

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, everyone wants to make health care more affordable and more accessible, but for the past year, the majority has been working on pieces of a puzzle they call health care reform. And now that their puzzle is complete, the picture doesn't make any sense.

Their final image includes billions of dollars in new taxes, over \$1 trillion in new government, increases the premiums of the 85 percent of those who have health insurance, and cuts Medicare by half a trillion dollars. And I continue to hear from Kentuckians from home who remain concerned over the possible passage of this bill and who are frustrated with this process.

We need to start over. We need to piece together better solutions in an open and honest system. Now is the time to work on incremental reforms that will lower the cost of health care without spending trillions and bankrupting future generations.

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

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, 2 weeks ago, I went to dinner with my family in New Haven, Connecticut. As we left the restaurant, a young woman stopped me. She said to me, ROSA, can I talk to you for a moment? I've been waiting for you. I said, Why didn't you come over to the table? She said, I didn't want to disturb you or your family. No disturbance.

I looked at this beautiful young woman with tears in her eyes. And she said to me, ROSA, I have lung cancer. I have lung cancer, and I cannot get the kind of help that I need. I can't leave my job because I will not be able to get insurance. Preexisting condition is killing me. Pass health care reform.

You don't know Melissa Marotolli. I do, and Melissa Marotolli's face haunts me every single day. And this is not just one story. It is writ large across this Nation, a people who can't leave their jobs; they can't get the care they need because the insurance companies have run roughshod over them. Yes, they are rationing health care in this country. I know where I stand. I stand with the Melissa Marotollis of this Nation. My Republican colleagues stand with the insurance companies.

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

Mr. SCHOCK. Madam Speaker, this bill really is not about health insurance reform. If you watched the Presi-

dent's televised health care forum, you heard them say it time and time again: This is about entitlement expansion. And that is really where the real debate comes down this center line. Both sides agree that there needs to be health care reform. Republicans have put forward a thoughtful bill since last April promoting reform, competition across State lines, covering people with preexisting conditions, on and on and on.

But how can my friends on the other side of the aisle endorse this bill when the Congressional Budget Office, the nonpartisan determiner of how much these bills cost us, has not come out with their cost estimate for this bill? I know from my home State of Illinois, our Governor is talking about a 50 percent tax increase to pay for \$9 billion in unpaid Medicaid bills. This bill we do know will cost my State of Illinois \$1.89 billion over 5 years just for their match. I don't know how anyone from my State can support this bill.

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(Ms. TSONGAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TSONGAS. Madam Speaker, some of the most egregious insurance industry practices in our health care system disproportionately harm women, and this needs to change. Under the current system, women pay more and get less and often are denied care. If a woman is of a certain age or is already pregnant, insurers can deny her, of all things, maternity coverage. In eight States, it is still legal for insurance companies to deny a woman coverage if she has been the victim of domestic violence.

These examples illustrate how our current system discriminates against over 50 percent of the population of our country. And that is why I offered a motion on this important issue in last night's Budget Committee hearing. My Republican colleagues joined me in supporting this motion, acknowledging that health care reform must end these harmful insurance practices. So many of the health care reforms that are so important to women, families, and our Nation hang in the balance. We must pass these commonsense changes in our health care system.

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

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, the American people are increasingly rejecting government-run health care. They are saying "no" to backroom deals and gimmicks used by the majority party to ram this bill through by any means necessary. The Democrat leadership has greased the skids to ignore the will of the American people and make their vision of socialized medicine the law of the land.

Abusing the rules of when it suits the majority party's purpose is not what the American people want. Madam Speaker, allow us to do the work we were sent here to do. Let this bill stand or fail on its merits. An issue so important to America's future demands transparency and a legitimate up-or-down vote.

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

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, as a direct result of the White House submit a couple of weeks ago, good ideas from both parties are in this plan. But there is a philosophical difference between the two parties that I think came out last night. On weekends I very often go to the supermarket and see these little notices for beef and beer socials for people trying to raise money for a medical emergency in their family. Most of the people trying to do this have insurance. But their daughter has leukemia or their son is on a ventilator and they ran out of health insurance benefits because they run up against what is called a lifetime policy limit.

Last night, we took a vote on whether or not to abolish those lifetime policy limits so no family should have to do that. Our side voted "yes." Their side voted "no." But Members of Congress, in their own health plan, if our families have this problem, there is no limit on what we get.

So we think that the American people should get the same benefit that the men and women who vote in this Chamber every day do. We believe we should stand on the side of the families of this country, not the insurance industry.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, the health care reform debate has become a farce, and I am outraged. I am outraged at this proposed law. I am outraged at the process. I am outraged at the majority party's sham of a health care bill. But I'm not the only one. The American people are outraged. Americans have marched, they have protested and they have written letters and they have made phone calls. Americans have spoken, Madam Speaker, and they do not want this health care bill.

But the worst part about it is that we may not even vote on it. The majority party wants to deem the Senate bill passed and then hope that the Senate changes the bill later. Was this the hope and the change that we can all believe in? Madam Speaker, this has become a legislative sleight of hand, a gimmick, a parlor trick.

I urge my colleagues to listen to the American people and kill this bill.

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

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Madam Speaker, I am outraged also. I am really outraged at the amount of money that the insurance industry has spent trying to defeat this bill that will help the American people. The companies claim they support health reform, just not this bill. But they have done nothing to reform. They could have taken this time to reform. They still deny coverage for preexisting conditions. They still charge exorbitant rates. They still fight antitrust legislation. They still cancel people's policies when they most need them. And they still limit the payments when people get sick.

They have a secret code word. It's called "start over." What they really mean is defeat it; we don't want it. The question has to be here, whose side are you on? Are you on the side of the insurance companies? Or are you on the side of the American public, the people, the small businesses who have to carry the burden of these fees? Whose side are you really on? I am on the side of middle class Americans, small businesses, and those who are healthy and those who are sick.

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

Mr. McCOTTER. We live in a very dysfunctional time. We have heard a parade of speakers come to the microphones here in the well of the House and say they stand on the side of the American people. Yet in my 44 years of life, I have never stood on the side of someone who disagrees with me so vehemently.

Overlooking it is a fundamental proposition. The Democratic Party believes that you can take an imperfect health care system and fix it by putting it under the most dysfunctional and broken entity in the United States today. It is called the Federal Government. That proposition is insane. The reality is they do not stand with the American people. They stand for Big Government making decisions in your lives.

We trust the American people, and we will not turn the intimate decisions between you and your doctor over to some Federal bureaucrat. We will leave it in your hands, and we will empower patient-centered wellness and free market reforms if given the chance and a real vote.

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

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PETRI. Madam Speaker, the American people want health reform. They want affordable, reliable care. But after watching the current majority wrangle for over a year to produce gargantuan bills filled with complicated and punitive policies, tax increases and special deals, the American people are right to say, no, we don't trust the current Congress to do this right. They have seen how the Congress has worked over the past year and have rightfully said that it's crazy to give the government greater control over our health care. They look at aspects of the legislation before us and say, yes, there are provisions here that we like, but at what cost? They have projected trillion-dollar deficits stretching to the horizon. And we are told that this big, new entitlement will truly restrain costs. Is that credible?

I believe the more sensible approach is a simpler approach. I would favor expanding health savings accounts coupled with catastrophic insurance and paid for with subsidies when necessary. It is a simple arrangement that everyone can understand and would help to restrain costs because everyone would have incentives to spend carefully. It's not all I would do, but it's understandable.

Instead, the current majority is pushing ahead with a breathtakingly expensive bureaucratic and regulatory monstrosity. This is no way to restructure one-sixth of our economy.

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(Ms. LEE of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, quality, affordable health care should be a fundamental human right, not a privilege for the few, as my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would have it. Today, 47 million Americans are uninsured, including 9 million kids.

Meanwhile, the CEOs of private insurance and drug companies are raking in huge profits. Take the case of WellPoint. They proposed increasing rates by as much as 39 percent in California, even as they made \$4.2 billion in profits last year and paid out million-dollar compensation packages to their top executives. These rate hikes would hit Democratic and Republican districts alike. And the other side would have us do nothing.

We talk about the big banks making a killing off of taxpayers. Well, insurance company executives are literally getting million-dollar compensation packages while our constituents are dying.

Health reform is long overdue. The 31 million people this bill will cover are Democrats, they are Republicans, they are Independents, they are Greens, and they are people with no party affiliation. This should not be a partisan

issue. The costs of inaction are much too risky, they are much too costly, and we must act now.

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

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, if health care reform weren't such a serious subject, something that will affect every person in America, then what the Democrats are trying to do would prove to provide enough fodder for comedians like Letterman, Leno and Jon Stewart that their writers wouldn't have to work on new jokes for the next month.

Last week, the Speaker of the House said, "We have to pass the bill so we can find out what's in it." That would be like buying a house before checking it out to see how many bedrooms were in it or what the colors were or whether we could even afford it in the first place. Most Americans don't buy shoes without trying them on, buy a car without test driving it, much less support a takeover of our health care system that will include life-changing decisions that are being kept from you in the dark.

This morning, the Speaker said we may actually vote on the health care bill without voting on it, something that she calls "deem and pass." What a pesky little thing voting is, you know, where those of us who work for you have to actually cast our votes first so you can find out whether you should vote for us in November.

This is an insult and a sham.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, following me will probably be as many as 40 or more of my colleagues on the other side. Many of them will use terms like "ramming," and "the American people." I don't know what part of discussing a matter for the greater portion of the last 14 months that people do not understand.

I also get a little tired of hearing my colleagues talk about socialism. And I would ask the American people if socialism, as you understand it, is so bad when government acts than perhaps it is. Some of my colleagues believe we should eliminate Medicare. Let's eliminate Medicaid. Let's eliminate the Social Security safety net. Let's eliminate the Centers for Disease Control. Let's eliminate the National Institutes of Health. All of these are government-run programs.

In the greatest country in the world, it is morally wrong for millions of our fellow Americans to not have affordable, portable health care. We all should be willing to share in order to help the least of us.