

this government takeover of health care and start working across the aisle to create jobs. How many times are the American people going to have to reject this health care monstrosity before the message is finally taken to heart? Americans across the country are tired of Congress's misplaced priorities. Tragic unemployment continues to cripple many communities. Liberals are obsessed with passing a job-killing health care takeover. NFIB documents 1.6 million jobs will be killed by the takeover.

Americans want health care reform, but they want Congress to tackle the unemployment rate first through job creation incentives and then work together for a bipartisan health care reform that increases access and lower costs.

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

WOFFORD COLLEGE

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

Mr. INGLIS. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to join a celebration going on in Spartanburg, South Carolina, because the Wofford College Terriers have won the Southern Conference Tournament Championship last week and they have gotten a ticket to the NCAA tournament. Led by Southern Conference Player of the Year Noah Dahlman, Wofford also won the regular season this year and then its first ever SoCon tournament title last week in Charlotte. Winning 13 straight games, Wofford will be making its first ever appearance in the NCAA tournament as the smallest school in the field of 65 this year, with 1,450 students. While the Terriers may be small in size, they played big in upset wins against Georgia and South Carolina.

My congratulations to Wofford head coach Mike Young and all the Terrier players. I'm with them all the way to the final. If they're against Duke at that point—sorry, all bets are off. Until then, I'm for the Terriers.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE RIGHT OF PRIVACY IS VIOLATED BY GOVERNMENT TAKEOVER OF HEALTH CARE

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. Madam Speaker, the new health care bill is an invasion of people's privacy. It's another reason why we should vote it down. The gov-

ernment shouldn't be sticking its nose into people's medical records. It's none of the government's business. There's a "health care integrity data bank" in the bill that gives the Feds access to everyone's medical records. Once the government has everybody's medical records, none of that information is secure. Health care information should be between the patient and the doctor—and that's all. Not the patient and some yet unnamed, anonymous, unaccountable Federal bureaucrat.

Ask Joe the Plumber about government bureaucrats keeping personal information private. Joe was standing around in his front yard one day when the Presidential candidate walked right up to him for a little chat. It could have literally happened to any of us. Joe asked the candidate a question about "spreading the wealth around." Well, some government bureaucrat didn't like his question. She saw it on the news. She took it upon herself to illegally dig up his tax records and leak all that information to the media.

Giving government bureaucrats access to people's most private health insurance gives them opportunity to misuse that information, private and intimate information. The right of privacy is almost sacred, and this Federal Government grab of health care will eliminate medical privacy. Why do you think there are 111 new Federal agencies in this 2,700-page bill? It's to administer and snoop around in the medical records of Americans.

If the government health care bill passes, privacy is history. Talk to your doctor? The government will know about it. You have some type of illness or disease? The government will know. Feeling a bit depressed after a family death and need some medication for that depression? Well, the government will even know about your mental health issues.

Is this the kind of information that should be in the hands of Federal bureaucrats? When you fill out that background information for your private doctor and they ask you all about the diseases and illnesses and medical problems you have ever had, now that formerly confidential information will be in the hands of Federal Government bureaucrats to use however they want to. That should make us all sleep very well tonight. Once medical records are available to the Feds, every government agency will be fighting for the right to get their hands on that information. That's the way bureaucrats work, especially when every individual's health in America becomes a Federal budget item.

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Every American will be required to be a part of the Big Brother health care database because everybody will be required to have government-approved health insurance plans. It's not just the medical records that are no longer private. Under the government takeover of health care, they will have a

plan for the government to have access to your banking records as well. The law now is that government has no access to your finances without a court order, but under the new plan, the government will have access to your bank accounts to make sure you're paying for that government-mandated health care or paying the fine on that failure to have insurance.

This 2,700-page bill gives the Feds the authority to automatically debit your bank account. Private medical records and bank records are none of the government's business. People won't talk to their doctor about problems anymore. They'll know somewhere in the deep, dark, dank dungeons of Washington, D.C., a Federal bureaucrat will be reading their medical records and their bank statements.

This is all an invasion of privacy and a violation of our Constitution, and those who say we can trust the government to keep this confidential live in an "Alice in Wonderland" existence. This whole scheme is a denial of individual liberty and an attempt to make America another European-style nanny state where the people are mere subjects to an oppressive, inefficient Federal bureaucracy. This health care takeover by the Feds is a violation of the right of privacy for all Americans. And that's just the way it is.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS CRACKDOWN IN 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. Madam Speaker, for 8-plus years, we've been told that the military campaign in Afghanistan is about promoting freedom and democratic values, which is why the latest news out of Afghanistan is so disappointing and ironic. The Karzai government, which has proven itself corrupt and ineffective in so many ways, is imposing restrictions on media's freedom to cover suicide attacks. Of course the government insists, quite condescendingly, that this policy is simply about keeping journalists safe. It reminds me of when you were a kid and your parents told you they were enforcing some new rule or discipline because it was "for your own good." Of course, you thought that they were doing it to serve their own interests, not yours. But in all seriousness, Madam Speaker, that's what's going on here.

This is censorship, plain and simple, designed to shield all of us from fully understanding the horrors and abject failures of this war. Sometimes, Madam Speaker, propaganda takes the form of active misinformation, but sometimes, as in this case, the propaganda is in what they don't tell you. Just as the previous Bush administration didn't want the coffins of dead U.S. soldiers photographed, the Afghan Government doesn't want its people or

the world to know that the insurgency remains alive and well. They don't want us to know about the violence. They don't want us to know about the bloodshed because they don't want us to know that this troop surge is not working, that it is emboldening rather than crushing Taliban militants.

And here is the richest irony of all. The Taliban, one of the crudest and most repressive regimes Afghanistan or the world has ever known, has put out a statement tweaking the Afghan Government for an action against the recognized principles of freedom of speech. You know you've run afoul of civil liberties when you've gotten a rise out of the Taliban, which banned everything from the Internet to kite flying to painted fingernails.

Madam Speaker, democracy depends on the ability of citizens to make sound decisions based on open access to information. When we crack down on freedom of the press, we undermine the very foundation of democracy and everything we're fighting for in this war. This episode is just one more reason why we need to bring an end to the conflict and adopt an entirely new national security approach.

A smart security strategy would replace the military surge with a civilian surge. It would defeat terrorism by providing aid and promoting human rights instead of sending troops. And smart security would also have a strong democracy-building component to help principles like freedom of speech and the press to take root in the troubled regions of the world.

We cannot passively accept this decision by the Karzai government to impose a gag order on the media. I urge Secretary of State Clinton and Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke to raise this issue at the highest levels. At a time when Americans are sacrificing so very much, when they're being asked to send their sons and daughters to risk their lives halfway around the world, we owe them nothing less than the unvarnished truth about this war. Now is the moment for more information, not less; the bad news as well as the good news.

AFGHANISTAN WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

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. Madam Speaker, last week during the debate on Afghanistan, I spoke on the floor. I was in support of the resolution introduced by Mr. KUCINICH, House Resolution 248, and I used in my remarks an article from Marine Corps Times of November 2, 2009. It says, "Caution Killed My Son: Marine families blast 'suicidal' tactics in Afghanistan." Sadly, Retired Marine First Sergeant John Bernard lost his son Lance Corporal Joshua Bernard, 19, who was killed in Afghanistan; and from that, his concern was

that the rules of engagement have changed to such a point where our military is restricted in certain areas of what they can use in the way of defending themselves.

Well, after I read part of the article on the floor, it really got on my mind about, you know, what are we doing to our military if we're asking them to go to Afghanistan and fight, yet we tell them in certain situations, You cannot use your weapons? So I asked my staff to email a very dear friend of mine who is a retired senior military general. I wanted him to help me understand the rules of engagement. Well, the comments that he sent back really didn't speak to my question of rules of engagement, but I want to share with you part of his email back to my staff.

"As I wrote and mentioned to Congressman Jones before, trying to 'win' in Afghanistan is a losing proposition. You are not dealing with a nation-state, nor are you dealing with state actors. Afghanistan is a tribal country, and we are involved in a tribal warfare. Bottom line: as I told Congressman Jones before, Afghanistan has been too tough a nut to crack for every nation that has ever tried to crack it. We need to figure out a way to honorably pack our bags and get out. It is not in our national interest to be there. Al Qaeda is the enemy . . . not some tribesmen who are loosely affiliated with something called the Taliban. Al Qaeda does not need Afghanistan to attack us. They play 'whack-a-mole' . . . we beat them down in one location and they will pop up somewhere else. Case in point—Yemen. If we want to fight these guys, we need to fight like them. Hunter-killer teams supported by air and artillery . . . set ourselves up in the bad guys' backyard and hit them whenever they show their faces."

Madam Speaker, before I close, I want to say again that I am concerned about the issue of rules of engagement. I intend to write the chairman of the Armed Services Committee and ask for hearings, because it's not fair to send our men and women overseas to fight for this country and then tell them that they're handcuffed. They can only shoot at certain times to defend themselves.

Madam Speaker, with that, before I yield back my time, as you know, I have signed over 9,000 letters to families and extended families who have lost loved ones in Afghanistan and Iraq because I will go to my grave regretting that I voted to send our troops to Iraq. Madam Speaker, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God in his loving arms to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I will ask God to please bless the House and Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God. And I will ask God to give wisdom, strength, and courage to the President of the United States, President Obama, that

he will do what is right in the eyes of God. And I will ask three times, God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

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

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to reaffirm the strength of the U.S.-Israel relationship. Both of our countries have shared values. Both of our countries are democracies. Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. I know there have been some difficulties during the past few days.

When Vice President BIDEN visited Israel, there was an announcement of the expansion of a neighborhood in North Jerusalem. The timing of that announcement was wrong, but I don't think that we should blow the timing of that announcement out of proportion. We should not have a disproportionate response to Israel. We need to be careful and measured in our response, and I think we all have to take a step back.

The relationship remains rock solid. The Obama administration and the administration of Prime Minister Netanyahu have been cooperating on a number of things: containing Iran, the Goldstone Report, and making sure that Israel retains its qualitative military edge in the region. And there has been good cooperation between our two administrations, the Obama administration and the Netanyahu administration. But to seem to question the very nature of the U.S.-Israel relationship and to put it in personal terms in a very public way will not contribute to peace in the Middle East. Rather, it's the contrary. It will cause the Palestinians to dig in their heels, thinking that the Americans can just deliver the Israelis.

Last year, when there was public pressure being put on Israel not to expand settlements, there was no simultaneous public pressure being put on the Palestinians, and we saw that the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas just sat back, didn't make any concessions, didn't say that he would do anything positively to further peace talks, and just thought that the United States would wring concessions out of Israel.

The fact of the matter is that the Israelis have been welcoming peace talks with the Palestinians. The Israelis have said they would sit down and have face-to-face talks for peace with the Palestinians. That's what you do when you have peace. Instead, the Palestinians have refused to sit with the Israelis, and Senator Mitchell is proposing to shuttle back and forth between the Palestinian side and the Israeli side to have negotiations, but not direct negotiations.

We need to be careful. If we criticize Israel for doing what we think was