

businesses. We cannot let banks challenge this government with our own tax dollars. We need broad reform in our financial system, and I will be addressing that at another time. But one element of that reform must be to impose some fiscal discipline onto these banks that think that they can get away with giving themselves mega-bonuses while the rest of America is suffering and starved for capital.

Support H.R. 4414.

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

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

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.)

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

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

#### WHERE IS THE TRANSPARENCY?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank our leader for allowing me to spend this time this evening in talking to our colleagues about some very important matters dealing with health care reform and the pledge of transparency. That will be the focus of the hour. I have a number of colleagues that will be joining me who are part of an organization within the House of Representatives called the GOP Doctors Caucus. We have about 13 members of the GOP Doctors Caucus, most of whom are medical doctors. We have an optometrist, we have a clinical psychologist Ph.D., and a couple of dental doctors in the caucus.

And for the last year literally in the entire year 2009, I think my colleagues on both sides of the aisle know that this GOP Doctors Caucus has been working diligently, working diligently to try to have some input in regard to health care reform, making some suggestions, writing and cosponsoring comprehensive legislation such as H.R. 3400, an alternative approach.

Members of this caucus, Mr. Speaker, introduced individual bills on certain subject matter that the President has pledged that would be in the health

care bill. And yet as we stand here today, at the 11th hour literally of merging these two versions from the House and the Senate, there is nothing about health care reform of the medical liability system which the President pledged to do.

The President, of course, made that pledge in Chicago at the annual meeting of the American Medical Association, an association that represents maybe a fifth, 20 percent, of the doctors across this country, that has literally given their endorsement to the President's bill, but asks in return for some relief of the reimbursement under Medicare to the physicians, elimination of this flawed formula that year after year after year forces the doctors to take these deep cuts so they literally can't afford to continue to see Medicare patients.

And of course the request, Mr. Speaker, at that particular meeting back in Chicago, probably last May or June of 2009, that there be some meaningful medical liability tort reform. The CBO in fact estimated that would save \$54 billion. Just that one issue would save \$54 billion the CBO says over the next 10 years, and I respectfully suggest that is a most conservative estimate on their part. I think there would be a \$54 billion savings each and every year over the next 10 years.

In any regard, I am blessed tonight to be joined by a number of the members of the GOP Doctors Caucus, and we are going to talk about the main theme of tonight and that is the issue of transparency. I want to get into that in just a second because nothing could be more important, particularly at this point, this 11th hour, when a bill is about to be presented. I say "presented," really I mean, Mr. Speaker, forced upon the 435 Members of this body and the 100 in the other body, when the American people don't want it; but more about that later.

#### MOMENT OF SILENCE RECOGNIZING COBB COUNTY TRAGEDY

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I would like with your approval to take just a moment because a tragedy occurred, and I was just notified by email just a few minutes before I started, that in my district, the 11th Congressional District of Georgia, Cobb County in one of its townships, Kennesaw, part of my nine-county district of northwest Georgia, there was a tragic, tragic shooting in my district, in the city of Kennesaw today, where two people lost their lives and three people are in critical condition.

I would like to ask my colleagues on the floor tonight to join me for just a moment of silence to remember the families of the deceased and the victims that are in critical condition and their families as well. We will take just a moment of silence before we continue.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing us to do that, and I thank my colleagues for joining me in their prayers for those of my district who have been killed and injured.

Well, we want to talk a little bit about the issue of transparency because that is what is in the news right now—this is a huge concern—or I should say the lack of transparency in regard to the health reform bill. We are going to give you a second opinion today about that. And, indeed, we are going to roll the tape on health care doublespeak as we look at these slides.

Mr. Speaker, let me just start off by saying and calling the attention of my colleagues to this first slide: Where is the transparency?

Our President, then candidate, Senator Obama, in January 2008 on the campaign trail, and we all know what a great communicator President Obama and then-Senator, candidate Obama was, the best speaker, the best communicator, I think, that this country has possibly seen since the Great Communicator himself, Ronald Reagan. Here is what candidate Obama said in January of 2008, talking about health care: "I would put my plan forward and I would welcome input, but these negotiations would be on C-SPAN so the public will be part of the conversation and will see the choices that are being made." Presidential candidate Obama made that remark to the San Francisco Chronicle in January of 2008, almost 2 years ago.

Continuing on the campaign trail, candidate Barack Obama said about 8 months later in August of 2008 as the primaries were getting hot and heavy: "We will have the health care negotiations televised on C-SPAN so we can see who are making arguments on behalf of their constituents and who are making arguments on behalf of the drug companies or the insurance companies." That was at an Obama town hall meeting in August of 2008. Once again candidate Obama, now President Obama, saying it's time for the American people to see what's going on, see it with their own eyes, hear it with their own ears, use their own common sense to figure out, to connect the dots, to see why one group or another group might be supporting something that on the surface seems almost incredible that they would. Almost incredible that they would.

So I would say to President Obama today, as I said to him, or at least through the television set I said to him, right on, Mr. Candidate, you are absolutely right. The American people need to know. They need to have this opportunity of transparency.

Where is the transparency? Where is it?

President Obama, and he went on and we all know now ran a great, great campaign and beat a tough opponent in the primary and a war hero in the general election, certainly a well-deserved victory for President Obama. And then shortly after inauguration, January 21, 2009, about a year ago, President Barack Obama said this:

□ 2015

"My administration is committed to creating an unprecedented level of

openness in government. We will work together to ensure a system of transparency, public participation and collaboration. Openness will strengthen our democracy. And it will promote efficiency and effectiveness in government." Amen, brother. I agree with you, Mr. President. Unfortunately, we are not seeing it. We are not seeing it. Such a disappointment for the American people.

Well, here we are, colleagues on both sides of the aisle, here we are. We don't know exactly what is going on. Certainly we members on the Republican side, even leadership in the House and Senate on the Republican side, ranking members on the committees of jurisdiction on the Republican side, they are not meeting with anybody. They may be symbolically named as conferees at some point, if indeed we have a conference. My colleagues can talk about that. Maybe we won't have a conference.

But it is one thing to shut Members of Congress out and not allow them to represent their people. Almost 50 percent of the people are shut out by virtue of not including the minority party in any deliberations henceforth and to this point and to the final deliberations. And there are some serious issues, Mr. Speaker, that need to be resolved, that need to be resolved. The American people want to see this. They want to know. They want to have the opportunity.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that my wife is not the only spouse in this United States House of Representatives who loves to watch C-SPAN at all hours of the day and night, because they are so unbiased, and they cut to the chase, and they treat people fairly, and they take questions from Democrats, and Republicans, and independents. And it is no nonsense. It is just the facts, ma'am, sir. C-SPAN televises many of the things that we do in this Chamber and in the other Chamber and the committees process. Brian Lamb, who has been with C-SPAN, I guess he is president and CEO, probably been there 20 years, an icon, really, wrote a letter just recently to the President of the United States.

And, Mr. Speaker, here is the letter from C-SPAN to the House and Senate leadership. "C-SPAN requests that you open all important negotiations, including any conference committee meetings, to electronic media coverage," so the American people can see, can connect the dots, can understand about the Louisiana Purchase, can understand about the Nebraska Compromise, or is it the Cornhusker Compromise, in which it seems to I think a lot of people out there on Main Street that maybe Nebraska got the corn and everybody else got the husks.

That is why we need openness and sunshine. And that is why Brian Lamb and C-SPAN are making this request. And that is what we are here to talk about tonight. And as I say, I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, to have some of

my colleagues in the GOP Doctors Caucus with us. I don't know in what order they arrived on the floor. But I want to yield to each of them as much time as they desire to let's have a little colloquy and talk about this issue, because this is so important. And indeed, we are at the eleventh hour.

Let me first recognize my good friend from Texas, my classmate, a fellow OB/GYN physician. I think between us we have probably delivered about 8,000 babies. And I know I have 26 years at it, and I know he has 17 years at it, so I will call on the gentleman from Texas, OB/GYN doctor and great member of this body, Dr. MICHAEL BURGESS.

Mr. BURGESS. Well, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for bringing this hour to the floor of the House tonight. I think it is important to talk about this issue. It is important to talk about opening the doors, opening the windows on this Congress, on this health care legislation.

We have seen this bill now take several forms over the past 12 months since the President was inaugurated. And certainly the bill that we had in committee, and Dr. GINGREY and I serve on the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and we had this bill for several days in what is called a markup in committee. That was covered on C-SPAN. People got to see us argue, and Republican members attempt to amend the bill. Not many of those amendments were accepted, unfortunately. But nevertheless, it was an open process. And HENRY WAXMAN, the chairman of that committee, to his credit, did allow a relatively lengthy discussion on that legislation.

However, when we left for August and went through the very famous August recess and August town halls, we came back to Congress, I thought we would hit the pause button, I thought we would hit the resets button, I thought we would hit the rewind button on this legislation, but no such luck. The President came and talked to us here on the floor of the House and said this was going forward, it was going forward rapidly, there was no time to lose, no time to stop and study what we had done. We were simply going to push ahead.

So between that date, which was the middle of September, and the very first part of November, another bill was written. It was a different bill from what we had in the committee. It was a different bill than what Dr. GINGREY and I attempted to work on in committee. It was a bill that was essentially written in secret. It was written in the Speaker's suite of offices, heavy, heavy input from the White House.

But none of us saw the bill. And I mean to say none of us, none of us Republicans, nor in fact no Democrats who weren't in leadership, who weren't part of this process, this secret process in the Speaker's suite, none of them knew what was in this bill. So as a consequence, we had a bill come forward,

we had a very tumultuous week here in early November, and it culminated in the House bill passing on the floor of the House by a very slim margin, late in the night, late on a Saturday night in early November.

Then it goes over to the Senate, and the same thing. We had the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee mark up the bill in June. Then it went to the Senate Finance Committee. They never had a bill. They debated talking points, but then they did a bill. And then the final product was written in secret, in secret in Majority Leader REID's office with a heavy input, a heavy hand from the White House, and then came to the Senate floor, and famously was laid out for the Senators right before they left for Christmas Eve.

So it has been a process that has been draped and cloaked in secrecy really since it left the committee process July 31. The American people haven't had a chance to see it, rank and file Democrats haven't had a chance to see it, rank and file Republicans have had no chance to see it. None of us who are the so-called back benchers on both sides of the aisle, none of us had any part in drafting this legislation, or carrying this, or modifying this legislation after it left the committee. And that is important to remember.

The Rules Committee met here in the House late into the night. One amendment, one amendment was accepted, famously the one by BART STUPAK from Michigan, a Democrat, that dealt with the issue of abortion, funding of abortion in the bill. But one amendment out of the many hundreds that were offered during the course of that time it was in the Rules Committee, one amendment was made in order.

Many, many amendments we could talk about that had merit, that should have had an airing here on the floor of the House were never even considered. So we have a process that has been cloaked in secrecy. And so when it came out that, well, there is going to be some sort of reconciliation process, whether it is a formal conference or whether it is what is famously referred to now as a ping-pong match between the House and the Senate, there is going to be some coming together of these two very different pieces of legislation. And it is important.

So why not, at least at this point, open it up and open it up to the cameras, the C-SPAN cameras. They are not there with commentary. They are not there with an editorial agenda. They are simply there with their cameras to show the give and take. And the President, when he was running for office, thought this was so important he wanted to show the American people which representatives, which Members of Congress stood with the American people and which stood with the special interests. In fact, I would like to know that very thing myself, but we are prevented from knowing that.

Now, early in this process, in May or June of this past year, there were several of those special interests that met down at the White House. There were headlines that were made on those days, there were photographs taken, hands that were shaken, agreements that were made. \$2 trillion in excess has been wrung from our health care system by the insurance companies, the pharmaceutical companies, my AMA, the American Hospital Association, AdvaMed, the medical device manufacturers, and the Service Employees International Union, all of those six groups got together at the White House and gave up, they came to the White House to give up something to get this bill the momentum it would need. But none of that information has then subsequently been made available to us.

And thus you had situations occur, such as in the Senate Finance Committee, when a Senator asked legitimately, "Well, I thought we could tax this on the hospitals, but the hospitals say that wasn't part of the deal that they struck at the White House." Well, what is that deal that they struck at the White House? We are the legislators. We should be privy to that very information so that when we write the legislation we can do so with the full knowledge.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. If the gentleman would yield.

Mr. BURGESS. Yes.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I thank the gentleman. Certainly carrying along that same theme is an example, the Big Pharma, a willingness to contribute \$80 billion toward the success of this program to reduce the cost of the doughnut hole for those who have Part D prescription drug part and they get in that donut hole. The question needs to be asked and the American people need to understand, well, what does Big Pharma get in return for that? The gentleman from Texas said the same thing in regard to the American Medical Association and the 250,000 members of that organization. What in effect do they get by endorsing this program? And the American Health Insurance Plans and the American Hospital Association and on and on and on.

AARP, the American Association of Retired Persons, that represents 40 million people in this country, you would think that when you have got a health program, Mr. Speaker, in both the House version and the Senate version that is cutting \$500 billion out of the Medicare program, which already has an unfunded liability over the next 75 years of \$35 trillion, why in the world would an organization who is supporting seniors who depend so much on Medicare support a program that is going to cut that program to the bone 10 percent per year, Mr. Speaker, over the next 10 years and 17 percent per year on the Medicare Advantage program? Why would that organization?

So again, these are rhetorical questions. And as the gentleman from

Texas is saying, the American people and C-SPAN says indeed, let's put some sunshine on this and let people connect the dots and figure out, well, oh, yeah, now I see, now I understand. Make some sense out of it.

Mr. BURGESS. Well, and the good news is that this is information that we need as legislators, the American people need to see to make up their minds as to whether or not this is good legislation or not. We have a tool at our disposal. The tool is called a resolution of inquiry. And a resolution of inquiry can be filed at the committee level. And a resolution of inquiry has to be, after it is filed, has to be dealt with in 14 legislative days.

I filed a resolution of inquiry for these documents down at the White House, that were arrived at down at the White House in May and June. I filed a resolution of inquiry right as we left December 17. The resolution is H. Res. 983 for anyone who might want to look that up on Thomas. And our Committee on Energy and Commerce will have 14 legislative days to deal with this.

□ 2030

Now, my expectation is that the committee will simply quash it. That may be, but at the same time I feel it is our obligation, as dutiful members of the minority, to bring to the American people some of these discrepancies.

Now, part of the good news there is when I filed this, an article that was written in *The Hill* the day that we left town in December talked about this Resolution of Inquiry and had some interesting quotes from our chairman, HENRY WAXMAN, on the resolution. And quoting from an article by Molly Hooper in *The Hill* on December 17, Mr. WAXMAN said, "If there are such documents, Burgess should get them. I don't know if there are such documents. I think some of the things he wants are not written down, and different people have different ideas of what was agreed," WAXMAN told *The Hill* on Wednesday before Congress adjourned.

I don't know either whether anything was written down, but the Resolution of Inquiry is there for a reason. I have been informed by House legislative counsel that they cannot recall having done a Resolution of Inquiry on a health care subcommittee, but this is important. This is important stuff.

So this is one more tool at our disposal. The committee has to act on it. Probably it will mature sometime in early February. We are working so few days in January, the 15 legislative days likely will take us into February. It will either be forwarded from the committee to the floor of the House or it will be quashed in committee, which is what I expect will happen. But nevertheless, it is one of those things that we should be talking about because it is our obligation to bring some of these things to the floor on this discussion.

Before anyone criticizes me by saying, "Well, why didn't you speak up

when George Bush had a meeting with energy executives?" for one thing, I wasn't here when then-President Bush convened that meeting. But I don't recall President Bush in his campaign saying, "Energy is so important that I will bring all the leaders in energy into the White House and I will open it up to C-SPAN." I don't recall him saying that. He never promised to open it up to C-SPAN.

Now, President Obama, when he was running, had referenced the Clinton administration and some of the missteps when they attempted to take over health care and the 500 people who were locked in a room to produce a bill. He thought that was wrong. He thought that was a problem that the bill had because it was conceived in secret, and it should have been conceived in the full openness of sunlight in the legislative process. I agree with that. I, for one, am looking forward to the day that we elect a President who has the courage to stand up and say to the American people that he is going to put 500 doctors in a room and make them come up with a way to pay lawyers and he's not going to let them out until they come up with something. I would like to see that happen.

I do thank the gentleman for bringing this issue up. It's an important issue, and I know there are other people who wish to speak on it.

I yield back to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, I would like to yield time to a fellow member of the GOP Doctors Caucus and actually a member of the Georgia Caucus, a fellow physician who has a practice, a doctor who actually makes house calls, the gentleman from Athens and Augusta, Georgia, Dr. PAUL BROWN.

Mr. BROWN of Georgia. Thank you, Dr. GINGREY, for yielding.

I have a 19-year-old son. His name is Paul Collins Brown III. We affectionately call him "Bear." Collins and his friends have a peculiar type of language. They talk about something being "bad." Well, to me, if it's bad, it's bad, but when they say something's bad, they really mean that it's good. Well, we've developed a similar kind of language here in the leadership of this House, in the leadership of the Senate, as well as the leadership down Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House. When they say something is transparent, they mean opaque. When they say that there is a new era of openness, that means secrecy. That is exactly what we're seeing. It's unfair to the American public. It's unfair to their representatives, both Democrat and Republican alike.

We have a newspeak here in Washington. It's a newspeak where transparency actually means opaque and obscure, where the American people are being kept in the dark, where major policies are being proposed that are going to radically change how health

care—as well as every aspect of life in America—is going to be done, and it's not fair. The American people need to stand up and say no. They need to say no to this newspeak. They need to say, Mr. President, NANCY PELOSI, Madam Speaker, HARRY REID, Mr. Majority Leader, we want openness. We want transparency. We want a new era of open government so that the American people can understand what's going on up here in Washington.

It's absolutely critical that the American people stand up and speak to the leadership and demand something different, that the American people demand that nothing is passed, particularly on health care, that is going to radically change the economic future of our country, that is going to radically change the way people live because anything and everything can be brought under the aegis of health care. I think probably we are going to see way beyond the things that are going on today where government is trying to control what we eat, how we live, what kind of car we drive.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. If the gentleman will yield.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Certainly.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, even so, we're talking about one-sixth of the whole economy of this great country of ours, and it's going to expand.

I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Well, this is not about health care. It's about the government. It's about government control. It's about government telling people how to live, government making decisions for us. It's taking away our liberty. And we see right now New York City is trying to control the amount of salt in everybody's food.

This health care plan can tell us what kind of car to drive, whether we can own guns or not to protect ourselves and our home, whether we can teach our children the way that we, as parents, believe that our children ought to be taught.

This is the largest takeover of liberty and freedom this country has ever seen. The American people need to stand up and say no to this obscure, opaque, secret process that this leadership of this House and the Senate across the other side of the Capitol and the administration, the Obama administration, and the leadership are doing, because it is totally, totally against everything that this country stands for.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. If the gentleman will yield, Mr. Speaker, just for a second.

The American people—and I think that my colleagues would agree with me—the American people have spoken, haven't they?

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. They really have.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Over 60 percent of them are vehemently opposed to this government takeover that Dr. BROUN is talking about.

I will make one other comment before yielding back to my friend, and that is that the Speaker herself—Mr. Speaker, you're in her stead in the chair this evening, but the Speaker, back in 2006 on the campaign trail when your party did indeed take over the majority, Mr. Speaker, Madam Speaker—minority leader at the time—said to the American people, You give us an opportunity to take back over control of the leadership of this Congress, this House of Representatives, and you will see the most open process you have ever seen. It will be a breath of fresh air. That sun will be shining in. The American people will come up and the children will sit around as I'm sworn in and they will be right there at my knee and I will be patting them on the head, Mr. Speaker, she said. And it will be wonderful. Happy days are here again. Well, when you say something like that—and I think my colleagues agree with me, Mr. Speaker—you need to deliver.

Now, she could have said, back in 2006 on the campaign trail, These rotten Republicans who have run this place for 12 years and they haven't given us a fair shake. Man, you give us an opportunity, put us back in, when we get there, we are going to roll them at every opportunity. Well, she would have been speaking the truth, Mr. Speaker. Madam Speaker would have been speaking the truth. That's what she should have done because that's what she did. We have no openness here. It's kind of like our current President said, you know, a change you can believe in.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think this is the change the American people were expecting, and they certainly don't believe in it.

I yield back to my colleague.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Well, Dr. GINGREY, thanks for yielding back.

And you are exactly right, the American people were promised many things by this Speaker: transparency, openness, the new era of a clean government with a prosecution of corruption. Nothing could be further from the truth. This Speaker has not fulfilled those promises to the American people.

The American people need to stand up and understand that they are really in control. The Constitution of the United States, which I believe in as it was originally intended, starts off with three very powerful words. In fact, I have a copy in my pocket. I carry a copy all the time. It starts off with three powerful words, "We the people." This is the government that is supposed to be for the people, by the people, as President Lincoln said.

The people have the power. They have the power to demand openness. They have the power to demand transparency and stop this secrecy and stop the veil that's going on up here. In fact, I challenge any Democrat in this House or in the Senate to show me anywhere in this document that we have the authority, constitutionally,

to take over the health care system. It's not here. I challenge any Democrat to show me in the Constitution where we have the authority to pass this health care bill that they're taking. They won't find it. It's not there.

The American people can demand from their elected representatives within the House or the Senate something different than we have today. Former U.S. Senator Everett Dirksen once said when he feels the heat, he sees the light. What he means by that is when the people who elect him, or reelect him, contact him and say, You're headed in the wrong direction. You need to head in a different direction, when enough people contact him, that's putting heat upon the elected representative. The elected representative, if he wants to be reelected, will start paying attention to enough of those phone calls, emails, faxes, and visits and will start seeing the light.

We need to shine the light of day. The American people can control the light in their hand right now today by getting on the telephone, getting on their computer, by calling their Representatives, by calling their Senators, their district offices or their offices up here, and saying no to this government takeover of health care, saying no to this obscure, secretive process that NANCY PELOSI, HARRY REID, and Barack Obama are undertaking, and saying yes to the openness and transparency we have been promised by Ms. PELOSI as well as Mr. Obama.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Reclaiming my time, and I thank the gentleman, I want to continue in just a second and introduce our next speaker, the gentleman from Tennessee and a fellow OB/GYN physician, Dr. PHIL ROE. But the gentleman from Athens, Georgia, is absolutely right. And as he pulled out his pocket Constitution—and I'm so proud of him for keeping it with him at all times because there are things in this bill that we think, Mr. Speaker, and I think the American people feel are unconstitutional, that are unconstitutional. I hope Dr. ROE will speak of that. These issues are so important at this 11th hour to not let the American people see the process for Madam Speaker and the Democratic leadership and the President. I showed you all the quotes at the outset of the hour, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, and you know he said it, she said it. It's time to deliver.

I yield to my good friend from Tennessee.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Thank you, Dr. GINGREY.

A little over a year ago, I stood on this House floor and was sworn in for the first time in the 111th Congress, one of the proudest days of my life. It goes up there with my marriage, the birth of my grandchildren and children. It was a very proud day to be here.

I came from a background of local government, and in Tennessee, where we're from, I was the mayor of Johnson City, Tennessee, and was a city commissioner and local official. In that

State, we have a sunshine law. Everything that is discussed is discussed in the open. It cannot be discussed in our local city government. We have five officials. We cannot discuss anything between ourselves unless we are in the open. That means an open, scheduled meeting that has been published or with a TV camera on.

Let me tell you what happens, Mr. Speaker. When that happens, you get a better government and you get a better product when the sun shines on it.

□ 2045

I will tell you that one of the great disappointments I have had is when I woke up near Christmas Eve and found that one of the Senators had voted for a health care bill to exempt a State that other States are going to have to obey on. I was absolutely nauseated with that. It is the most unbelievable thing. It made me ashamed to be a Member of this great body, and I shouldn't be. I should be proud. Every Member should be proud and honored to belong here. We lecture Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan about corruption. Let him turn around and look at our government and say, Wait a minute. For enough money, you can get your vote bought off to do something. If that health care bill had had legs, it should have stood on its own. Let me explain to you what that means for other States, and let me explain to the American people what that means for the State of Tennessee.

Right now, we have 50 fewer State troopers than we had in 1977, and we have 2 million more people. For the safety of our State, we can't afford Medicaid, which this bill in the Senate does. If it is accepted without going back to the Senate and goes straight to the President, we will have 15 million more people who will have Medicaid. With that comes an obligation from the State to pay for that. We don't have any money to pay for it in Tennessee. Right now, our colleges do not have one capital improvement project on a single college campus—the University of Tennessee and all of the 26 board of regents colleges—not one dormitory, not a library, not a chemistry department, not anything. Right now, we can't add any more people to our local Medicaid and Medicare plans.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. If the gentleman will yield—

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. I will.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia.—Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't be a bit surprised if some of the teachers in the great State, the volunteer State, are having to take furloughs and leaves of absences and are having to work short days and that kind of thing.

I yield back.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Where do we go? Do we cut K through 12? We're already in the 40s in education.

Here is another unfunded mandate that comes to the State of Nebraska, and the people in Nebraska don't have to pay for that. The people of Texas do.

The people of Ohio do. The people of California do. The people of Maine do. This is something that should not be there. When the sun shines on this, this will not happen. That is why it is extremely important for the sun to shine on this process.

You mentioned a moment ago, when you peel this onion back and when you begin to read this bill—and I've read every page of the House bill. I have not read the 2,700 pages of the Senate bill—we look at the AARP. When you sell, there will be an insurance exchange, and on this insurance exchange, if a company trades on there—and this is a private company—their CEO will be limited to a \$500,000 salary, which is tax deductible. That's fine. That company ought to be able to decide what it pays its CEO. If you pay more than that, you have to pay corporate taxes of 35 percent plus ordinary income taxes of 39 percent. So, for anything over \$500,000, the government will get three-fourths of it—except if you are the CEO of AARP. If you are the CEO of AARP, you make \$1.55 million a year. The average Social Security recipient receives about \$12,000 a year. That's their business, but they are exempted from this bill. They are not included in this bill. So guess what happened? AARP endorsed this bill. I can go on and on.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. If the gentleman will yield—

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. I will yield.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia.—I want him to go on and on because he has got a lot of facts to present.

The point, Mr. Speaker, is about AARP and other organizations and about wanting the people to have the opportunity to see for themselves with their eyes and to listen to the debate with their ears and to figure it out with common sense and to connect the dots. I mean, AARP, you know, do they make some money off the deal?

I do want to make one point, before yielding back to the gentleman from Tennessee, recognizing the good people of Nebraska—the Corn Husker State—and coach Tom Osborne, who is a former Member of this body, a great colleague, a friend of ours who is now the athletic director at the University of Nebraska. It's a great, great State. To their great credit, the Governor said, We don't want it. We don't want this sweetheart deal. This is not right.

I commend him, and I commend the State of Nebraska for understanding. Mr. Speaker, the inequity, the realization that the sweetheart deal for them means crumbs and bacon bits for everybody else. They understand that. Of course, now the Senator who was able to effect this sweetheart deal is saying, No, let's not rescind the deal. Let's just give the deal to everybody. Then what's going to be the true cost? Instead of \$1.2 trillion, it will be \$2 trillion; but anyway, I digress a bit.

Let me yield back to the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Thank you, Dr. GINGREY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As you go through this bill, the people who do get it are our seniors. I saw a lot of senior patients, as did you, and as I went home and spent these last couple of weeks over the break meeting with hundreds, if not thousands, of people during that time and talking to them one on one, let me tell you what they do get:

They do get the fact that you're going to take in the next 10 years almost \$500 billion out of a Medicare plan that does not pay its premiums in 2017. Seven short years from now, it will not pay for the obligation that we have now, and we are going to add 3 to 3.5 million seniors beginning in 2011 when the baby boomers hit. So that's 30 to 35 million more people with \$500 billion less money. Let me explain to you three things that will happen.

One is you will decrease access. And when you decrease access, you will decrease quality. Third, you are going to increase the cost for our seniors. They get it. They do understand that, and they understand they're going to pay more for needed care that they may not be able to get. That's the other reason. As people begin to understand what is in this bill, they push back.

Just today, Dr. GINGREY, as I was leaving home—and this has been consistent throughout my district—a poll was published in the local newspaper that showed in our district, the First District of Tennessee, that 79 percent of the people did not want this current bill, this current legislation. This is 8 out of 10. We'd better start listening to the people of this Nation. They have been screaming as loudly as they can. They want to be heard. I am afraid, right now, we are not listening to them. They want meaningful health care reform; 435 Members of this body want meaningful health care reform. We don't want to interfere with the doctor-patient relationship, and we can do that. We should be able to discuss that openly, and the cameras and the lights should shine upon those decisions.

I yield back, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I thank the gentleman.

I wanted to also mention a couple of responses from the White House in regard to the present CEO of C-SPAN requesting that the negotiations, whatever they are—whether there is a ping-pong back and forth between the House and the Senate or a mini conference or a full conference, whatever the deal is, for goodness sakes, let the American people see it. Even if they shut us Republicans out, let the American people have the opportunity. C-SPAN said, Look, we will provide all of the equipment—the digital—just as they do in this Chamber.

On the Sunday Morning show, Mr. Speaker—and I'm sure most of us watch it. I watch it every Sunday—here is what the press secretary, the Honorable Robert Gibbs, said on January 5, 2010. The reporter asked: Did the President regret making that earlier

promise to broadcast meetings on C-SPAN? Robert Gibbs' response: The President's number one priority is getting a bill through the House and the Senate.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we get that.

Let's get ourselves out of this hole that we've dug at any cost, with any sweetheart deal, whatever we have to do to get 60 votes. Let's pass this darned thing so that I can stand up here at the State of Union and declare victory. We can all pound our chests and do the high fives and the knuckle to knuckle, or however you do that these days, and declare victory and, for goodness sakes, move on to something else because this is killing us.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, if and when that happens, it is going to kill the American people. I have great concerns, and my colleagues do as well.

I yield back to the gentleman from Athens, Georgia.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

As you and our colleague from Tennessee, Dr. ROE, were talking about the Senate bill and as you went on, it just occurred to me that I spoke just earlier about the Newspeak in the leadership in Washington—in the House and the Senate as well as in the Presidency—and about how “transparency” now means being obscure and opaque and how “openness” means being in secret.

As to the deals that are being struck, from everything we understand in my language, when people are threatened with harm if they don't go in a certain direction, that's called “extortion.” If somebody is offered a perk or money or something for going in a particular direction, that's called a “bribe” if one accepts it.

Mr. Speaker, we're having a lot of extortion and a lot of bribery going on in this process. I will repeat that. There is a lot of extortion and bribery going on in this process, and the American people deserve better. The American people deserve more. They need to stand up and reject this process of secrecy, of obscurity, of opaqueness, of broken promises, and of everything that we see going on in this House.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. If the gentleman will yield back to me, I want to point out to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, that I realize our time is limited.

As we conclude our hour, the gentleman didn't mince any words. We know that, my colleagues, and I love him for that. He speaks plainly; he is blunt; and you can understand him unlike the typical politician, but what he is talking about are things like—and we mentioned it—the Corn Husker kickback. We're having fun with these names.

One-hundred million dollars for Nebraska's support of Obama health care. I credit the Governor of Nebraska who says, No, we don't want it. God bless him. The Louisiana purchase: \$300 million to purchase the Louisiana vote. That's about 12 million more dollars than it cost to purchase the whole Lou-

isiana Territory in current dollars. UCONN: \$100 million for Connecticut's support. I guess that's Mr. CHRIS DODD of the Obama health reform. Gatorade: 800,000 seniors in Florida get to keep their Medicare Advantage.

What about the other 10.2 million seniors in the rest of the country? What about the 175,000 in my great district, the 11th District of Georgia? What happens to them? Mr. Speaker, they get pushed under the bus. That's what's happening to them. It's not right.

Well, here is what the American people think. Here is what they think. I know the President knows this, and I know the Democratic majority knows this, and I know that's why they want to pass this thing in the dark of night. They don't want C-SPAN looking in. They don't want Republicans looking in. They don't want the American people looking in. They want to get out of that hole and get out of town. That's what their plan is.

Obama's health care marks hit a new low as 54 percent disapprove of Obama's handling of health care and only 36 approve. Look at his overall approval rating going back to February of 2009, Mr. Speaker, when it was 61 percent. Let's just fast-forward here over on this slide to January of 2010, and we are talking about 46 percent. Scary times for the majority party. Scary times for this President. But scarier times for the American people.

We hear this expression all the time. Mr. President said it himself: It is time to press the reset button in dealing with Vladimir Putin, the Russian President. It is time to reach out with an unclenched fist to Ahmadinejad, this dictator over in Iran, who is trying to develop a nuclear weapon despite all of our pleadings and reaching out with an open hand. It is time to push the reset button with Kim Jong Il in North Korea.

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Well, Mr. Speaker, I suggest this time to push the reset button with the American people, and give them a fair shake and be honest with them and tell them what is in this bill, these 2,500 pages that they can't understand. They could if they had time or if they had an opportunity, and C-SPAN is trying to give them that opportunity to shine the light of day on this process.

That is what it is all about. That is what Madam Speaker promised. That is what this President promised. It is time for them to deliver.

Mr. Speaker, I want to yield a few more minutes, whatever time remains, to my good friend from Tennessee, Dr. ROE.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Very quickly, Mr. Speaker, I think what the American people want for us to trust is transparency. The people have to trust us for us to govern, and they can't trust us if they don't know what is going on.

I know, Mr. Speaker, you went home, I went home for the holidays; and they

said, What is going on with the health care bill? And I told them, You know as much as I do. Because we are in the dark just as you are. And that is not the way it ought to be.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee. I thank the gentleman from Texas. I thank the gentleman from the great State of Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, we thank all for the opportunity for the members of the GOP Doctors Caucus to spend some time tonight to explain to our colleagues on both sides of the aisle what our concerns are. I think we did it in a very fair way. We did it in a way that is not a personal attack on any individual, any Member of this body, any member of the administration. We are just asking to give the American people a fair shake.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### HEALTH CARE BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. QUIGLEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue much as we have done over this past hour, talking about this same issue, the health care bill that is now before the House and Senate, even though none of us have seen the finished product, and what has happened on the issue of transparency over these past several weeks since the House adjourned in the middle of December.

I am going to talk a little bit more about the resolution of inquiry because I believe that is an important tool that is available to the minority Members of the House. And I think it is a tool that we need to use, a tool that we need to exercise in order to get the American people the information that they are going to need to make up their minds about this bill.

If time permits, we will talk a little bit about some of the structural issues, some of the procedural issues that still are yet to occur if this bill indeed passes and is signed into law: What are the ramifications thereof? When will things happen? What will occur at the level of the Federal agency at the Department of Health and Human Services?

But I thought, first, it might be useful just to do a brief recap of where we have been this past year.

As most of us know, it has been not quite a year since the inauguration took place here in January of 2009, a historic day. A record number of people came and stood to watch the inauguration and to hear the speeches that occurred that day.

We had a very spirited campaign during the fall. We had the appearance, for the first time, of some rather stark economic news that hit the headlines and perhaps dictated some of the course of the campaign, and certainly