and as well the Bush Interconti-

mental Airport, which is their hub airport.

Let me thank them for the many economic dollars they provide to the fourth largest city in the Nation, Houston, Texas, and as well let me congratulate them as they move forward in a new structure that will allow more diversity, more competition, but stronger airline services and customer relations.

Thank you to the leadership of Continental Airlines and to their CEO, Larry Kellner, and all of the hardworking employees. You've had 75 years. You should be proud.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH INSURANCE OPTION

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, the voluntary public health insurance option is an important part of health care reform for a number of reasons.

First, the public plan will provide a competitor for private plans that will help make the entire system more efficient and help drive down prices for everyone. Second, it provides assurance to all Americans that there will be an affordable, comprehensive health insurance plan available to them no matter where they live or work. In many places there are currently only one or two insurers people can choose from.

Third and of vital importance, the public plan will have the ability to test and implement innovative methods of payment that have the potential to make the entire health care system more efficient and patient centered.

The current fee-for-service structure is a fragmented system. No provider will be required to participate in the public plan, but for those who do, it's important for the public plan to be able to implement effective payment reforms for all participating providers. Allowing individual providers to negotiate their own rates and their own methods of payment with the plan will slow the vital process of moving us towards a more efficient, integrated health care system that serves both the patients and the taxpayers.

Now is the time to act on health care reform, including a robust public health insurance option.

HONORING J.D. WILLIAMS

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

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the loss of J.D. Williams, who expired 3 days ago.

J.D. Williams was a very special person. He worked with the young people, taught so many how to play baseball. And, of course, he was an outstanding athlete himself.

He was always giving of himself to help others. I recall as a youngster how

he would organize and go into his pocket and take money out to be able to assist young people in buying uniforms and being able to move from one location to another to be able to play different teams.

He was just so committed to developing young people. He worked to get them into college, and, of course, he had a relationship with many coaches around the country. And they would respect the fact that if J.D. Williams said that you could play, you would be able to play. And that's the kind of relationship that he had.

Of course, let me say to his family in times like these you can be proud of the accomplishments of J.D. Williams, even though he's no longer with us.

THE NEW BLACK PANTHER PARTY CASE

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

Mr. WOLF. As a strong supporter of the Voting Rights Act, I've been deeply troubled by this Department of Justice's questionable dismissal of an important voter intimidation case in Philadelphia, where I grew up, and my dad was a policeman. My commitment to voting rights is unquestioned. In 1981 I was the only member, Republican or Democrat, of the Virginia delegation in the House to vote for the Voting Rights Act, and was harshly criticized by the editorial page of the Richmond Times Dispatch.

And when I supported its reauthorization in 2006, I was again criticized by editorial pages. I have grave concerns about the Department's dismissal of this case. Congress must use its oversight to maintain the integrity of the voting system. Oversight is needed now more than ever given the disclosure today in the Washington Times that the Department's case against the New Black Panther Party was dismissed over the objections of career attorneys on the trial team as well as the chief of the Department's Appellate Division.

The politicization of the Justice Department by Eric Holder against career employees is absolutely wrong, and the Congress ought to get to the bottom of this.

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I have grave concerns about the department's dismissal of this serious case. Above all, Congress must use its oversight to maintain the integrity of our voting system.

All the documents surrounding this case need to be made public and all the questions asked in my July 22 letter to Attorney General Holder should be answered. The American people deserve nothing less than full transparency.

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Sources within the department stated that Associate Attorney General Thomas Perrelli, a political appointee, overruled career attorneys in dismissing the case.

According to the Appellate Division memos first disclosed in the Times article, Appellate Chief Diana K. Flynn said that “the appropriate action was to pursue the default judgment” and that Justice had made a “reasonable argument in favor of default relief against all defendants.”

Flynn's opinion was shared by a second Appellate Division official, Marie K. McElderry, who stated, “The government's predominant interest is preventing intimidation, threats and coercion against voters or persons urging or aiding persons to vote or attempt to vote.”

Given these troubling disclosures, I call on the attorney general to re-file this civil suit and allow a ruling from the judge based on the merits of the case—not political expediency.

It is imperative that we protect all Americans' right to vote, which I consider a sacrosanct and inalienable right of any democracy. The career attorneys and Appellate Division within the department sought to demonstrate the federal government's commitment to protecting this right by vigorously prosecuting any individual or group that seeks to undermine this right. I hope that the political leadership will follow their example and allow this case to go forward again.

[From the Richmond Times Dispatch—
Editorial, October 15, 1981]

A MORE OFFENSIVE LAW

A recent news story from Washington reported that Tenth District Republican Rep. Frank Wolf “didn't want to talk about” his vote in favor of extending the odious federal Voting Rights Act. No wonder. There is absolutely no way that he can justify his endorsement of a measure that officially brands Virginia a second-class state and denies Virginians some of their most precious political rights. Mr. Wolf was the only Virginia congressman to support the bill when it moved through the House of Representatives last week.

Grossly unfair in its present form, the Voting Rights Act would be made even more offensive by changes the House approved. The despicable pre-clearance provision, which now is subject to periodic reconsideration, would become a permanent feature of the law. Under this provision, covered states and localities must obtain federal approval of any law, action or decision that might affect the voting rights or strength of minorities, especially blacks. The House's new version outlines a procedure by which a state might, theoretically, purify itself and gain exemption from the act, but the process is so cumbersome and vague that it is likely to prove to be worthless. One important aspect of the

act that would remain unchanged in the House version is its inequitable selectivity. The law's harsh impact would continue to fall mainly on the South. Efforts to persuade the House to apply the act uniformly throughout the nation were unsuccessful.

Indeed, the House was unwilling to make even the slightest gesture toward fairness. As the bill had emerged from the House Judiciary Committee, it provided that any state or locality seeking to obtain exemption from its coverage would have to get the approval of the United States District Court in Washington. Sixth District Republican Rep. M. Caldwell Butler, one of the principal leaders of the valiant but vain fight against the act offered an eminently sensible amendment that would have permitted states and localities to sue for relief in a local federal district court. The necessity to go to Washington, he argued, would be so costly and cumbersome that many communities would be discouraged from even attempting to qualify for exemption. But the House, unmoved, rejected his proposal.

Not in many years has Virginia followed the kinds of restrictive voting practices that originally inspired the Voting Rights Act. Not in many years has Virginia attempted to abridge the right of its black citizens to vote. Yet if the House bill prevails Virginia, and most of the South, will continue to be treated as wards of the federal government and denied political rights that the rest of the nation freely exercises, and Mr. Wolf will be partly to blame. Fortunately, the House bill faces considerable opposition in the Senate. And Virginia's two representatives in that body—Senators Harry F. Byrd Jr. and John Warner—can be counted on to support, enthusiastically and aggressively, efforts to transform the Voting Rights Act from a selectively punitive measure into a fair and reasonable law.

[From the Washington Times, July 30, 2009]

JUSTICE APPOINTEE OK'D PANTHER REVERSAL—CAREER LAWYERS PUSHED FOR SANCTIONS IN CASE

(By Jerry Seper)

Associate Attorney General Thomas J. Perrelli, the No. 3 official in the Obama Justice Department, was consulted and ultimately approved a decision in May to reverse course and drop a civil complaint accusing three members of the New Black Panther Party of intimidating voters in Philadelphia during November's election, according to interviews.

The department's career lawyers in the Voting Section of the Civil Rights Division who pursued the complaint for five months had recommended that Justice seek sanctions against the party and three of its members after the government had already won a default judgment in federal court against the men.

Front-line lawyers were in the final stages of completing that work when they were unexpectedly told by their superiors in late April to seek a delay after a meeting between political appointees and career supervisors, according to federal records and interviews.

The delay was ordered by then-acting Assistant Attorney General Loretta King after she discussed with Mr. Perrelli concerns about the case during one of their regular review meetings, according to the interviews.

Ms. King, a career senior executive service official, had been named by President Obama in January to temporarily fill the vacant political position of assistant attorney general for civil rights while a permanent choice could be made.

She and other career supervisors ultimately recommended dropping the case