

would not apply to those who are here illegally."

Fact: Nothing in any of the Democrat bills would require individuals to verify their citizenship or identity prior to receiving taxpayer-subsidized benefits—making the President's promise one that the legislation itself does not keep.

Quote: "And one more misunderstanding I want to clear up—under our plan, no federal dollars will be used to fund abortions, and federal conscience laws will remain in place."

Fact: The National Right to Life Committee, among other independent pro-life groups, have confirmed that the legislation will result in federal funds being used to pay for abortions—both through the government-run health plan, and through federal subsidies provided through the Exchange, despite various accounting gimmicks created in an Energy and Commerce Committee "compromise."

Quote: "I will not sign a plan that adds one dime to our deficits—either now or in the future. Period."

Fact: The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has found that H.R. 3200 would increase deficits by \$239 billion over 10 years—and also found that the legislation "would probably generate substantial increases in federal budget deficits" thereafter. The Peter G. Peterson Foundation released a study today which found that in its second decade, H.R. 3200 would increase federal deficits by more than \$1 trillion.

Quote: "Not a dollar of the Medicare trust fund will be used to pay for this plan."

Fact: Among more than \$500 billion in proposed savings from Medicare, the Democrat bills also propose redirecting \$23 billion from the Medicare Improvement Fund to fund new health care entitlements. According to current law, the Medicare Improvement Fund is designated specifically "to make improvements under the original Medicare fee-for-service program."

Quote: "Reducing the waste and inefficiency in Medicare and Medicaid will pay for most of this plan. Much of the rest would be paid for with revenues from the very same drug and insurance companies that stand to benefit from tens of millions of new customers."

Fact: The Congressional Budget Office has previously found that the cuts to Medicare Advantage plans included in the Democrat legislation would result in millions of seniors losing their current plan—a direct contradiction of the President's assertion that "nothing in this plan requires you to change what you have."

Quote: "This reform will charge insurance companies a fee for their most expensive policies, which will encourage them to provide greater value for the money—an idea which has the support of Democratic and Republican experts. And according to these same experts, this modest change could help hold down the cost of health care for all of us in the long-run."

Fact: While some Republicans support addressing the current employee exclusion for health insurance in the context of overall tax reform, the President's proposal would raise "fees" in order to finance new federal spending—a tax increase of hundreds of billions of dollars, and one that many Republicans may not support.

Quote: "Add it all up, and the plan I'm proposing will cost around \$900 billion over ten years."

Fact: The Congressional Budget Office, in its score of H.R. 3200 as introduced, found that the legislation would spend approximately \$1.6 trillion over ten years—nearly double the President's estimate.

Quote: "I will continued to seek common ground in the weeks ahead. If you come to me with a serious set of proposals, I will be there to listen. My door is always open."

Fact: On May 13, House Republican leaders all wrote the President a letter reading in part: "We write to you today to express our sincere desire to work with you and find common ground on the issue of health care reform. . . . We respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss areas for potential common ground on health care reform." Nearly 4 months later, that meeting has yet to take place.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. LOWEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THESE COLORS DON'T RUN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it was a clear, cool morning in America 8 years ago on September 11. The sun had risen, and people of the Nation went to work. I was driving my Jeep to the courthouse in Texas, where I served as a judge at the time.

KILT Radio, in Houston, interrupted a Willie Nelson song and reported that a plane had crashed into a tower at the World Trade Center. Then a second plane had hit the other tower in New York City. I, like many others on the road that day, pulled over to the side and listened intensely to the radio, and heard about a third plane crashing somewhere in Pennsylvania and yet a fourth plane deliberately hitting the Pentagon.

They were from every State in the United States, from 115 foreign countries and were of all races and nationalities. They were men and women and America's young people. At the end of the day, 2,819 people did not return home to the people they loved; 343 were firefighters and paramedics; 23 were New York City police officers; 37 were Port Authority officers; 125 were working for the military at the Pentagon; and 266 others were passengers on airlines.

These were the victims of the attack on America on September 11, 2001. The enemy we faced and still face killed in the name of religion the innocence of this Nation.

America is great because of people like the passengers on Flight 93, who called their loved ones and said goodbye and then said, "Let's roll." They knew it was up to them to stop the terrorists on that plane. They were un-

armed and already had seen others murdered before their eyes, but they did what it took to stop the terrorists from doing whatever the terrorists had planned to do to our Nation. It didn't matter whether they were flying into the Capitol or into the White House or exactly what they were going to do. The passengers of flight 93 were not going to let them do it no matter what it was. They saved innocent lives on the ground when they forced that plane down in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

What makes America great is her people—ordinary Americans who strap on hundreds of pounds of gear and who run into a building that's on fire to help people who are scared and injured and who don't know where to go to be safe. They are paramedics and police officers and firemen and Port Authority officers who climbed hundreds of flights of steps, climbing up while everyone else was trying to get out of a building that was on fire.

They went into those darkened stairwells even after one building had collapsed, even after they knew that hundreds of their friends and family members and coworkers had just likely been killed when that first building came down. They kept on trying to save people whose lives they had been trained to save and to be responsible for. They took an oath and stood for that oath, and we would hope that we would all do the same. That's what makes America the rare breed. Through the smoke, the fire, the dust, and the debris, these extraordinary people showed the world exactly what an American hero looks like.

What sets Americans apart is the bravery of the people who face challenges. We are continuing to be underestimated because no other country in the world can understand what an American feels when confronted with the type of evil that confronted us on September 11, 2001.

At the end of the day on September 11, 2001, I, like most Americans, was mesmerized in front of the TV, watching video of the attack on our Nation. I noticed that, when the planes hit the World Trade Center, thousands of people—good people—sought safety from the terror in the skies, but there was another group, a handful of people—that rare breed—who, when the planes hit those buildings, ran as hard as they could to confront that terror.

Who were they?

Well, they were the emergency medical technicians; they were firefighters; they were police officers; and they were just regular Americans. Their first inclination was not to run and hide. Their first inclination was to fight back, and that's exactly what they did. They showed the pride that we feel in our country when we see the flag waving and say, These colors don't run. We mean it.

So, Mr. Speaker, while it's important to remember those who died that day 8 years ago, it's just as important to remember those who got to live and who

had another chance at life because America's first responders were there and answered the call to defend America.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AMERICA MUST NOT OCCUPY AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POLIS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the eighth anniversary of one of the most tragic days in America's history, September 11, 2001.

On that day, our Nation was attacked, and nearly 3,000 Americans were killed. We continue to grieve for them and for their families, and tomorrow we celebrate a national day of remembrance and service in their honor and memory.

Soon after 9/11, Mr. Speaker, American troops invaded Afghanistan, where the attacks had been planned. Many Americans have considered the war in Afghanistan a good war. Our troops have shown incredible skill and bravery in a very difficult conflict over those 8 years. But now, 8 years later, our troops are still in Afghanistan and are still facing a growing insurgency. The Taliban appears to have regained control of half the country, and many al Qaeda operatives have fled to Pakistan. As a result, a growing number of Americans now oppose a war that no longer serves our national security interests.

In three recent polls, more Americans called for reductions in our troop levels rather than increases, and in one poll, the majority of Americans said that the war in Afghanistan is simply not worth fighting.

Despite this, General Stanley McChrystal, commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, is expected to ask the President to commit more troops. There are reports that General McChrystal may ask for as many as 30,000 more, which would bring the American troop level to about 100,000. Enlarging the American footprint in Afghanistan, Mr. Speaker, will almost certainly lead the Afghanistan people to see the United States as an occupying force, and if history has taught us anything, it is that the Afghan people will resist any foreign occupation. That is the bitter lesson that the Soviet Union and the British empire learned.

Even Secretary of Defense Robert Gates is concerned about the problem. In a recent interview, Secretary Gates

said he asked General McChrystal about the implications of significant additional forces and whether the Afghans will see this as the United States becoming more of an occupier rather than a partner.

Secretary Gates also spoke last week about the failures of previous foreign forces in Afghanistan. He said one reason for their failures is that the Afghans concluded that they were there for their own imperial interests and not there for the interests of the Afghan people.

Mr. Speaker, the worst thing our Nation can do right now is to stumble into an occupation that the Afghan people do not want, one that will last many years, that will cost many lives and that will cost hundreds of billions of dollars that we can't afford.

We should not double-down on a strategy that hasn't worked. We need a brand new strategy, one that is based, among other things, on economic development for the Afghan people, on better governance and on improvements in policing and in intelligence. We need to have strategies that are the best ways to capture violent extremists, and we must have a clear exit strategy and a timetable for the withdrawal of our brave troops.

If we do that, if we can stop more people from dying—our troops and the Afghan people—we will truly be honoring the 3,000 who died on September 11, 2001.

COFFEE WITH THE CONGRESSMAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, like many Members in the House, I spent a good part of August visiting with those who sent me here to Washington to represent them. I held seven "Coffee with the Congressman" meetings in all parts of the 19th Congressional District, and I was amazed at the tremendous amount of turnout.

Those who came to these meetings were upset about the direction that the government is taking their country. They want their voices to be heard in Washington. I told them I would bring their messages back to Congress with me, and hundreds of those attending our meetings filled out these message forms. As I said, I would like to read these comments on the House floor so that everyone in Congress will know how they feel. The people of the 19th Congressional District, and I think people all across America, share these same thoughts. So, for the next 5 minutes, you're going to hear from the people who came to the August 24 townhall meeting in Abilene, Texas, in their own words.

David from Abilene, Texas wrote these comments:

"My message to Washington is fix Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, VA, and welfare first. When they have

a good working system in place, then we can talk about taking on health care."

Claude from Tuscola, Texas had these comments:

"In my business, I have 19 employees, and I have reasonable health care coverage for all my employees, and I furnish this at no cost to my employees. Two of my employees cover their families at their expense. It is a very good policy."

Jerry from Abilene said, "I'm a 75-year old male, married 52 years with 6 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. This is all about the enormous debt I will be leaving for them. Please quit the spending, and look for ways to cut costs and improve our current system."

Charles from Abilene said, "You can't borrow your way out of debt. When you find yourself in a hole, stop digging. Whatever happened to common sense? Stop the cap-and-trade bill. It will raise taxes on all and not affect the global climate. Drill for oil in Alaska and our coastal waters, where there are proven reserves. If the health care bill is good enough for the taxpayers, it should be used by the President, Congress and the unions."

Charleye from Abilene said, "I do not want the government to control our health care. Please do not pass the proposed health care reform. Government spending is out of control. Please put a cap on spending in all areas. Not more bailouts—for anybody. Please listen, and stop spending our money now."

Bill from Abilene asked this question:

"Should this health care bill get passed, will all of the national politicians have to get on it too, or will you still keep your individual health insurance you have now?"

Trudy from Abilene said, "Please stand against all bills that are not read and debated. 'No' to government health care."

Tom from Abilene said, "You must do everything possible to prevent publicly funded abortions in the health care bill."

Maria from Merkel, Texas said, "People fail to see I am paying for this. Somebody has to. I'm tired of paying taxes toward things that people don't want to work for."

Lucile from Abilene says, "I do not want government control of my health care. This excess spending is ruining the U.S. Please be serious about your country and its citizens."

Grace from Abilene said, "No new taxes. We need insurance reform, not health care reform. The government bankrupted Medicare, not the recipients. No more bailouts. When did we start bailing out people that lived beyond their means in their high-priced homes?"

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Mike from Abilene: "I am a 27-year retired Air Force veteran. I am concerned about TRICARE for life and the