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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. CAPPS).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

March 18, 2010.

I hereby appoint the Honorable LOIS CAPPS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

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

Draw near, O Lord, our God. Graciously hear us. We know You as ultimately powerful, ultimately wise, and ultimately good. By Your power, we believe, our weakness is helped. By Your wisdom, our ignorance is corrected; and by Your goodness, our iniquity is washed away.

Turned to You in prayer and with expectations throughout this day, may both our intentions and our behavior give You glory. 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 gentlewoman from California (Ms. HARMAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. HARMAN 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 passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1789. An act to restore fairness to Federal cocaine sentencing.

S. 2865. An act to reauthorize the Congressional Award Act (2 U.S.C. 801 et seq.), and for other purposes.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 10 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Ms. HARMAN. Madam Speaker, in a few hours, the House leadership will finally introduce a rescission package on health care which will reduce our deficit over the next two decades to lower numbers than would either the House-passed or Senate-passed health bills. As a Blue Dog, I commend this.

But I stand here this morning specifically to say that information just released by the Energy and Commerce Committee, on which I serve, shows a very favorable impact on my district from the bill, which I intend to support.

I have received thousands of calls and emails from constituents. I will post this information on my Web site immediately after speaking this morning.

But in a nutshell, the bill improves coverage for 427,000 of my constituents who already have health care. It gives tax credits and other assistance to up to 137,000 families and 15,100 small businesses. It improves Medicare coverage for 81,000 constituents by helping to close the doughnut hole. It extends coverage to 67,500 uninsured, guarantees coverage for people with pre-existing conditions, and permits kids under 26 to stay on their parents' policies.

I ask my colleagues to support the bill.

HEALTH CARE TAKEOVER COSTS TOO MUCH

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, as backroom deals and threats continue to force a health care takeover vote, the costs from the Congressional Budget Office have just been released of nearly \$1 trillion. State leaders across the country have recognized that this takeover could bankrupt our great Nation.

Just yesterday, the State treasurer for Massachusetts, Tim Cahill, said, "If President Obama and the Democrats repeat the mistakes of the health insurance mandate in Massachusetts on a national level, they will bankrupt this country within 4 years."

Other State leaders have expressed great concerns about unfunded mandates. South Carolina is one of 36 legislatures considering barring individuals from being compelled to purchase health insurance. I applaud State leaders who are fighting Big Government mandates which the NFIB estimates will kill 1.6 million jobs.

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

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. HEINRICH. Madam Speaker, each of us faces a question about whose side we are on today. Will we continue to protect the insurance companies, or will we stand up for the American people? Protect the insurance companies, or stand up for people like Rebecca Gentry, small business owner, whose bottom line is suffering as the cost of health insurance for her employees continues to skyrocket.

Protect the insurance companies or stand up for people like Joseph Crumb, an educational assistant, who can't get health care coverage for his neck and back injuries because his insurance company said they were preexisting conditions.

Protect the insurance companies or stand up for people who are uninsured like Elise Perez-Alford, who will soon have only the emergency room to care for her seriously ill 2-year-old daughter because she can no longer afford the copayments.

The time has come for us to stand up for the American people and to hold the insurance companies accountable.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. BACA. Health care reform is needed now. Not tomorrow, not yesterday, but now.

After decades of working hard, the Hernandezes from my district now struggle to pay for prescription drugs with disability payments and unemployment checks. This is wrong.

With the fourth highest foreclosure in the Nation and 15 percent unemployment in my district, my constituents cannot wait any longer. We need health care reform now. Health care reform will lower the costs and hold health insurance companies accountable; provide new coverage for 31 million people; end discrimination based on pre-existing conditions; close the doughnut hole for thousands of seniors; allow 75,000 young adults in my district under the age of 27 to stay under their parents' coverage; provide millions of dollars for funding for seven community centers in my district; cut the national deficit by a hundred-and-some billion over 10 years; and produce 4 million new jobs in the coming decade.

Health care reform is good for seniors, good for adults, good for women, good for families, good for America. Let's support health care reform now.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. You know, even while the President tours

the country saying it's time for an up-or-down vote on health care, the Speaker is attempting to bypass a vote altogether. As Newt Gingrich said, This Congress has gone from voting on bills without reading them to passing bills without voting on them. That is unconscionable and unconstitutional.

It's time for an open and honest vote on health care.

Let's vote on how the bill cuts Medicare, let's vote on how the bill actually hikes health costs. Let's vote on how the bill uses taxpayer dollars to fund abortions.

But the Speaker can't do that. She's faced with the unfortunate inconvenience that some of her Members actually want to listen to their constituents and vote "no." So now she intends to muscle through health care reform without an actual vote. That is just wrong.

I will say it again: Congress has gone from voting on bills without reading them to passing bills without voting on them. America deserves better.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Ms. KILROY. Madam Speaker, I believe that a great strength of our democracy is in our First Amendment. It allows for the robust exchange of ideas and opinions. I welcome that. I want to hear what my constituents are thinking, what concerns they have, concerns about how health care will work for them. I want to listen to them discuss the lack of health care and how that affects their life, the high cost of health care and how they are coping with that.

I have held town halls, roundtables, small groups, over 20 meetings in my district over health care. And this week demonstrations for and against health care reform were held in front of my district office.

Unfortunately, some of those opposing health care reform went too far. Instead of making their arguments against the bill, they engaged in abusive language directed at one of my constituents who suffers the terrible ravages of Parkinson's disease. They treated him like a beggar. They threw dollar bills at him. They did not respect his humanity, did not respect his right to give his opinion on the health care bill. This type of protest goes too far. It has crossed a line.

The health care legislation is about respecting each other's rights as human beings. And when it comes to needed medical care, it should respect our rights as citizens to express our opinions.

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. This is a remarkable moment in the life of our Nation. After years of runaway Federal spending, deficits, debt, borrowing, bailouts, and takeover, against the opposition of a clear majority of the American people, the Democrats in Congress and in this administration are prepared to ram through a \$1 trillion government takeover of health care. And it's just hard to believe.

Ignoring the will of the American people, twisting the rules of the House and the Senate into a pretzel, we're headed for a showdown this weekend.

But I've got to tell you, I like our chances. The reason House Democrats don't have the votes is because the American people know this is a government takeover of health care. Mandating that every American purchase health insurance, whether they want it or need it or not, passing hundreds of billions of dollars in job-killing tax increases, providing public funding for abortion, and setting into motion government-run insurance that will cause millions to lose the insurance they have is a government takeover of health care.

Let's have the debate. A minority in Congress plus the American people equals the majority. America, we can win this fight.

□ 1015

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of March as Women's History Month. Throughout history, women have been at the forefront of our Nation's most important struggles; the abolition movement, support for people with disabilities, efforts to enact child labor laws, civil rights, and environmental causes, to name a few. And now we are again at the forefront of one of the most historic efforts of our time, the fight for affordable health care coverage.

It's not coincidence that we are finally making progress on health care reform with the first woman Speaker of the House at the helm, a woman in charge at the White House Office of Health Reform, as well as several Cabinet Secretaries.

Finally, with all due respect to our male colleagues, I believe it is very appropriate during Women's History Month that we pay special tribute to the women of the House as we continue fighting for the causes our mothers and grandmothers fought for before us. Together, we will continue to make history and will do so next with the passage of health care reform.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House