

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.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. SCHAUER. Madam Speaker, health care is an issue of basic economics to middle class families, seniors and businesses. During the health care debate, my constituents have asked me to listen. I'm listening.

The story I heard last week is from a college in my area. It employs 300 people. As in the case with many employers, the lion's share of their costs come from employee costs, 70 percent in this college's case. Their health insurance premiums this year went up 17 percent. Seventeen percent. What does that mean? It means job cuts or tuition increases, or both, both disastrous for middle class families in our economy.

Seventeen percent premium increases. The Nation's five largest private health insurance companies' profits went up \$12 billion last year while they dropped 2.7 million people from coverage. Our current health care system may work for the health insurance industry, but it is broken for middle class families and is hurting our economies. It must be fixed now.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. CANTOR. Madam Speaker, Republicans have come to the floor today because we care about Americans' health care. We just don't care for this bill. But still, the majority seems committed to trying to muscle through a trillion-dollar overhaul that will change health care for every man, woman, and child.

Americans have made it very clear. They don't like this bill. They don't want the government in the decision-making of their health care. They want lower costs, and they don't want their government tax dollars going to fund abortion services.

So why can't we start over, Madam Speaker? We ask again. There has been a year and a half nearly of debate over this and still more questions than answers. That's why we are hearing reports that the majority will try to ram this through without a direct vote on the Senate bill, Madam Speaker. We should take an up-or-down vote on the Senate bill.

H.R. 4440, THE COMBAT ACT

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the sacrifices of American men and women serving our country overseas and to urge my colleagues to support legislation I introduced to give them a much-deserved pay increase for facing dangerous situations.

Late last year, I traveled to Afghanistan and was privileged to meet members of our Armed Forces serving our country in a difficult and dangerous environment. Two of those soldiers approached me and said they had not seen a combat pay increase in several years and asked me to do what I could do to make the burden of overseas deployment easier for them and their families.

As a result, when I got back to Washington, I introduced H.R. 4440, the COMBAT Act, which provides several types of combat pay increases, including hostile fire pay, imminent danger pay and family separation allowance. I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting our troops and their families by becoming a cosponsor of this bill.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. PENCE. The Democrat health care bill that is being brought through the Congress this week is nothing more than a government takeover of health care, and the American people know it. I know the administration doesn't like us to use that phrase, but come on. When you mandate that every American purchase health insurance whether they want it or need it or not, you mandate that every business provide it, you create a massive government-run bureaucracy exchange that mandates what is in insurance plans, you wrap that all in about \$1 trillion worth of spending, that is a government takeover of health care.

But what is really remarkable about this whole business is that not only have the American people rejected this plan, but Democrats are so desperate to pass it that they are willing to trample on the traditional rules of the House and the Senate and even trample on the Constitution of the United States to get it done. The Constitution provides that a bill becomes a law if it has passed the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Democrats actually don't have the votes to pass the Senate bill, so they have decided they are going to try and pass the bill without a vote.

Well, that would be news to the Founders of this country and a betrayal of the commitment of every Member of this Congress to the American people. I urge the Speaker, if you have the votes for the Senate bill, bring it to the floor. If you don't, let's scrap the bill and start over for the American people.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, at least 46 million Americans are now un-

insured; 7.7 million in California are uninsured, and at least 80,000 are uninsured in the Sixth Congressional District, which is the district I represent. By the end of the day, 14,000 more Americans will lose their coverage, more than 2,000 of them in California.

Without health care reform, the average family premium in California will rise from \$13,280 to \$22,660 by the year 2019. That's why we must pass the health care reform bill that brings down costs and increases competition. The Senate bill, with the corrections, including better subsidies and insurance market reforms, will be the beginning of this.

We must pass health reform so that our Nation's families have access to affordable, quality health insurance.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. BLUNT. Madam Speaker, The Washington Post today on the front page said: Pelosi may try to pass health bill without a vote. May try to pass health bill without a vote. I didn't even think that was possible, but apparently The Washington Post and the Speaker of the House think it's possible. It's no wonder, Madam Speaker, that the country is outraged not just by the bill, but by the process. This was like the Speaker's statement that said we would have to pass the bill so we could know what's in it.

Madam Speaker, this bill does not reduce costs. It cuts Medicare and increases taxes for 10 years and spends the money in 6 years. Madam Speaker, this bill throws the health care system up in the air and just hopes that the greatest health care system in the world is still there when it lands a few years from now.

Madam Speaker, I hope that we have a vote on this bill, a debate on this bill and we do not pass this bill with a vote.

BORDER VIOLENCE

(Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona. Madam Speaker, on Saturday, three people connected to the U.S. Consulate in Ciudad Juarez were brutally murdered by drug cartels in front of their young children.

What more must happen to focus our attention on the serious threat along 2,000 miles of our southern border? For the safety of Americans living in border States and traveling or working in Mexico, we must take this danger seriously and crack down on the cartels. U.S. citizens are increasingly at risk of being innocent victims of this brutal violence, but the administration budget would cut resources intended to crack down on cartels and to secure our border.