is not—this is not—the way to do it. Competition occurs when we have more private insurance companies competing in marketplaces, which would happen under some proposals made by our side of the aisle—if we would simply create a system where individuals could buy health insurance in any State across the Nation and were not just confined to buying health insurance in their own State. Competition increases when we get more insurance carriers to enter the market, not by creating a government plan that will drive them out of it.

We have proposed ways, as I have said, to increase the number of private insurance options in every State. We think if that is the goal, certainly we ought to be able to come together in a bipartisan way to accomplish that goal. But I do not know why in the world we would settle for a health care proposal that would ultimately drive people to a single-payer, government-run health care plan, would raise taxes on the middle class, raise premiums on those who have insurance now and depress the wages of those who have that health insurance now, and would cut, as I mentioned a moment ago, $500 billion from a Medicare Program that is scheduled to go bankrupt in 2017. Why would we settle for something that would make things worse instead of better for more than 100 million Americans? Why would we vote to spend $1 trillion or more on a new entitlement program without fixing the ones we have now?

Well, it is not just me saying that this so-called public option with the opt-out the majority leader has now proposed—which he admits does not have 60 votes, and the one Republican, Senator SNOWE, who said she would vote for the bill said she would not vote for a bill with a public option. So I am not sure why, with one Republican supporting the Finance Committee bill, they have now apparently rejected Senator SNOWE's support and opted for a strictly partisan proposal coming out of Senator REID's conference room.

But I also checked, and another health care expert whom I respect shares some of my views about the dangers of the so-called public option.

Secretary Mike Leavitt, who is the former Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, said:

> Advocates for a public health-care plan continue to look for a way to give political cover to moderates while advancing their goal of implementing a government-run health-care system.

He said:

> [Ultimately,] it is designed to undercut private insurance.

He said it is ''dangerous for three reasons.'' He said:

> One, it would be cheaper for employers to stop offering private [coverage to their employees and to] funnel their employees into the government-run plan. Employers, not employees, would get to make that choice.

Secondly, he said:

> [A] government-run plan would use the coercive force of government to dictate the prices that [are going to be] charged by others—by doctors, nurses, and hospitals—in a way that private entities cannot.

Third, he said this proposal is dangerous because a ''government-run plan would be subsidized by American taxpayers, while private plans are not.'' In other words, he says, if, in fact, States will be given a chance to opt out of the so-called public option, they would not have a chance to opt out of the tax dollars their taxpayers would spend in order to subsidize the so-called public plan.

As he concludes, he says:

> The state ''opt-in'' is a transparently false choice. It is just another gimmick to try to find votes for an unwise policy that would increase the federal government's control over health care.

We can do better. We must do better. I urge my colleagues not to take the bait on this so-called public option, whether it has an opt-out or not, because it is just another disguised way to try to end up with a single-payer, government-run health care system out of Washington, DC.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, first of all, let me say to my friend from Texas, the wake-up call is out there. People are fully aware of what is going on right now—the fact that you have a government option; you have a form of socialized medicine; you have something that has proven not to work in areas such as Canada and Great Britain and elsewhere. It is kind of interesting to me that we see those countries trying to emulate something we are doing at the same time we are edging over in their direction. I do not think that is going to work.

CAP-AND-TRADE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I will tell you something else I do not think is going to work. During the August recess, people were upset mostly about—because it was the most visible issue at the time—the prospect of socialized medicine for America. But at the same time, as a close second, there was another issue that was very much of concern; that is, a cap-and-trade bill.

Just to refresh your memory, this goes all the way back almost 10 years when we had the Kyoto Treaty. That was back during the Clinton administration, and we were supposed to be ratifying the Kyoto Treaty, which would have been a big, massive cap-and-trade or tax increase. In fact, the analysis of that was done by the Wharton Econometric Survey, from the Wharton School of Economics.

The question put to them was, What would it cost if we ratified the Kyoto Treaty and lived by its emissions standards? The answer was it would be somewhere between $300 billion and $330 billion a year. I always go back, when I am trying to figure out what that would mean to individual families, and I recall that the Clinton-Gore tax increase of 1993 was the largest tax increase in three decades, increasing marginal rates, capital gains, inheritance taxes, and all other taxes. That was a $32 billion tax increase. So that would be 10 times larger. That was the Kyoto Treaty. We did not ratify it.

Then along came the McCain-Lieberman bill in 2003 and then again the McCain-Lieberman bill of 2005, and the same thing was true. Other universities' analyses came in and tried to determine what the cost would be. I remember MIT came in and did an analysis of those bills, and it was somewhere in excess of $300 billion a year. Then along came the Warner-Lieberman bill—not the current Senator WARNER but the past Senator Warner—and that was essentially the same.

What I am saying is, it does not really matter whether we are talking about Waxman-Markey or what we are going to be voting on sometime in the near future, I would assume, that is going to be a form of Waxman-Markey. By the way, I say that because when several Senators were trying to get information to analyze what it is we are going to be starting to have hearings on tomorrow and then ultimately marking up, they said the bill is a lot like Waxman-Markey, so just go look at the analysis of Waxman-Markey. If you want to do that, at least we now know there is a target out there. We have something we can talk about.

While I have serious problems with EPA's analysis of Waxman-Markey and its 38-page ''meta-analysis'' of Kerry-Boxer—that is 38 pages of a 923-page bill—the latter is not entirely EPA's fault. It is a drive to ram the Kerry-Boxer bill through the legislative process before people really know what it is. Now we know what it is because it is essentially the same thing we had in the Waxman-Markey bill that went through the House of Representatives.

It is kind of interesting. This massive tax increase called the Waxman-Markey bill passed the House after very little debate because it came up—in fact, they finished it at 3 o'clock in the morning the day they voted on it, so people had not had a chance to read any of it. So it passed by 219 votes in the House of Representatives. That is barely a majority. It is one that was—interestingly enough, the last time they had a massive energy tax increase such as this, it was called the Btu tax of 1994. That passed the House by 219 votes, the same margin. Obviously, that was killed later on in the Senate, as I believe this will be.

I come to the floor now to talk about this because tomorrow we start hearings, exhaustive hearings, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. They are not going to be talking about the specifics of the bill; it will just be more propaganda. The main thing we want to do is make sure everybody knows it is going to be a very large tax increase. It wasn't long ago that Representative JOHN DINGELL, who is a Democrat from Michigan—he said it right. He said: Cap and trade is ''a tax, and a great big tax at that.''

So we have something we know we are going to be faced with. We know we are going to have hearings. The question has to be asked: If we know there are not votes to pass it in the Senate, why are we having our hearings now? I would suggest to my colleagues we are having them because there is a big party that is going to take place in Copenhagen. Every year, the United Nations throws this party. You might ask: The United Nations? Yes, that is where it all started, the IPCC. It is going to take place in Copenhagen during the middle of December. I thought it was interesting last night when President Obama announced he probably was not going to be going to this party in Copenhagen because it didn't look as if they had the votes to pass something in the Senate.

So I would only say to get ready. We are going to have more of the same. We went through it back during Kyoto, 10 years ago, and since then with four bills on the Senate floor and we are going to be talking about it more and more.

I just came from my office. This is kind of interesting. This is a hat signed by the Young Farmers and Ranchers, which is tied to the American Farm Bureau or the Oklahoma Farm Bureau, in this case. It says: ''Don't Cap Our Future.''

When you stop and think about what would happen to the farmers—I hate to even single out farmers or any other groups because it is going to be just as punishing to the entire manufacturing base. It was interesting the other day, when we asked the question of the newly appointed Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, Lisa Jackson, as to what would happen if we were to pass the bill in the Senate and it would become law, as did the Waxman-Markey bill, how much would it reduce CO_2 emissions. She said: Well, it wouldn't reduce them. Because if we act unilaterally in the United States, then things happen where—this isn't where the problem is. In fact, we know we would have a massive exodus of our manufacturing base to such countries as China, Mexico, India, and others.

But nonetheless, here are the farmers who are concerned about this because, if you look at the cost of fertilizer, one of the major ingredients there is natural gas, and you look at the cost of diesel and everything else, it is very serious.

Bob Stallman, the president of the American Farm Bureau, just the other day said:

Increased input costs will put our farmers and ranchers at a competitive disadvantage with producers in other countries that do not have similar greenhouse gas restrictions. Any loss of international markets or resulting loss of production in the United States will encourage production overseas in countries where production methods may be less effective than in the United States.

In other words, we can do it more efficiently in the United States, but if we don't have the energy, we will not be able to do it.

So I think the farmers, of all the people who should be concerned and are concerned, the wake-up call is out there. They better be ready when they come up with allocations. The allocations will not be available to us during the next 3 days of hearings. The allocations are something that are held back in secret so they can go to different elements of the society and say: Well, you are going to have an allocation where you can be a winner. They tried this with the Wheat Growers of America early on during the Warner-Lieberman bill, and they actually endorsed the bill until they realized it was a fraud and withdrew their endorsement.

I think Senator KIT BOND said it well. They did a study in the State of Missouri, and the study found that the proposed cap-and-trade legislation will cost the average Missouri farmer an additional $11,000 a year in 2020 and more than $30,000 a year by 2050.

So let me say to Tyler and to all my friends at the Oklahoma Farm Bureau: I have your hat, and I will wear it with dignity all the way to Copenhagen to make sure this thing doesn't pass.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN). The Republican leader is recognized.

HEALTH CARE WEEK XV, DAY I

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, as the debate over health care continues, I think it is important, once again, to remind the American people that every lawmaker in Washington recognizes the need for reform. Health care costs are rising at an unsustainable rate, and if we don't get these costs under control, we can't expect to maintain the quality of care or the access to care most Americans currently enjoy. This is the primary problem with our system, and it is the primary reason our Nation is so engaged in this debate.

One of the proposed solutions for increasing access is the expansion of Medicaid. This afternoon, some of my Republican colleagues have been discussing why we, and many others from across the political spectrum, believe this is a very bad idea. The proposal that is being considered would expand Medicaid to about 14 million new people by 2019, including nearly 250,000 in my own State of Kentucky. On its face, this seems like a potentially effective way to increase the ranks of the insured. The reality is, however, it would make current problems much worse.

First of all, Medicaid is already in serious trouble. Leaving aside its exploding costs, the program is increasingly unable to match doctors with patients because a growing number of doctors refuse to see Medicaid patients. This is a serious problem already. It would be a far worse problem if the program is expanded to include millions more without any expansion in the number of doctors willing to see Medicaid patients.

So while the need to expand coverage is real, Medicaid is exactly the wrong program to choose as a foundation for achieving that goal. Senator ENZI, the ranking member of the Health Committee, put it best when he said:

Instead of trapping poor Americans in a substandard health care plan, we should be giving everyone more options to find the care they need. Senators get to choose between competing private plans; so should low-income Americans.

Another reason we shouldn't be looking to Medicaid as a solution to our problem is the States, which run the program, are begging us—begging us—not to. There is a simple reason why: The States simply don't have the money. The recession is hitting the States particularly hard, and expanding Medicaid would make their problems far worse. That is because, unlike the Federal Government in Washington, every State except one is either constitutionally or statutorily required to balance its budget. In other words, while lawmakers in Washington continue to ring up everything on the government credit card, States actually have to pay their bills at the end of the year. So if Washington tells them they have to expand Medicaid by $1 billion, that is $1 billion less they have for something else. For States, expanding Medicaid would almost certainly mean shrinking services or raising taxes in the middle of a recession.

It is easy to see why the bill writers would propose Medicaid as a solution. It is a lot easier for Washington to push its problems onto the States, but in the context of reforming health care, this makes no sense at all. Expanding Medicaid would worsen the quality of care for those who already have Medicaid, and new enrollees would be entering a system with even fewer doctors per capita than there already are. Additionally, States could very well be bankrupted by the additional cost imposed by Washington, and even if they weren't, there is no doubt services would be reduced.

This is why Governors of both parties are insisting Washington not use Medicaid as a vehicle for expanding health care. Here is a sample of what we have heard. Governor Rendell, Democrat of Pennsylvania, put it this way:

We just don't have the wherewithal to absorb it without some new revenue source.

Gov. Bill Richardson, Democrat of New Mexico, said:

We can't afford [it] and [it's] not acceptable.

Bill Bredesen, a Democrat of Tennessee, called the plan:

The mother of all unfunded mandates.

Ted Strickland, the Democratic Governor of Ohio, summed it up like this: