

MARCH 16, 2010.

Nine States allow private plans to refuse coverage for domestic violence survivors.

Eighty-eight percent of private insurance plans do not cover comprehensive maternity care. In many policies, a previous C-section and being pregnant are considered preexisting conditions.

Less than half of all women in America have employer-sponsored insurance. This is partly due to the fact that more women tend to work for small businesses or have part-time jobs where health insurance is not offered, certainly the case in Hawaii.

It's time for reform.

PASS THIS HEALTH CARE REFORM LEGISLATION NOW

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

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening as we prepare for this historic vote, and I'm here to tell you that the people of Missouri's First District want us to act and pass this health care reform legislation now. And here's why:

It will improve coverage for 331,000 residents who already have health insurance. And it will give tax credits to 168,000 families and 15,000 small businesses to help them afford coverage. It will improve Medicare for 96,000 seniors, including closing the doughnut hole. It will extend coverage to 45,500 uninsured residents. It will guarantee coverage for 10,000 residents with preexisting conditions. And it will protect 1,400 families from medical bankruptcy.

This plan ends gender-based discrimination by stopping insurance companies from charging women more than men for the very same coverage.

It is time to act, Mr. Speaker.

HEALTH CARE REFORM IS CRITICAL FOR WOMEN IN AMERICA

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

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, the need for health care reform is critical for so many in America, but for women, the need is even greater. With health care costs weighing heavily on our small businesses, and with women more likely to own or work for small businesses, it's critical that real reform help those businesses compete by lowering health care costs.

In Nevada, insurers are allowed to consider gender when setting premium rates in the individual health insurance market. And as a result of this gender rating, women are often charged more than men for the exact same coverage.

Insurers can also exclude coverage for certain preexisting conditions, such as having had a C-section and even being pregnant. And it can be difficult, sometimes impossible in certain markets for women to find coverage for

maternity care in the individual health market.

I say it's time to tell insurance companies that being a woman is not a preexisting condition.

HEALTH CARE FOR WOMEN

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

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, the facts are that, according to the National Institutes of Health, suicide is the leading cause of death for women. That is unacceptable.

Actually, adequate health care coverage is critical to the future of women who suffer in silence from mental illness, whether it is postpartum depression, or some of the military women whose families are not covered by VA who suffer loneliness, stress, depression, and everything that goes with it, especially if they're tending to a spouse who's got TBI or PTSD.

They're rejected by the insurance, denied coverage for preexisting conditions. There's articles by The L.A. Times, The Memphis Editorial, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Dayton Daily News, Detroit Free Press, and The Missouri Herald, supporting health care reform.

We must vote for it. Let's get it done.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. BURGESS. I received a letter yesterday from a State senator in my State, Tommy Williams, who's from the Beaumont area, not my immediate area but he serves on their Senate finance committee in the State. He worked on the State budget last year and will work on it again next year.

He says: "I am writing respectfully to ask you to oppose President Obama's proposed health care reform plan as outlined in the President's summary reform." He said: "In a word, it will be devastating."

The analysis provided to Senator Williams from their Health and Human Services Commission is roughly \$4 billion to \$5 billion for the 2-year budget if we implemented this plan in a State that is arguably in better shape than other States but still facing a significant budget shortfall for the next budget year, \$11 billion to \$17 billion.

He concludes with: "I hope you understand as a member of the Senate Finance Committee who has wrestled with these very difficult issues I respectfully ask you to oppose President Obama's plan because of the fiscal havoc it would cause for the State we both love so dearly."

"Respectfully, Tommy Williams, State Senator."

I will put Tommy Williams' letter into the RECORD.

Hon. MICHAEL BURGESS,
Canon Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BURGESS: During the last session of the Texas Legislature it was my privilege to negotiate the Article II (Health and Human Services) provisions of the conference committee report on our state budget. In doing so I have become intimately familiar with the effects that state and federal mandates can have on health care-related costs in Texas and to Texans.

I am writing to respectfully ask you to oppose President Obama's proposed health care reform plan as outlined in the President's summary reform document released February 22, 2010.

Recently, the Texas Health and Human Service Commission (HHSC) provided me with an analysis of the impact of President Obama's proposal on our state budget. In a word, it will be "devastating."

As I am sure you are aware, our state is in much better fiscal shape than many of the others; however, we are facing a gap between projected revenues and expenditures of approximately \$11–\$17 billion for the next biennium. Health and Human Services expenditures already make up roughly 1/3 of General Revenue (GR) expenditures and are a significant cost driver in the state's budget.

HHSC's analysis estimates that the President's proposal would cost the State of Texas as much as \$24.3 billion dollars over the next 10 years. This includes a \$6.0 billion reduction in available DSH funding. Our state can simply not afford an additional average cost of \$4.0–\$5.0 billion per biennium over the 10 years it would take to implement this plan.

I appreciate your hard work toward health care reform we can all support. I hope you understand as a member of the Senate Finance Committee who has wrestled with these very difficult issues I respectfully ask you to oppose President Obama's plan because of the fiscal havoc it would cause for the state we both love so dearly.

Respectfully,

TOMMY WILLIAMS,
Texas State Senator, District 4.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HOYER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. RICHARDSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Women comprise over 50 percent of the population. In the 2008 Presidential election, 53 percent of the people who voted were women. And indirectly, when women are involved in anything, any major decision, it impacts all family households

because women are becoming more and more the primary breadwinner.

On Sunday, this Sunday, a part of Women's History Month, we mothers, sisters, brothers, and dads will have the opportunity to cast an historic vote that will improve health care for all Americans and long-awaited gains for women in particular.

What women have to gain from this bill. Number one, no more gender ratings. Right now a gender rating system is used by many insurance companies in the current health care system to charge women more than men for the same health care insurance. Discriminatory practices are allowed in all but 12 States. With the health care reconciliation bill, women and men will be charged the same price for the same coverage. It only makes right sense.

What is the second thing we will do? You will no longer be able to see women struggling that they will be denied their coverage based upon pre-existing conditions. Women are often denied coverage because of past pregnancies, C-sections, and domestic violence injuries. With the new health care reconciliation bill it will be illegal, and that only makes sense, to deny women coverage or charge them higher rates based upon any supposed "pre-existing conditions."

And then what is the third thing? Expanding access to employer-provided health care insurance. Can you believe that right now less than half of American women receive health care through their employers? Why? Because more women work for small businesses, and they also work more part-time than most men. So because of that, their ability for health care insurance is hindered. With the health care reconciliation bill, small businesses will be able to afford health care and good choices. By joining with others in the exchange, they will have an increase in their purchasing power. And then most importantly, there will be tax credits to make it affordable for small businesses to have coverage.

And then what is the fourth thing? By this, when you look at currently, doing away with copays and deductibles for preventive care. Many women forgo preventive care such as mammograms because of the prohibitive high costs. With the health care reconciliation bill, which makes sense, we can emphasize the importance of preventive care and early detection. We can eliminate copays and deductibles for preventive care. And most importantly, we can encourage women to go to their doctors regularly, protect themselves from debilitating medical crises, and oh, by the way, save money too.

Women have much to gain with health care reform. Women, when you consider it, we also have much to lose for continued nonaction and status quo. What women stand to lose if reform does not occur, women will continue to be subjected to discrimination. Right now many women are being

charged 48 percent more than men for the same health insurance. It doesn't make sense and it is not right. We cannot continue to condone this discrimination in America.

If reform does not occur, women will be denied coverage based upon pre-existing conditions. And in eight States, including where we reside now, the District of Columbia, women are still being denied health care because they might have been victims of brutal domestic violence. If reform does not occur, some women will not receive health care even when they are pregnant and they need it most.

Women need the peace of mind that they and their baby will not have to worry about skyrocketing health care costs. Many companies today right now continue to not include maternity coverage. And as I close, this would mean that 79 percent of the women in individual markets today do not have maternity coverage.

Americans face discrimination. All Americans are currently facing discrimination with our failed health care policies. And women, their fate is even worse. The final reconciliation version of the health care bill includes equal access to affordable, quality health care for women and for all Americans.

THE JACK YATES BASKETBALL TEAM OF HOUSTON, NATIONAL CHAMPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow night starts what we call March Madness, college basketball playoffs for the national championship, and 65 college teams throughout the country will start competing tomorrow night. But there is one team that won't be there. And probably those 65 teams are glad this team is not there. It is not a college team. It is a high school team, and they are from Jack Yates Senior High School in Houston, Texas. They are now ranked the number one high school basketball team in the United States by USA Today and Rivals.com.

The Jack Yates Lions have won 58 consecutive basketball games in a row, going since last year, and two Texas State championships in 4A basketball. They have defeated their opponents by an awesome amount of points. They have won games by 88 points, 90 points, 98 points, 99 points, 115 points, and 135 points against the opposition. And that is just the margin of victory in those games.

In one game this year, on January 5, 2010, they scored 170 points in a high school basketball game, breaking the national record. That is an 18-year record set of scoring. And yes, they scored 170 points in one game. No wonder they weren't invited to the big March Madness starting tomorrow night in college basketball games.

They not only set the national record for consecutive games won over 100 points, they finished the season averaging 116 points per game, taking that title away that was 40 years old from a Hobbs, New Mexico high school team. They scored 100 points in 26 basketball games this year. They are a foe to be reckoned with. They have no competition in high school basketball anywhere in the United States.

They employ a strategy that is called "38 minutes of hell." It is a run and gun offense where the coach, Coach Greg Wise of Houston, Texas, plays all 15 players. Five at a time he puts them in. They run and gun up and down the basketball court, he pulls them out, puts another five in, throughout the game. And by the end of the game of course the other team is dragging, they are out of breath, out of energy, and they are out of points. And of course the Jack Yates High School basketball team wins the game.

In the State championship this year going into the fourth quarter they were behind by 24 points. They had a little conversation with their coach before the fourth quarter started, and they won the game by 23 points.

I want to commend this wonderful group of young men who live in Houston, Texas, for their zeal, for their energy, and for representing really what is good about high school sports not only in the State of Texas, but throughout the United States, and congratulate them on being the number one high school basketball team in the United States. Way to go, Lions.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. BERKLEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, women of America, Republicans want you to believe that our health care reform bill is poison, that doing nothing is better for the Nation. But the truth is doing nothing is poison for the women of America. Insurance companies are cheating women from getting the health care they need. It is women that need health care reform the most.

Women have a harder time getting the care they need, women like Holly from Georgia. Holly is 3 months into her chemotherapy treatment for cervical cancer. She works at a small business that does not offer insurance to its employees, and she makes too much to qualify for Medicaid. But she thought she would be okay because of her husband's insurance. Then the devastating news came: her husband lost