

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 economy. 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.

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(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.

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(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.

I call on the White House to provide necessary support for law enforcement, at all levels, to track down these criminals and their networks. This is a fight we cannot lose. It is too close to home. My thoughts and prayers are with the families of those who lost their lives in these attacks.

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(Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Speaker, America needs health care reform, but America knows that this is not the right approach. This is the wrong policy and it is the wrong process; yet the majority is willing to do everything possible to pass this bill, even over the objections of the American people.

Just recently, CNN had a poll that showed 73 percent of Americans across the country would like to scrap the bill or start all over; yet now we are being told the Democrat leadership may deem the bill passed without Members of Congress even voting on it. That is un-American. It ignores the democratic process.

Madam Speaker, we need an up-or-down vote. If Congress passes this bill without even a vote on it, the American people will be outraged, and rightfully so. There is a better way. Let's go to work on it.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(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. Madam Speaker, just when we thought we had heard enough, seen enough, and paid enough, the big insurance companies are at it again. Seniors are paying more for prescriptions, home values plummet, savings and retirement accounts disappear, and millions lose homes, jobs, and their health care. But that didn't stop the big health insurance companies from announcing premium increases of nearly 40 percent.

Look, Madam Speaker, these companies have some impudence. They have to be stopped. Deny, deny, deny. They deny coverage. They deny claims. They deny care. And last week the CEOs came to Washington. It is not enough that we have to dodge their lobbyists in the Halls of Congress, but they came to town, staying at the Ritz on your premium dollars, and now they want to deny the American people quality, affordable, and accessible health care.

They know we are in the home stretch, and they won't stop at anything. They will stop at nothing to keep us from clamping down on their practices. But we are going to stop them. Let's deny them. Let's vote them off the island. I am ready to do it.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, words that strike fear in the heart of every American are, “I’m from the Federal Government, and I’m here to help you.”

We have a bill here that people can't read; they are not given the opportunity to understand. We have smoke screens everywhere, backroom deals being made that nobody knows what they are, all from the Federal Government that is here to help you.

We are going to take over your health care, take over about one-sixth of the economy, and “We’re from the Federal Government, and we’re here to help you.”

By the way, we are even going to push this through the House of Representatives without a vote, so you don't have to worry about whether your Representative stands up for your rights or not. Is this the kind of democracy we want?

This is a bad bill. Give us a straight vote, be straight with the American people, and let's let the American people know that that man who says “We’re here to help you” is not going to get in their back pocket.

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

Mr. TONKO. Madam Speaker, we have been talking about health care reform for nearly a century, and certainly inaction is no longer acceptable. The American people voted for and demand reform. They deserve our support.

Health insurance reform is about cost. These reforms slow the growth of health care spending and make health care insurance more affordable for everyone while reducing our deficit.

Health insurance reform is about coverage. These reforms will cover nearly all Americans, including those with preexisting conditions, and will not drop you if you get sick.

Health insurance reform is about competition. It repeals antitrust exemptions for insurance companies and brings them into a regulated marketplace to bring down prices for families and small businesses.

Health insurance reform is about care. These reforms eliminate copays for yearly checkups and screenings and ensure that our seniors have access to prescription drugs that they can actually afford.

Health insurance reform returns control to mothers, to fathers, to grandparents, and families, where it belongs, not with insurance companies, not with government.

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(Mr. WALDEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALDEN. Madam Speaker, I was a small business owner with my wife for nearly 22 years and I served on a hospital board, and I support reforming the health care system. In fact, I have offered up legislation to do that and supported other bills, but the way that this process is being mismanaged and misrun today is not the way to do health care reform. There isn't the transparency the American people deserve and that is now being denied by those in charge.

We are reading in the press that the Senate bill, with all of its barnacles on it, may pass this House without ever having a stand-up “yes” or “no” vote. That is outrageous.

And what does that bill do and what do these bills do? They whack Medicare \$500 billion. Thirty-eight thousand seniors in my district run the risk of losing the Medicare Advantage policies that they have.

This is not the way to do health care reform. You should scrap the bill and start over on a bipartisan basis.

I had two amendments to deal with rural health care issues adopted unanimously in the Energy and Commerce Committee, both of which, after the committee passed the bill out of the committee itself, were stripped out somewhere between the committee and the House floor, and the Democrats wouldn't even let me offer those amendments on the House floor again. Stop this process. Let's do it right.

STIMULUS AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, I continue to hear my friends on the other side of the aisle refer to the stimulus bill as a failed policy, apparently in the belief that if you say it over and over again it will be true. But it's not true, not by a long shot.

Last year at this time, the stock market was at 6,500 and today it is at 10,600. One year ago, during the first quarter of 2009, GDP came in at a staggering 6 percent decline, but in the last quarter of 2009 it rose almost 6 percent. And monthly job losses, while not where we want them to be, are literally 20 times better than they were a year ago today.

Some may say this would have happened anyway and that the stimulus had nothing to do with it, but I would ask my colleagues, Madam Speaker, to consider that would be quite a coincidence, don't you think, for all those economic indicators to begin such a dramatic turnaround at precisely the time the stimulus passed. Quite a coincidence indeed.

SUNSHINE WEEK

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1