

for possession, in addition to dealing—dealing is already covered in the Democratic bill—but would make felony conviction for possession also grounds for losing your student loan. Presumably, that's State and Federal felony conviction.

Now, in this, I was faced with several choices. One, I'm a Republican in a Democratic Congress. I was probably going to lose today. This was a practical way. I didn't want to see possession go out of the bill.

It basically means that marijuana won't be covered. If you have that much marijuana in your possession to be a felony, it probably means you're a dealer. You wouldn't have that much if you weren't a dealer. It's far more than individual use.

It basically covers meth, cocaine, and all sorts of other drug convictions for felony possession. It means the United States Government still stands on record saying that both possession and dealing should restrict your ability to get a student loan.

But there are some other practical things here. A lot of States, I believe, falsely and wrongly overrode Federal marijuana laws by decriminalizing marijuana, declaring that it was medical in some States when, in fact, marijuana is not medical. There are ingredients inside of marijuana that can be medical. We have Marinol, for example, that deals with that.

But they affect chaos in marijuana laws across the United States. It's very similar to what we are dealing with in Canada, as I debated up there as they proposed changing laws, and now Mexico has; and that is when different provinces have different laws and there's complete chaos in the laws, the Federal courts are not likely to uphold a law because it would be unequal enforcement.

So how would an Indiana student get denied a loan but a California student wouldn't get denied a loan? What about if it's somebody from Indiana who's in California going to school? What about if you're taking an online course combined with going to class, and the online course is based in California but you're going to school in Indiana? It's chaos. I do not believe, even had I won, the courts would have upheld my provision.

This shows, in fact, Republicans and Democrats can work together. It's very difficult on the major fundamental debate arguments. For example, I felt this was a Federal takeover of private lending and will lead to more Federal takeover and a national bank.

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So we weren't going to be able to agree on the loans. But it doesn't mean inside, even on controversial provisions, that we can't work together. So I wanted to explain that, and I want to thank Chairman MILLER and Congressman PERLMUTTER for working with me.

#### THE PRESIDENT MUST REJECT PLANS TO SEND MORE TROOPS TO AFGHANISTAN

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, every child and every adult is familiar with the story of Goldilocks. Remember how it goes:

After wandering into the three bears' house, Goldilocks saw three bowls of porridge. One was too hot, one was too cold, but one was the medium temperature, and it was just right. I mention this because The New York Times recently reported that Goldilocks is playing a role in shaping American defense policy. According to the report, General McChrystal is expected to give Secretary of Defense Gates three options for troop increases in Afghanistan. The three options are, first, 15,000 more troops; second, 25,000 more troops; or third, 45,000 more troops. Pentagon officials apparently believe that Gates will choose the medium option of 25,000 troops. According to the Times, they actually call this the "Goldilocks option."

Here's why: Sending 15,000 more troops would be too cold because it wouldn't be enough to satisfy the generals; sending 45,000 more troops would be too hot because it would cause political problems; so sending the medium number of troops, 25,000, is considered "just right."

Of course the problem with this is that Afghanistan is not a children's story. It is a real war where real people are getting killed, and it is rapidly losing the support of the American people. Recent polls show that the American people want to reduce our troop strength in Afghanistan, not increase it. The American people have good reason to oppose the escalation of the conflict. They know that the recent elections in Afghanistan were filled with fraud, and they believe the Kabul Government is more interested in corruption than in improving the lives of the Afghan people.

The American people also know that we have already spent nearly \$225 billion in Afghanistan but have little to show for it. Our troops have performed brilliantly and courageously, but the insurgency is growing, and the war is getting harder to fight every single day. Besides, they believe the money that we have poured into Afghanistan is desperately needed here at home for health care reform and other vital domestic problems. The American people also know that we do not have a clear mission in Afghanistan, there is no exit strategy, and they fear that we run the risk of being considered an occupying force. Since the Afghans have opposed and defeated every single foreign power that has ever tried to occupy their nation, it all seems to be a repeat of past failures.

For all of these reasons, we need to debate, and we need to reconsider what

the U.S. role is in Afghanistan. I am urging the House to support my bill, H. Res. 363, the SMART Security Platform for the 21st century. The SMART Security Platform would change our mission in Afghanistan to emphasize economic development, humanitarian aid, education, jobs, and better governance. It would also help Afghanistan develop its policing and intelligence capacity. Policing and intelligence, you see, are far more effective than massive military invasions when it comes to tracking down violent extremists in the communities where they lurk.

Mr. Speaker, if the administration sends more troops to Afghanistan, the United States will be doubling down on a strategy that has already failed. The Afghan people don't want the United States to occupy their country, and the American people don't want an occupation, either. I urge President Obama to reject any plan to send more troops to Afghanistan because, like Goldilocks who should not have eaten any of the porridge that did not belong to her, Afghanistan does not belong to the United States.

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

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### CZARS—SHADOW GOVERNMENT?

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, every President has the right to get advice from anybody he wants to get advice from. That's a good thing. United States Presidents have a tough job. They should have as many advisers as they wish. My dad, in fact, would like to be one of those advisers to this President and wishes he was an adviser to all the past Presidents.

These czars, as they are now called, are not new to the executive branch. But when a person crosses the line from being an adviser to being a policymaker and decision-maker for the government, that person needs to be held accountable to the people of the United States. Someone who gives advice to the President is one thing, but there's a difference between an adviser and someone who sets a policy and implements that policy. Then that person has direct control over the American people. If this occurs, our Constitution requires that person be subject to the oversight of Congress to be legitimate.

The big questions become: are these czars advisers or are they policymakers? If they become policymakers, then transparency is important, accountability is important, and confirmation by the United States Senate

is mandatory. Our Constitution requires it. Without the confirmation process, we don't know who these people are. And are these czars nothing more than a shadow government? We don't know.

The Constitution mandates visibility and oversight by Congress. That's how our government works within the bounds of our law. We don't know how many czars we have or who they are. How much do they get paid, and where does that money come from? What do they do? Who do they report to? Are they in control of the executive branch and its duties? Well, we don't know.

What are the Cabinet secretaries doing? Who reports to whom? Do the czars report to the Cabinet members? Or do the Cabinet members report to these folks? The American public does not know. We don't know because there's no oversight and no accountability, and it doesn't seem like anybody's talking. Czars haven't gone through the Senate confirmation process. Are they a national security risk? We don't know. No one knows.

Now the FBI tells us they go through a background check. But it's the same background check that the FBI does for a White House intern. These czars do not get a security clearance. That's a much more detailed background check for people with more responsibility than a White House intern. The FBI gives the information from the czar-intern background check over to the White House—that's it. And once the FBI hands the information over, they have nothing else to do with the czars. If these czars are decision-makers and policymakers, that's not acceptable. Just like Cabinet secretaries, they need to be vetted. We have to know who the people are that are in control and who controls the levers of our government. This is just common sense. The American people don't want a shadow government controlling America. Just who are the czars? We have the right to know, and Congress has the responsibility to find out.

And that's just the way it is.

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

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

#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, every once in a while, I read something that makes me wish I had written it or said it. I had that experience recently, reading Nick Kristof's column in *The New York Times*. It's just like Abraham Lincoln said during the Gettysburg Address, I read something like this and I

say, This is far beyond my poor power to add or detract. So I would like to read it to you, I would like to share it with you and the other Members of the House because it so well captures what's important in the current health care debate.

He wrote as follows:

In the debate over health care, here's an inequity to ponder: Nikki White would have been far better off if only she had been a convicted bank robber. Nikki was a slim and athletic college graduate who had health insurance, had worked in health care and knew the system. But she had systemic lupus erythematosus, a chronic inflammatory disease that was diagnosed when she was 21 and gradually left her too sick to work. And once she lost her job, she lost her health insurance.

In any other rich country, Nikki probably would have been fine, notes T.R. Reid in his important and powerful new book, *"The Healing of America."* Some 80 percent of lupus patients in the United States live a normal life span. Under a doctor's care, lupus should be manageable. Indeed, if Nikki had been a felon, the problem could have been averted, because the courts have ruled that prisoners are entitled to medical care.

As Mr. Reid recounts, Nikki tried everything to get medical care, but no insurance company would accept someone with her preexisting condition. She spent months painfully writing letters to anyone she thought might be able to help. She fought tenaciously for her life.

Finally, Nikki collapsed at her home in Tennessee and was rushed to a hospital emergency room, which was then required to treat her without payment until her condition stabilized. Since money was no longer an issue, the hospital performed 25 emergency surgeries on Nikki, and she spent 6 months in critical care.

"When Nikki showed up at the emergency room, she received the best of care, and the hospital spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on her," her stepfather, Tony Deal, told me. "But that's not when she needed the care."

By then it was too late. In 2006, Nikki White died at age 32. "Nikki didn't die from lupus," her doctor, Amylyn Crawford, told Mr. Reid. "Nikki died from complications of the failing American health care system."

"She fell through the cracks," Nikki's mother, Gail Deal, told me grimly. "When you bury a child, it's the worst thing in the world. You never recover."

We now have a chance to reform this cruel and capricious system. If we let that chance slip away, there will be another Nikki dying every half-hour.

That's how often someone dies in America because of a lack of insurance, according to a study by a branch of the National Academy of Sciences. Over a year, that amounts to 18,000 American deaths.

After al Qaeda killed nearly 3,000 Americans 8 years ago on Friday, we

went to war and spent hundreds of billions of dollars ensuring that this would not happen again. Yet every 2 months, that many people die because of our failure to provide universal insurance—and yet many Members of Congress want us to do nothing?

Mr. Reid's book is a rich tour of health care around the world. Because he has a bum shoulder, he asked doctors in many countries to examine it and make recommendations. His American orthopedist recommended a titanium shoulder replacement that would cost tens of thousands of dollars and might or might not help. Specialists in other countries warned that a sore shoulder didn't justify the risks of such major surgery, although some said it would be available free if Mr. Reid insisted. Instead, they offered physical therapy, acupuncture, and other cheap and noninvasive alternatives, some of which worked pretty well.

That's a window into the flaws in our health care system: we offer titanium shoulder replacements for those who don't really need them, but we let 32-year-old women die if they lose their health insurance. No wonder we spend so much on medical care, and yet have some health care statistics that are worse than Slovenia's.

My suggestion for anyone in Nikki's situation: commit a crime and get locked up. In Washington State, a 20-year-old inmate named Melissa Matthews chose to turn down parole and stay in prison because that was the only way she could get treatment for her cervical cancer. "If I'm out, I'm going to die from this cancer," she told a television station.

This has to end. As Mr. Kristof wrote: Do we wish to be the only rich nation in the world that lets a 32-year-old woman die because she can't get health insurance? Is that really us?

[September 13, 2009]

THE BODY COUNT AT HOME

(By Nicholas D. Kristof)

In the debate over health care, here's an inequity to ponder: Nikki White would have been far better off if only she had been a convicted bank robber.

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