



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 156

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2010

No. 45

House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. MARKEY of Colorado).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 23, 2010.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BETSY MARKEY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

DISINGENUOUS SAVINGS IN HEALTH CARE BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Good morning. Madam Speaker, my colleagues, I've come here this morning to talk about the health care bill. The Senate health care bill that we passed which honestly continues to spend far more than we can afford and at a rate faster than anyone could have imagined. The bill itself is chock-full of budget gimmicks to game the system to show that it's revenue-neutral. I am briefly going to outline this morning why it's not revenue-neutral.

In fact, future Congresses will repeal some of these cuts in Medicare and some of those taxes, like the tax on certain Cadillac health care plans. The President indicated that he would veto any health care bill that created a dime, a penny of deficit. Well, Mr. President, I hope you are listening because I have gone through the scoring on the Senate health care bill, and it's chock-full of gimmicks, and in fact, this bill creates a deficit. Let's take a look at them.

These savings that the CBO scored will not be achieved, and let me first of all start by saying there's 10 years of taxes to pay for 6 years of benefits. That's one of the gimmicks we should understand. Many of the taxes will start immediately, yet the health exchange does not begin until 2014. The two large cost drivers are Medicaid expansion and the health care exchange, but there are only 6 years of the exchange costs in the budget window. So if we're going to have taxes for 10 years, and we're going to institute the program four years later, much later, then these will be cost savings obviously.

But once this thing gets going, after 10 years of taxes and 6 years of benefits, what happens after that? No one knows. Obviously there is going to be a deficit. That's the first thing I want to start out with. There are cuts throughout this healthcare bill to Medicare. But they are fiction. Let me give you an example. They have a 21 percent cut in what's called the SGR which is the sustained growth rate, or the funding rate for physicians. So they're going to cut physicians on their SGR by 21 percent, and they're going to do a 2 percent cut every year for the rest of the decade. So this would require a \$208 billion fix. Now is this going to occur? Re-member now, we have just passed H.R. 3961, a doc fix. So they're already agreeing that we have to fix Medicare for doctors, yet they are going back

into this health care bill and cutting them even more to get cost savings realizing they will have to stop these cuts or devastate the Medicare program.

There are \$156 billion in cuts to the hospital market basket. Now this is the reimbursement formula used to calculate payment rates. Can we realistically expect to provide a negative cost increase to hospitals? Or are we creating another so-called SGR-type situation for hospitals in this bill? There is \$70 billion in what's called Community Living Assistance Services and Supports program. This is a new entitlement. It's an insurance program for assisted living programs. However, it does not collect enough revenues and pays out too little. It's estimated this program will become insolvent in 2020. Senator KENT CONRAD has called this a Ponzi scheme of the first order that would make Bernie Madoff proud. Another fictitious cost savings. There will be \$15 billion cut by the Independent Payment Advisory Board. This is an unelected body who will be able to force Medicare cuts and reforms throughout the system. But where are they going to cut? Congress can only vote to stop it if three-fifths of the Senate votes to stop the cuts. They have continually talked about a tax on Cadillac health care plans. They use this as a saving of \$32 billion. You know whose Cadillac health care plans we're talking about? We're talking about unions plans. They are the ones who will be affected. Do you think the Democrats are going to tax unions' Cadillac health care plans? That's not going to happen.

So I will tell you that once this gets passed, they're going to repeal this tax at future points. There are 10 years of taxes to pay for 6 years of benefits, as I mentioned earlier. The two large cost drivers are Medicaid expansion and the health care exchange, but there are only 6 years of the exchange costs in

□ 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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the budget window. So again, that's a gimmick. Also there are costs which are not included by the CBO because they would not be subject to future appropriations. They are not mandatory spending. So that's why the CBO didn't include the following:

There is \$10 billion to hire about 16,000 new IRS agents to enforce the individual mandate on every American. So CBO did not include this in the scoring because it would be subject to future appropriations and not mandatory spending. So CBO didn't even include that. And what about the number of employees who are going to be hired by Health and Human Services to operate this bill? That's not in here. There is \$55 billion for new bureaucrats to run this government expansion into health care, none of that is included by CBO. So Mr. President, you should realize that if you sign this bill, you're signing a bill that is going to create deficits. The savings we will see are not there. We are continuing to put this country in hock to China and deficits for the foreseeable future.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 36 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. MARKEY of Colorado) at noon.

PRAYER

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

Lord God, who orders the heavens and guides the affairs of humanity on Earth, be with the Members of this, the 111th Congress of the United States of America. Make known Your will for the common good of the Nation and reveal Your presence in the midst of our activity. By Your spirit, renew in all those who have sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution the original enthusiasm, high ideals, positive attitudes, and desire to make a difference that brought them to serve here.

Banish all indifference and quicken every response in them to the needs of Your people and to the challenges of the time. Proud to serve, raise them with renewed hope and deepened faith to manifest the strength of character,

the integrity, and nobility this institution deserves.

May Your Divine Providence lead them to represent and reflect the genuine good and greatness of the American people by their prayer, honest search for truth, unified action, and great deeds. So may the people of this Nation grow in patriotism and give You the glory—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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. PITTS 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.

REPEAL HEALTH CARE BILL WITH REAL REFORM

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, today, the liberal editors of the Washington Post state in their lead editorial that the current trajectory of entitlement spending will bankrupt the country. On the facing page, conservative commentator George Will calls America's entitlement programs a Ponzi scheme and "a teetering tower of unkeepable promises." Indeed, this is the true crisis in American health care.

We have already made over \$100 trillion in entitlement promises we can't keep. But what Congress has just done is not reform. It does not bend the cost curve. It does not reform entitlements. It just makes more promises that can't be kept. ObamaCare pours gasoline on the fire of our entitlement crisis.

This Congress has squandered an opportunity to save and strengthen America's safety net. When they should have put on the brakes, they put their foot on the accelerator. We need to repeal this terrible bill and replace it in a bipartisan way with real reform.

THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING, THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, there's a new push to drill for oil in the Gulf of Mexico. The "Drill Here, Drill

Now" slogan is finally sinking in. But the new rigs won't be flying American flags. They'll be Russian rigs drilling for oil in the Gulf of Mexico—right there off our own shores.

The Russians and the Cubans are now in cahoots to drill for oil we should be obtaining. Then they'll probably sell it back to us at an increased price. We don't drill off our own coast, so we have to import more crude oil. And it gets worse every year. It's costing Americans millions. Plus, Americans won't be getting those high-dollar rig jobs.

We have our own natural resources, but refuse to explore them because of the elitists. We're a decade or more away from green technology—when we all will be driving those itty-bitty toy cars that you can buy by the six-pack. But the anti-American energy elites dominate Congress and the White House. Unfortunately, they'll let us freeze in the dark before they will allow offshore drilling.

And that's just the way it is.

AMERICA STANDS WITH ISRAEL

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

Mr. PENCE. Today, I had the privilege of welcoming the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, for his second visit to the United States Capitol. The American people consider Israel our most cherished ally and we her closest friend and guardian. As we met, Israel lives under the shadow of a threatening neighbor seeking nuclear weapons but, remarkably, this administration seems intent on focusing on a controversy over construction in undisputed areas of Jerusalem instead of the threat of a nuclear Iran. As I just told the Prime Minister, I never thought I'd live to see the day that an American administration would denounce the State of Israel for rebuilding Jerusalem. If the world knows nothing else, let it know this: America stands with Israel.

As the President meets with Prime Minister Netanyahu today, I urge the President to stop all this talk about settlements in Jerusalem and start focusing on isolating a threatening and menacing and rising nuclear Iran. The American people and the American Congress in both parties support the State of Israel.

LET'S GET BALANCE BACK IN THE COUNTRY

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, dramatic times require dramatic actions. There's a part of the Constitution that hasn't been used since its inception: Article V, the part that says that "on the application of the legislatures of