

won't cause socialized medicine. So tell them that, too, if you would.

And just remember this as I leave, I love you, ladies.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

WOMEN AND HEALTH CARE

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

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I can remember when women couldn't get credit cards in their own names, when drug companies didn't run tests on women, and when women were told that secretarial school was about the only career option they had. Even as recently as a year ago, women didn't have the same fair-pay rights and protections in the workplace as men have until this Congress voted to change that.

It takes women speaking up to make unfair and discriminatory practices like those a thing of the past, which is why we must speak up for this health care bill.

I would ask opponents of this reform to think of a woman in their life—whether it's a mother, a grandmother, a sister, an aunt, a daughter, or even a friend—think about her and ask yourself, is it right that insurance companies can deny her coverage based on gender? Is it right that insurance companies charge her more because she's a woman? Should women be turned away by insurance companies for such pre-existing conditions as pregnancy, giving birth by C-section, or being the victim of domestic abuse? Should 80 percent of mothers in my State of California not be offered maternity coverage in the individual market? Should women who often rely on a spouse's insurance because they are taking care of children be more vulnerable if they are divorced or widowed?

If you don't think these things are right, then you should support this bill.

The American Medical Association that represents professional caretakers of our country, they support it because it protects the health of the caretakers in our families.

So, Mr. Speaker, once it passes, insurance company penalties for the women in our lives will be a thing of the past.

Let's pass the bill.

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

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

WOMEN AND HEALTH CARE

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

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, as we stand now on the cusp of history, we have never really been this close to assuring quality, affordable health care for all Americans. While health care reform is essential for everyone, women are in particularly dire need for major changes to our health care system. Too many women are locked out of the health care system because they face discriminatory insurance practices and cannot afford the necessary care for themselves and for their children.

In 40 States and in the District of Columbia, insurers are allowed to consider gender, mind you, when setting premium rates in the individual insurance market. This practice permits insurers to charge women more than men for the exact same coverage. Additionally, businesses with predominantly female workforces can end up paying significantly more for their coverage than for predominantly male businesses.

In the past 2 years, nearly 7 million Americans have lost their health care coverage. This is just not acceptable.

While we all know that the current health care reform bill has some flaws—unfortunately it does not have a public option, or an expansion of Medicare, or a single-payer option—it offers vitally important advances for women's health. The bill makes health care coverage more affordable and extends many health services that women need.

Without health care reform, family premiums will continue to skyrocket leaving more and more women unable to afford health care. The health care system is failing American women. We owe it to each and every woman to pass this health care bill.

When I cast my vote, I will be thinking of my mother who nearly died giving birth to me, my mother Mildred. When I cast this vote, I will be thinking of my sister, Mildred, who suffers from multiple sclerosis. I will be thinking of all of the women who are denied coverage because domestic violence is considered a preexisting condition by insurance companies. When I cast my vote, I will be thinking about so many of my friends who died prematurely because they did not have access to preventative health care.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I cast my vote, I'm going to be thinking about my granddaughters Jordan, Giselle Barbara Lee, and Simone Lee, because we, when we cast this vote, are going to ensure that my granddaughters and my grandsons live longer and healthier lives.

So if we do nothing, the health care system will continue to work better for insurance companies than it does for the American people. And that is why the President has put forward a plan that will give American families and small business owners more control

over their own health care by giving them more consumer protections and shifting power away from the insurance companies.

But if we pass health care insurance reform, we also know that families and businesses will have control of their health care, the insurance industry will be prohibited finally from continuing its worst practices like denying coverage based on preexisting conditions, and we also will cut the deficit by up to \$1 trillion over the next two decades. As the President said this past week, if not us, then who. If not now, then when. Now is the time.

I urge my colleagues to support this health care reform legislation for our women, for our families, for our children, for all Americans. This is a major first step in setting a strong foundation where finally health care becomes a basic human right for all rather than a privilege for the few, which it has been in the past. We are finally, mind you, finally catching up with the rest of the industrialized world.

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

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

WOMEN AND HEALTH CARE

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I would like to thank our friend and colleague, Congresswoman WOOLSEY, for organizing this very important statement, historic statement. Women that come from all over America, Members of Congress who have no ax to grind, who have no representation of special interest other than the American people: we stand on this floor to answer our colleagues and those who have offered a negative perspective, all kinds of obstructions and poor commentary.

Like an email I received blaming people for their obesity and diabetes. Yes, we need to be a healthier country, but does anybody realize that insurance companies would never provide for preventative care so that we could be tested and that we could learn to eat differently, to watch our diets? That is why this country spends more time wasting dollars on those who are sick.

So I stand today to be able to say to all of the moms and nurturers who happen to be women that we have listened to your call. We have actually recognized that it is important to provide for preventative care. You know what you do.

As we were raised by our moms and grandparents and aunts and uncles, they told us wipe our nose with tissues, wash our hands way before this whole

concept has come with automatic hand washers and bottled water. They wanted us to be clean and to respect cleanliness. Why? It was a method of preventing disease. But we were sick anyhow. And when we got sick, we couldn't get to the emergency room. We couldn't get to a doctor. We couldn't get to a hospital because many times that required health insurance.

So today for the women of America, for all of the women who have been denied insurance because of pregnancy, of a C-section, of issues that deal with womanhood, we now stand up and declare freedom with the passing of this bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I might say to you that all that is in this bill I don't agree with. Frankly, I'm concerned about the position being taken on physician-owned hospitals, many of them who have come and saved neighborhoods by opening up hospitals, declaring desert areas where rural communities had no hospitals, they came in and opened them up on inner-city neighborhoods. We understand that all of them are going to be looking for long-term fixes down the road almost the same way when Medicare was passed in 1965.

That wasn't a perfect system, but I can tell you that of all the lives of women that it has saved since its passage in 1965, for one, it saved the life of Ivalita Bennett Jackson, my mom, who now lives and lives enthusiastically with a love of life because of the resources that came about through Medicare. And she worked. So this is not a handout.

So this bill, for example, is going to give women affordability. It's going to give women in States the opportunity to go into a health insurance exchange pool, pick the insurance that they need. It's going to give women the right of choosing, give women the right to have healthy bodies. It's going to focus the responsibility of insurance on employers.

It's going to make sure that Medicare is strong. If you're an elderly woman, it's going to close the doughnut hole for all of the insurance needs that you have. It's going to help my mother-in-law, E. Theophia Lee, who needs care as we speak. It's going to give her the opportunity to buy prescription drugs without going into the poorhouse.

It is going to provide for an expanded Medicaid, and it's going to work on our hospitals in our community, provide 100 percent Medicaid coverage in the first year, 95 percent, and then 90 percent.

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Mr. Speaker, this is going to open the doors of opportunity for community health clinics so that women can be engaged in preventative care. Women are nurturers. They need to be able to take themselves to doctors and their children to doctors at the same time. That's what community health clinics will do. They will be set up in your

neighborhood. They will have full service, geriatric care, pediatric care, and, yes, the care that will take care of women and their individual needs.

Mental health parity will be in this particular bill so individuals who are concerned about mental health needs will not have to hide, cover themselves up, go in the dark of night or not even get the care that they need. It is going to be there in this bill. There's going to be a demand for health insurance companies to cover mental health needs.

What a new day this will be to be able to allow women to take care of their children. Let me remind you that there are stories all across America. The mother whose son died because he did not have health insurance. A young man who believed in giving help to other people, a young lawyer who gave pro bono work, but he died because he had no health insurance. Or the mother who came to my town hall meetings, was crying because she couldn't get her child into school. Why? Because her insurance didn't cover a doctor's visit. Well, that will be cured. This is going to cure the ills of women across America.

Vote for this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida 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 gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. I thank the gentlewoman from California, Congresswoman WOOLSEY, for calling us together tonight on such an important topic and rise to speak for decent health insurance for all of our people as essential to respecting life, to preserving life, and to protecting life from the very beginning to the very end.

The health system we have now does not adequately respect, protect, or preserve life. In fact, America doesn't even rank in the top 12 of global nations in terms of the quality of our health care. That is truly shocking. Yet we spend enormous amounts of money, and yet so many people are left out. There's not time to talk about all of them tonight in 5 minutes, so I am pleased to join my colleagues in focusing on women and children of this great Nation who need health care reform.

In our country, every year, more than a half million, 530,000 babies, one out of every eight, are born premature in our country. Premature birth is the leading cause of newborn death and a major cause of lifelong disability.

These outcomes are morally wrong, and they are ultimately very expensive, very expensive to our society, most expensive to those children.

The March of Dimes reports that, in 2008, more than 20 percent of American women of childbearing age, more than one-fifth, 12.4 million American women, were uninsured. They also report that uninsured women receive fewer prenatal services and report greater difficulty in obtaining needed preventive care than women with insurance. Ohio, the State that I represent, is among the worst States for its premature birth rate. The primary reason for this is because we have among the highest rates of uninsured women.

If we think about some of the most gruesome aspects of what happens, in 2006, which was the most recent study conducted in the United States by the Centers for Disease Control, in our country, 846,181 abortions were reported. Studies have shown that for approximately three out of four women who have an abortion, their belief is they cannot afford a child, and that was one of the key reasons for having to make that life-changing decision. Economic hardship, lack of access to health insurance and to health care, and even the lack of medicines all play a part in the gruesome number of abortions and premature births in our country.

The women of our Nation, the children of our Nation, all people of our Nation deserve a better chance.

The bill that's working its way to the floor will ban preexisting conditions and help expand coverage and access to women's health care, prenatal health care, to all of our people. It provides financial assistance surely to women who want to bring their baby to term or put the child up for adoption but fear they simply cannot afford it. What a terrible choice that must be for any woman. We know that the bill before us will improve community health clinics. In so many of our communities, they are the only lifelines to any health care at all.

Importantly, the bill that is moving to the floor intends to leave no one out, even the smallest among us, even the most voiceless among us. The bill we will soon consider has some fine points yet to be perfected. There is no question that for women and children, finally, all will have access to decent health care coverage, and it will be a great day in America when that will be possible.

All of us have situations in our own families where we have seen relatives grow older. This was certainly the case in our family, and without Medicare our grandmother would have had a very different end. Lyndon Johnson gave her dignity. All the Democrats and some Republicans who created that program in the House back in those days made the end of her life one with dignity. We would hope that that would be the case for all of America's