

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.

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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

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, a true bipartisan health care bill would have included real lawsuit abuse reform that provides savings for the American people. The administration refuses to consider lawsuit abuse reform because they want to protect their political piggy bank, which is filled by trial lawyers. The legal industry contributed \$43 million to President Obama's 2008 campaign. More than 78 percent of the money given to Congress by lawyers, mostly from trial lawyers, went to Democrats, almost \$100 million.

By bankrolling Democratic politicians, trial lawyers have succeeded in preventing any lawsuit abuse reforms from becoming part of the health care legislation, despite the overwhelming support for lawsuit reform by a great majority of 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. Mr. Speaker, the whole Nation desperately needs health care reform, but no group of Americans needs it more than women, women who face discrimination and insult at the hands of the broken status quo.

We all know that the current system allows insurance companies to deny coverage based on preexisting conditions, but I wonder how many of my colleagues realize that, essentially, being a woman is a preexisting condition. Pregnancy, for example, or C-sections can be deemed preexisting conditions. And most unbelievably of all, insurance companies can legally turn their backs on women who have suffered injuries due to domestic violence, because that, too, can be defined as a preexisting condition.

We should all be ashamed of a system that puts insurance company profits ahead of healthy American women. It's time for women to no longer be a preexisting condition. Pass the health care bill.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, Speaker PELOSI recently said that we have to pass the health care bill so we can find out what's in it. I can tell you what's in it. It does nothing for cost.

I'm not a career politician. I have been in business for myself for 30 years and created thousands of jobs. Small businesses are dying. We need to bring down the cost of health care. Today it is \$12,000 for a family of four. A recent study said it's going to take it to \$28,000 for a family of four in the next 10 years. We are doing nothing about lowering the cost of health care. It's

killing small businesses. It's killing jobs.

What also is in the bill, \$740 billion in tax increases. Small businesses are going to be the ones that feel it the most. Most of them have pass-through income. It will be another big, job-killing opportunity for small businesses.

The third thing is that it really hurts seniors; \$500 billion worth of real cuts, not just waste, fraud, and abuse. I have looked at the cuts. They are very serious cuts.

And now we have learned that the Speaker wants to pass the bill without actually taking a vote that will cover at-risk Members. No wonder the American people are fed up with Washington.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. My colleague from Florida, my good friend, is incorrect: health care reform is great news for small business owners and middle class families. For folks that already have insurance, there are important consumer protections. If you are paying your premiums and copays, these insurance companies will no longer be able to cancel you if you get sick. If you switch jobs, you will no longer be barred if you have a preexisting condition like asthma or diabetes. For parents, now your children will be able to stay on your policy until age 26, and we will ensure that the bulk of your payments and copays will actually go to health care rather than CEO salaries and bonuses.

My colleague is incorrect. Medicare will get stronger. Our parents, our grandparents, and our neighbors will see substantial improvements in their benefits. Not one benefit will be cut. Instead, we are going to pay Medicare doctors more to stay in Medicare. We are going to close the doughnut hole and make prescription drugs more affordable, and we are going to emphasize preventive care so they don't skip their checkups.

And for small businesses owners and families who don't have insurance, they will have a new shopping exchange and new tax credits to ensure you can afford your health care.

FALLEN MARINE LANCE CORPORAL ERIC LEVI WARD

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

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I am humbled and honored today to recognize the sacrifice of a fallen marine from my district, Lance Corporal Eric Levi Ward from Redmond, Washington, who was killed in Afghanistan on February 21.

Soon he will be buried at Arlington, the final resting place for those who so

honorably sacrificed their lives for this country. When I talked to Eric's mom the other day, she said she understood her son's dedication to his country. She was a proud marine mom despite the sacrifice her family has made and the sense of loss and grief that they now bear.

It's important that we remember today that our country, the government, the people, our very way of life would not exist without those who sacrifice so willingly, who put on the uniform and sacrifice their lives, marines like Eric Ward, who gave their lives to honor our country to have freedom.

To Eric's family and to his friends, know that we will never forget Eric's sacrifice nor all those who have gone before him. His memory will live on, and we will continue to remember Eric's service to this country.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, thousands of my constituents have shared their health care stories with me about America's broken health care system, like Christopher from St. Louis. He said, I stayed in a job that I hated for 5 years just for the insurance. Or like Stacy, also from St. Louis. Her grandmother died without preventive coverage 2 years ago, she said, leaving her grandfather broke due to medical debt and her family wondering why her medical problems couldn't have been detected sooner. She wrote, Please vote for health care reform for my grandmother.

Well, Stacy and the thousands of others that I represent, I want to tell you I will. The American people have had it with the partisan bickering here, and so have I. The folks who want to play partisan political games with your health care need to get out of the way. The insurance companies have made record profits during this economic recession and are sticking us with higher premiums all across the country.

Enough with the obstruction and the delay. This bill has already passed the House. A bill has already passed the Senate with a supermajority. It's time for every Member of this Congress to stand up and be counted, to have a final up-or-down vote. It's time to stand up for millions of Americans. I know where I stand. It's time for an up-or-down vote on health care now.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I want to address some of the misstatements that have been made. I am also tired of the partisan bickering. I came in thinking that the Democrats who said, We want to work together, were serious.