

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, this week this House has a historic opportunity. For far too long, millions of Americans have not been able to afford basic health care coverage. For far too long, families with insurance are told when they finally need to use that insurance, that they are not covered. For too long, insurance company executives and bureaucrats have dictated what is covered to the doctors.

For far too long, those who are insured have been paying a hidden tax to cover the millions of uninsured. This week the figure is \$51 million. For far too long, the United States has spent double the amount of any other industrialized nation, and we are no healthier for it. And for far too long, there have been those who have said we can wait a little longer; we will put health care off and do it at another time.

This button was given to me last weekend by a woman in Fountain, Minnesota. It reads, "Healthcare for All—the time is now." She's been carrying it for 25 years.

Last week, the Mayo Clinic—which is in my district in southern Minnesota—along with the Cleveland Clinic and other leading institutions, put out a statement urging reform in this House. The statement read, "Reforming health care in America will not become easier with the passage of time," and we urge you to move forward.

The time is right for America to fix this inequity. The time is right to move America forward, and as the button says, health care for all, the time is now. That is this week.

FLORIDIANS ARE HARD AT WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, yesterday, March 15, was Florida's Day of Action to raise awareness about the sham elections in Sudan which are scheduled for next month. When the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in the year 2005, the dream of a united Sudan, where everyone—regardless of gender, ethnicity, or religion—lived in freedom, it seemed possible. Elections were intended to usher that change.

Unfortunately, the Sudanese Government has since proven that it will do anything to remain in power—including slaughtering civilians and stealing elections. Southern parties have committed abuses, but it is Sudan's tyrant—an indicted war criminal—who remains the greatest obstacle to peace.

The time for wishful thinking is over. These elections are a sham, hijacked to legitimize the rule of a reprehensible, murderous regime. Responsible nations must work to ensure Sudan's butcher answers for his crimes before this process moves forward.

So congratulations to the many Floridians who spearheaded the Day of Action yesterday.

And speaking of Floridians, our State is hurting. Our economy is in serious trouble. Floridians ask what is the best way to put Floridians back to work without increasing our mounting national debt. The latest national unemployment record shows that we're still facing an almost 10-percent unemployment statistic. And totally unacceptable is Florida's numbers. Florida's number, 11.8 percent unemployment rate in my home State of Florida.

How can we fix this problem? Part of it deals with what U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk, said, and it was an important and very timely message. He said, Trade supports millions of U.S. jobs and expanding trade must be part of the U.S. economy. Congress needs to support long-delayed trade pacts with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea, which will greatly expand access to overseas markets for Florida businesses.

While these agreements are stalling here in Washington, our competitors are cutting their own deals to open more markets for their exporters. The European Union, for example, has concluded an agreement with South Korea—similar to the one that has been languishing here in Washington, DC.

Hundreds of thousands of people are employed in the trade industry. In my home State of Florida, we exported more than \$47 billion in goods last year. South Florida is the gateway to Latin America, and it's a huge hub for trade with Colombia, which has already produced thousands of jobs in key industries, such as the flower-importing industry. Trade is a crucial part of our economic recovery and an ideal opportunity for Democrats and Republicans to work together on an important issue.

It's so important to my home State of Florida, which brings me to another national issue that is crucial to my State of Florida, and that is a complete and accurate census count. We must mobilize everyone to participate in the 2010 census and help increase funding for education, health care, transportation, and other key programs while ensuring that our area will get the programs it deserves.

Having represented a diverse area such as South Florida here in Congress, I know that we need to reach out to residents of low-income and minority neighborhoods, which are especially at risk of being undercounted in the 2010 census. Along with many other metropolitan areas, Miami-Dade County will have a bilingual, English and Spanish, census form, as well as a special census outreach effort to the Colombian, to the Haitian, to the Cuban communities, among many different ethnic groups in our community and in our Nation.

Accurate data reflecting changes in our diverse and ever-changing communities will decide how over \$400 billion per year is spent in Federal grants and how it's allocated for programs like new hospitals and schools.

So your assistance, South Florida, with a complete census count will help ensure that essential social service programs like job training, after-school programs, school lunch programs, senior citizen centers, they will receive the funding they deserve. So please help us kick off our efforts to get the most complete census count in history. Floridians, get on board.

And I am so proud of the many Floridians who do amazing things every day.

In my congressional district of South Florida, Madam Speaker, extraordinary groups such as Teens Against Domestic Abuse, otherwise known as T-A-D-A—TADA—are working to raise awareness about domestic abuse. And TADA is a local student activist group run by a caring and passionate young woman, Emily Martinez-Lanza.

So I thank the exemplary work of Floridians. From the Call of Action on Sudan, to the economy, to the census, to combating domestic abuse, Floridians are hard at work.

"PASSED" NOT "DEEMED"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, the American people don't want a government takeover of health care. I heard it at town hall meetings, across eastern Indiana this weekend, and at a rally at the Statehouse in Indianapolis yesterday where over a thousand gathered on short notice.

Now, I know many in the Democratic leadership and the administration don't like us to call it a "government takeover of health care," but when you mandate that every American purchase health insurance—whether they want it or need it or not—you mandate what's in that insurance. If you set up a government-run insurance exchange to control what kind of insurance people can buy and set up a massive bureaucracy, even a new health care czar to govern all of it, that sure looks like to me a government takeover of health care. And the American people know it.

Now, clear majorities of this country have rejected this approach. But nevertheless, as we read in the papers, Congress is intent this week on bringing this legislation—seemingly by any means—to the floor of the House of Representatives. And I want to speak about those means today.

The choice that the leadership of the Congress has before them is whether or not to bring the wildly discredited Senate bill to the floor of the House of Representatives. But the truth is, the bill, with its Cornhusker Kickback, with the public funding of abortion, simply couldn't pass the House floor. There's just not the votes for it.

But it seems at this moment what we hear is that the Democratic leadership here in Congress is so desperate to pass this government takeover of health care that they are willing to twist the

rules of the House and the Senate into a pretzel to get it done.

But I am not here to talk about the arcane rules of the Senate and reconciliation that the follow-on bill would be an abuse of. I'm not even here to talk about the rules of the House. I'm really here to talk about the Constitution of the United States of America.

I mean, this so-called Slaughter House Rule that is being proposed, the idea that the Senate bill could be deemed as passed on the House floor without Members of Congress being asked to vote for it, I believe not just tramples on the common sense and insults the intelligence of the American people, but it really tramples on the Constitution of the United States. Let me break it down for you.

I've understood this since the first time I saw "School House Rock" about how a bill becomes a law and that little bill danced up the House steps when I was a kid. Let me read it. It's in the Constitution, Article I, section 7, "Every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it becomes a Law, be presented to the President of the United States." There it is.

As we learned as school children, as it says in the Constitution, a bill becomes a law after it has passed the House of Representatives—not after it was deemed to have passed, not after it was buried in a procedural motion that no one really has to say they have supported, but after it has passed on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Now, some will say that, well, Republicans just want to talk about process here; we're trying to do something for health care. Well, wait a minute. The processes that are in the Constitution of the United States exist to protect the liberty of the American people and hold those who govern them responsible. The reason our Founders enshrined in the Constitution of the United States the requirement that bills might not become law unless they pass on the House floor is so that they could hold accountable the decisions that the men and women who would serve in this Chamber throughout our history would make.

Madam Speaker, the very idea that the Senate bill could be adopted by the House without any vote on the floor is anathema to the Constitution of the United States, and I believe it's an insult to the American people.

I would say respectfully, Madam Speaker, if you have the votes, vote the Senate bill on the floor. Let's bring it down here. Let's have a good, long debate about that bill that passed the Senate on Christmas Eve with all of its backroom deals and all of its public funding for abortion and its individual mandates and its tax increases.

But if you don't have the votes, let's scrap the bill. Let's start over. Let's commit ourselves to building health care reform on the principles of limited government and free market econom-

ics. Let's pass health care reform that will lower the cost of health insurance rather than growing the size of government.

And for heaven's sake, whatever we do, let's go forward this week in a way that honors those who have gone before, those who have fought for this Constitution. Let us live up to the ideals of our Founders and the expectation of our people. And let's throw this Slaughter House Rule business in the trash heap where it belongs.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 59 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

God Almighty and Father of us all, we praise You, the source of all we have and all we are. Teach us to acknowledge always the many good things Your infinite love has given us. Help us to love You in return with all our heart and all our strength.

Empower us to serve this Nation with such wisdom and compassion that Your own gracious goodness and love of humanity may be evident and give You glory both now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SCHAUER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SCHAUER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to a concur-

rent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 53. Concurrent resolution recognizing and congratulating the City of Colorado Springs, Colorado, as the new official site of the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Service and the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. BACA. Anthem Blue Cross in my home State of California is trying to raise premiums by 39 percent. This is only the beginning if we do nothing. We must give the American people, not the insurance companies, more control. If we do nothing, the American people will continue to pay higher premiums and higher out-of-pocket costs now and in the future.

We cannot, our families cannot, afford to do nothing. Health reform will hold health insurance companies accountable; end discrimination based on preexisting conditions; cut and eventually close the doughnut hole for thousands of seniors, including 5,200 seniors in my district; cut the national deficit; and produce over 4 million new jobs in the coming decade. That is 400,000 new jobs every year.

Health care reform will bring coverage to 219,000 in my district and 31 million nationwide for the very first time in history. This is a historic moment. In 1935, we passed Social Security. In 1965, we passed Medicare. We must pass health reform now.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, the American people are appalled by what they have seen in this health care debate. But the worst is still ahead. The bill has already failed. The American people don't want it, and they are screaming at the top of their lungs, stop. But, yet, Congress continues to proceed.

The American people want jobs. But what does this bill do? It puts the American people out of work. They want lower health care costs, while the health care bill being debated is going to raise the cost of premiums. They want less government, yet this bill is going to create a giant bureaucracy here in Washington. They want to protect life. Yet the bill is going to force taxpayers to fund elective abortions.

If that weren't enough, the majority plans to force the toxic Senate bill through the House under some controversial trick. There is no way to hide from this vote. It will be the biggest vote that most Members ever cast. Now you can run, but you can't hide. Let's defeat this bill.