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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, March 22, 2010, at 2 p.m.

House of Representatives

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2010

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. CLARKE).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 20, 2010.

I hereby appoint the Honorable YVETTE D. CLARKE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

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

Let us approach the Lord with praise and thanksgiving. Strong is His love for us. Left to ourselves, we are easily overwhelmed. We cannot be attentive to His Word or accomplish His holy will.

So shield us with Your Holy Spirit, Lord, and make this Congress bold and strong. As Your instrument of mercy and compassion, drive away all that is evil and reveal the path that will strengthen Your people in hope and salvation, and give You the glory both now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays. The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of Ohio led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Today we are close to achieving a long-sought goal ensuring that all Americans have access to meaningful, affordable health coverage. Passing health care reform benefits all of us: families, seniors, businesses, taxpayers, and our Nation.

This plan includes many vital prescriptions that strengthen health care for all Americans, provisions that I have fought hard for: prohibiting insurance companies from excluding pre-existing condition coverage for children and adults. Six months after reform is passed, all children will be protected from these denials, strengthening primary care for seniors with a new focus on those with chronic diseases. Seniors will no longer have to pay copayments for preventative care and will have greater access to primary care doctors and nurses. And reform ensures that all insurance policies use plain, easy-to-understand language so that consumers know what they're buying and can honestly compare their choices.

The status quo is unacceptable and unsustainable. I urge a "yes" vote on health care reform.

GOVERNMENT FAIRY TALE

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

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

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



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Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, Ronald Reagan once said the most terrifying words in the English language are, "I'm from the government and I'm here to help." This is exactly what Washington liberals are trying to tell the American people.

The scheme that the government can give everyone free health care is a fairy tale which defies history and reality. The reality is there are real and affordable ways to improve the health care financing system, and Republicans presented 70 such proposals. Proposals like H.R. 3400 will make health care accessible and affordable, covering pre-existing conditions, promoting employer-sponsored insurance, and offers insurance across State lines.

The Pelosi bill will kill 1.6 million jobs according to the National Federation of Independent Business.

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

Citizens can make a difference, like Chuck Stauck of Hilton Head Island, with Ann Bull, Brenda Maxwell, and Lynn Dempsey of Lexington, South Carolina.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today to share my strong support for the health reform bill that we will be voting on this weekend.

This bill is not perfect, but it's a significant step forward. This bill will ensure that a wonderful little girl named Bridget from Marietta, Ohio, whom I met with last week, will never be denied health insurance due to a pre-existing condition even though she was stricken with cancer at the age of 3. It will guarantee that 9,300 other residents in Ohio's sixth district with pre-existing conditions can obtain coverage. This legislation will improve coverage for 365,000 residents in my district with health insurance and extend coverage to 40,000 people who are uninsured.

The bottom line is that we need this reform. Families like Bridget's need this reform. Our economy needs this reform. This is a historic vote, and I'm proud to cast my vote in favor of commonsense health care reform that finally benefits the people, not the insurance companies.

THE FIRST WORD WAS "HOUSTON"

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the United States is positioned to raise the white flag of surrender in space exploration. America is the leader in space technology, but yet there are plans afoot to turn our lead over to the Russians and the Chinese.

By foolishly canceling the Constellation Program and when the last NASA

shuttle flight occurs, we will have no means to transport our astronauts into space. We will have to hitch a ride with the Russians if we want that transportation. And if one of our security satellites needs repair, who's to say the Russians will even let us buy a coach ticket on their space aircraft.

Now even the Iranians have entered the space race. Last month they sent a rat, two turtles, and a worm into space.

Keeping our edge in spaceflight is a national security issue. We can not give that away to anybody. After all, when Neil Armstrong landed on the Moon, the first word was "Houston," not "Moscow" or "Beijing."

And that's just the way it is.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, from the beginning of the debate of health care reform, my top priority has been clear: strengthen and protect Medicare for our seniors, like Bunny Steinman in my district.

I believe that the doctor-patient relationship is absolutely essential, especially for our seniors. No one, not the government or private insurance, should stand between a patient and the doctor of their choice.

When I talk to seniors in my district, many of them tell me that struggling to cover the costs of prescription drugs—especially if they have fallen into the part D drug doughnut hole—is a real problem for them, and that is why I took the lead in working with AARP to make sure health care reform, this bill, closes the doughnut hole for good. Seniors will see immediate relief on prescription drug prices—a \$250 rebate next year and thousands more in savings in the years ahead.

We have won this fight. This reform will close the doughnut hole and save seniors money. There will be other benefits for seniors such as preventative care, like cancer screenings will now be free—no copays, no deductible. We owe it to our seniors. They paid into the Medicare trust fund. Taking care of our seniors is one of our top priorities. Benefits like these are critical to our senior population in south Florida, my district, and around the country.

I urge support of the bill.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I know that I am just a country doctor from Tennessee, but the fact that we can't have a true up-or-down vote on one of the most important pieces of legislation this body will ever consider just flat out confounds me.

I decided to do a little research on the issue, and just since the time I've been here, the House has recorded votes on whether to congratulate two college football teams, a college basketball team. There was a vote on a college quarterback. We've even held votes on honoring 10 colleges and universities and named 30 post offices. The House held a recorded vote on whether to pay tribute to Homeland Security Department employees, and just this week, we actually voted on whether or not to congratulate Vancouver on hosting the Winter Olympics. Heck, we've even asked Members of Congress to go on record about the 2,560th birthday of Confucius.

We can vote on all of these matters, but we can't have a vote on health care. Madam Speaker, if anyone can explain this to me, my phone line is open.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, this morning on my way in to the Capitol I experienced a moment of karma. The first song that came on the radio, when I turned it on, was a song from the show "Les Mis" called "One Day More." In that Broadway show, "One Day More" is sung on the eve of an insurrection by French students, many of whom know they are going to die.

One day more today we will be passing an historic piece of legislation that will not take lives. It will save lives; the 18,000 lives that are lost every year because of a lack of health insurance. We will save lives, we will save money, we will save Medicare, and we will save jobs. One day more until we accomplish all of that for our economy, for our citizens, and for our country.

Tomorrow, indeed, will be a wonderful day.

AP FINDS PREMIUMS WILL GO UP UNDER HEALTH CARE

(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. Madam Speaker, here is what the Associated Press has to say about the administration's health care plan: "Buyers, beware. President Barack Obama says his health care overhaul will lower premiums by double digits, but check the fine print."

"Premiums are likely to keep going up even if the health care bill passes, experts say."

"Listening to Obama pitch his plan, you might not realize that's how it works."

"The (Congressional) Budget Office concluded that premiums for people buying their own coverage would go up by an average of 10 to 13 percent."

The rest of the national media should report the facts about health care, not cover them up.