

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, economic recovery requires not only solving the employment and housing crises but the health care crisis as well.

In this decade, the premiums charged by private health insurance companies have risen more than 75 percent while workers' wages have risen less than 25 percent. Meanwhile, the profits of the 10 largest health insurers have risen by 400 percent, and the salaries of their CEOs have tripled.

America now has 50 percent higher health care costs than the highest of the next 20 most industrialized nations. Yet Americans suffer shorter life expectancies and higher infant mortalities than any of those nations. Fifty million American citizens who cannot afford basic health insurance receive crisis care in the most expensive way possible: in emergency rooms for which the rest of Americans pay. The uninsured fail to receive the preventative care they need, and the insured shoulder the enormous long-term costs in both lives and dollars of preventable diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.

There is something morally and fiscally wrong with this picture. Wake up, America. We need health care reform now.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS IN
AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's Washington Post editorial was correct when they stated that President Obama's goals in Afghanistan, as he outlined in March, were essential to preventing another attack on the United States by al Qaeda and its extremist allies. Indeed, there is much at stake in Afghanistan in establishing security and stability throughout the region. President Obama's original strategy is vital to ensuring that terrorist organizations do not reestablish safe havens or return the Taliban to power.

Our military commanders and troops on the ground are doing extraordinary work. We need to ensure they have the resources to complete their mission: to defeat the terrorists and to help provide, as President Obama mentioned in March, stability in the region.

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

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM
DAILY MYTHBUSTER: IMPACT ON
SENIORS

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address seniors in this country about many myths that have been perpetrated about current health care reform.

The fact is that health care reform in this House, which we've talked about, simply provides Medicare reimbursement to doctors who spend time with their patients who wish to speak to their doctors about their values and their preferences with regard to end-of-life-care decisions. It empowers older Americans who want to have their wishes observed.

The other myth we've heard about is rationed care. The fact is nothing will stand between you and your doctor or will prevent you from making the best health care decisions, and if you're enrolled in Medicare, it will improve the level of care you can get.

With regard to a so-called "government takeover" of health care, this bill would build on the system of private health care in this country. The CBO said it will actually expand coverage under private care by 16 million and that only about 3 percent of Americans would choose to enroll in a new public health care plan.

Also, with regard to Medicare, we are going to have savings from overpayments to Medicare Advantage plans of \$150 billion, which will help improve the stability of Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, we need to pass this now and get on with the serious business of health care reform for our seniors.

REMOVE THE CMS GAG ORDER

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

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, it was recently reported that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has issued a gag order on private insurance companies to prevent them from providing information to their beneficiaries regarding the administration's proposed cuts to Medicare Advantage and how the Democrat health reform could take away their current coverage.

The CBO, by the way, agrees with this. That is a fact that coverage is being taken away.

However, the one entity not being affected by this gag order is the AARP, which has been a prime advocate of the Democrats' government takeover of health care. Even as AARP advocates for cutting Medicare Advantage plans by more than \$150 billion, an analysis of the organization's operation reveals that it stands to receive tens of millions of dollars at the expense of seniors' medical care. Under the Democrats' plan, seniors are going to have to fund kickbacks to AARP-sponsored plans, and there isn't a single provision attempting to impose any new restrictions on AARP policies.

Did CMS somehow forget to include AARP among the organizations whose First Amendment rights to inform seniors of harmful Medicare provisions were restricted, or did the administration only wish to silence its critics?

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago when the President addressed the Nation from this very Chamber, my Republican colleagues made a big show of waving their plans for the health reform and of waving them all over the floor, five bills and particularly a specific bill.

Unfortunately, just as I hope all of us read our bill, I hope all of you read your own bills. The plans that have been bandied about by my Republican friends lack any commitment to guaranteeing affordable, quality health care for all Americans.

The truth about the Republican plans is that they dismantle and disrupt the health insurance system. Get this, the American people: the provisions espoused by the Republicans would unravel the employer-based system where 159 million Americans get their health coverage. It erodes the employer-provided coverage. It provides fewer choices at higher costs for those who need insurance the most.

Wait until Americans read the Republican plans for us and what they have available.

By the way, the CBO does not in any manner, shape or form tell us how we're going to pay for this under the Republican plans. You've criticized us, and hypocritically, you've done what you say we've done.

AFGHANISTAN

(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, I'll bet Osama bin Laden and his buddies are high-fiving each other in their caves after hearing that the administration is soft-pedaling on its promise for an aggressive fight in Afghanistan.

In March, the President unveiled a new plan for success for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Sadly, now he's singing a different tune at just the wrong time. General McChrystal recently warned that America and our allies are in danger of losing the war if we do not create a bold, new strategy for America that requires more troops.

The President should heed the general's advice and should stand strong for freedom and security by giving our troops the tools they want, need, and deserve for victory so they can return home with honor.

To quote the President: The world cannot afford the price that will come

due if Afghanistan slides back into chaos.

PROMOTING GENUINE HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, our Republican colleagues would have you believe that there is a considerable amount of agreement between the two sides on how we should best enact health care reform. Well, I think the reality is we have substantial agreement on what the problems are, but very different opinions about how we go about approaching them.

As my colleague Mr. PASCRELL said, last week or 2 weeks ago they were waving this bill, one of many, H.R. 3400, at the President when he spoke here. They might as well have been waving the insurance companies' financial reports because this bill just provides another government subsidy to the insurance companies, which have put us in the big hole that we're in right now. Furthermore, they don't even pay for it.

We are interested in genuine health care reform that's going to provide security and stability for every American citizen and that will help fix Medicare so that it provides continuing great service to our seniors.

The Republican proposals don't do anything like that. We wish they would join us in a sincere effort to promote effective health care reform. We haven't seen that effort yet.

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MEDIA IGNORE HEALTH CARE POLL

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, a new Investor's Business Daily poll of more than 1,300 physicians found that nearly two-thirds do not support the administration's health care plan. More than 7 in 10 say the government cannot provide insurance coverage without harming quality.

IBD's findings contradict stories in the national media that claim most doctors support the administration's plan. The media know that the American Medical Association does not speak for all doctors. In fact, only 17 percent of all doctors belong to the AMA in large part because it is too liberal.

It's not a surprise that the national media ignored IBD's poll. It doesn't fit their agenda of more government control and less individual freedom.

NATION'S HEALTH INSURANCE SYSTEM IS BROKEN

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

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. Speaker, it's clear that our Nation's health insurance system is broken and that the status quo is simply unsustainable.

Over the last decade, health insurance premiums in New Mexico have grown 118 percent for the average family, compared to just 50 percent growth in wages. Again, the cost of health insurance grew more than twice as much as wages earned by New Mexico's working families. That same trend has made health care insurance unaffordable for more than one in five adults who went uninsured last year.

Mr. Speaker, we must hold insurance companies accountable for these skyrocketing costs. If we are successful in health insurance reform, we will lower the cost of care for our families. Seniors will actually be able to afford their medications all year long, small businesses will save money, and it will end this impediment to this Nation's competitiveness in the 21st century economy. We simply cannot afford to let this historic opportunity slip away.

CONGRESS NEEDS TIME TO READ BILLS

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call my colleagues to join me and Congressman BRIAN BAIRD and Congressman CULBERSON in signing a discharge petition to change the rules of the House so that Members of Congress have at least 72 hours to read bills like this.

This is the so-called stimulus. We had 12 hours. Now, the Speaker has said we will all have 24 hours. We are asking for 72. The stimulus was 1,073 pages, \$787 billion.

This is the cap-and-tax bill, 16½ hours to digest it, 1,428 pages, \$846 billion.

We should have a chance to read these bills and understand them. Congressman BAIRD and about 90 of us are cosponsors of H.R. 544. It's time to bring it to the floor for a vote. Sign the discharge petition.

Let's bring sunshine into the process. Let's allow Americans, their Representatives and the press the time to read these bills before we have to vote on them here on the House floor.

AGREE ABOUT HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, let's all agree about three things when it comes to health care reform. The first message has to be we have to fix what is broken and improve on what we already have and make certain it's at a price we can all afford to pay.

Secondly, and this is in every piece of legislation moving through Congress

on health care, we have to guarantee that no citizen anywhere in this country shall be discriminated against because of preexisting medical conditions.

Isn't it time to finally establish a transparent medical marketplace where all prices for health care service and products are openly disclosed to the public at all times on the Internet? Isn't it time that every customer, when they go to the doctor or hospital or purchase insurance policies, gets to pay the lowest price that's openly disclosed and accepted as payment in full from everyone else?

It's time to have a transparent medical system and make sure that we can drive down prices for everyone.

CMS GAG RULE

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

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, the Obama administration keeps trying to silence critics of its government-run health care plan. This week, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services decided that Medicare Advantage plans were offering the wrong opinions about the health care bill. So CMS ordered them to stop telling their customers about the proposed cuts to Medicare benefits.

Mr. Speaker, this Chicago-style politics is a shocking abuse of power that flies in the face of the President's call for open and honest debate. It's time to remind the President and CMS that all Americans have a constitutional right to speak their mind, even when that holds back a government takeover of health care.

HEALTH CARE REFORM MUST BE DONE

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

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, health care reform is an imperative. We must get it done now. People want to know and deserve to know what's in it for them.

If you are a senior, it means continued quality medical care and lower prescription drugs. If you are a small business, it means you can afford health care for your family, for yourself, for your employees, and you will get help doing it.

If you have a preexisting condition, diabetes, a heart condition, multiple sclerosis, even acne, you won't be excluded from getting quality affordable health care. If you are a young person no longer on your parents' insurance, it means you can choose insurance you can afford. If, like millions of Americans, most Americans, you already have insurance, you like it, you keep it and you won't see skyrocketing premiums, deductibles and copays.