

TRICARE DEPENDENT COVERAGE EXTENSION ACT

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

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. Speaker, our brave men and women in uniform sacrifice so much for our Nation, and it is our duty to keep our promise that they have the benefits that they deserve and have earned through their service.

I know that many are familiar with the sentiment that a veteran, whether active duty, retired National Guard, Reserve, is someone who at one point in his or her life wrote a blank check made payable to the United States of America for an amount of up to and including their life.

We all know that the families of our men and women in uniform share the burden of this service to our Nation. To ease this burden, I introduced H.R. 4923, the TRICARE Dependent Coverage Extension Act.

H.R. 4923 would ensure that our Nation's troops and military retirees are able to provide health coverage to their dependent children up to the age of 26. This is one of the most popular provisions in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the health insurance overhaul that Congress passed and that President Obama signed into law last month.

However, health insurance for our Nation's military servicemembers, retirees, and their families is under the control of the U.S. Department of Defense, so this benefit for dependent children was not extended to military families.

Contrary to some misinformation we've heard, TRICARE was not altered, changed, modified in any way by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The good news is that H.R. 4923 would now provide dependent children of military families with the same benefits given to civilian children. Specifically, this bill would amend Title 10 to change the maximum age of coverage for children from 23 to 26, and it would take effect October 1 of this year.

Currently, in order for dependent children to remain in the TRICARE system, they need to be attending college full time and only up to the age of 23. However, the new policy in H.R. 4923 would allow all dependent children to be covered until age 26, whether or not they're full-time students.

I'm proud to tell you that that bill is supported by a growing number of veterans' service organizations, including the Military Officers Association of America, the National Guard Association of the United States, and the Air Force Association.

Mr. Speaker, allowing parents to provide health coverage to their dependent children is just one way we can show our military families how much we appreciate them. With each individual who generously dedicates their life to military service, there is a significant impact on those closest to them. We

know this especially well in New Mexico where we have a long and proud tradition of military service.

Each time a soldier leaves home, they leave behind caring husbands and wives, loving sons and daughters, worried parents and whole communities that remain concerned for their safety. Our military families stand behind our troops and lift them up. They make significant sacrifices just like our servicemembers do.

Let's honor their service to our Nation by ensuring that their health coverage meets the same standard that we have set for the rest of America and nothing less.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to cosponsor this important legislation.

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

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania 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 Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO 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 Washington (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of Washington 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SESTAK 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 Washington (Mr. LARSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LARSEN of Washington 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 Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TAYLOR 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 California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California 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 Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

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

Mr. MCMAHON. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, I rise this afternoon to speak to a very alarming and disconcerting issue that continues to grow unchecked around the world, and that is the debilitating and negative effects that the Islamic Republic of Iran is having around the world.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, we are very concerned about peace in the Middle East, and we know that it's very important that our great friend and ally, Israel, continue in negotiations with the Palestinians to come to a resolution of the issues that exist there. However, I believe we cannot expect success to come there unless we look at the role that Iran is playing on that issue and so many other dangerous issues around the world. It is acting in a way that is against the interest in our great ally Israel and our allies around the world and our Nation as well.

Mr. Speaker, indeed the Palestinian negotiations in Iran are very much linked, but not in the way that those who want to pressure Israel would argue. The connection between these two critical foreign policy issues stems from Iran's perceived veto power over the ability of Israelis and Palestinians to come to terms.

Acting as Iran's proxies, Hezbollah and Hamas are used to destabilize the region by engaging in hostile military activities or significant acts of terror at the will of the Islamic Republic. Furthermore, an environment conducive to peace is disrupted by the increased weaponization of the region. Already huge numbers of rockets have been illegally shipped to Hezbollah by Iran in violation of Security Council Resolution 1701. Likewise, arms and ammunition have been smuggled into Gaza and to Hamas through similar routes.

Thus, for those who want peace between Israel and the Palestinians, Iran must be brought under control. But it isn't just in the Palestinian Authority where Iran is making trouble. Iran is training and funding actors hostile to the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq and also providing lethal munitions such as materials used in the

IEDs to kill and maim our troops and allies. Examples of civil unrest throughout Iraq, northeastern Saudi Arabia, and even Bosnia have also been tied to the Quds force which conducts overseas operations for Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

And we must not ignore Syria's partnership with Iran either. Syria is a client of Iran and together with Hezbollah—an Iranian-controlled entity—in neighboring Lebanon, Lebanese Christians and moderate Muslims fear raising their voices against the Syrian hegemony over Lebanon, reversing the gains made in the Cedar Revolution that resulted in the end of the Syrian occupation of Lebanon.

Unfortunately, Iran's tentacles extend across continents and into our Western Hemisphere as well. Iran has entered into a strategic alliance with Venezuela, opening the path for Hugo Chavez to further his anti-U.S. activities in South America. And even more concerning, Venezuela is helping Iran circumvent the Security Council's economic sanctions and is also suspected of providing Tehran with uranium.

Finally, as smaller Arab states in the gulf witness the rise in Iranian power, a power which will be confirmed once it reaches the nuclear threshold, they too will follow this path and attempt to forge an alliance with this new regional superpower.

For this reason, Mr. Speaker, it is crucial that Congress move swiftly with the administration towards curtailing Iran's nuclear ambitions. Decades of inaction have allowed Iran's influence to sweep across the globe. We cannot allow Iran to move further as its influence creeps through our own hemisphere.

Back in the 1930s as the power of Nazi Germany grew, people like Winston Churchill sounded the alarm. But all too often that alarm was ignored.

The alarm is being sounded here in this Chamber and is being sounded across the world. We must act to stop the insidious influence of Iran around the world, and we must do it on every front. The time to act is now. And the way to act is, as I urge my colleagues, that we move swiftly to complete the passage of the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act and the Iran Human Rights Violation Sanctions Act which we must bring to conference committee and send to the President for signature.

NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW

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

Mr. AKIN. We're about to start on a journey on an interesting topic of discussion and one that has hit the papers and one that could very much affect the shaping of how the world develops and the safety of the world. And that is

the new discussion on the Nuclear Posture Review. That's a report that the Federal Government has just released along with the new START Treaty which the President has been working on negotiating with the Russians.

And these are talking about the future of our country, the future of our world, particularly as it relates to nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction. And the initial kind of read on what's going on sounds pretty good. We want to try to reduce the amount of proliferation of nuclear materials to make the world a safer place. We want to talk about a day when there won't be any nuclear weapons in the world. We want to try to, in general, reduce the amount of threat and risk to our own Nation and other nations.

And it all sounds pretty good when you first look at it, until you start to take a look at the troubling assumptions that have been built into these two documents. First of all, they call the Nuclear Posture Review the NPR and the START Treaty, of course, is going back to the 1991 historic treaty.

And so I'm joined here on the floor by some good friends of mine, some people who are good thinkers. But I think I will mention some of the topics that I would like to see us be talking about here in the next number of minutes. And I think we need to take a look at assumptions.

Many times people have good intentions, but the assumptions that are built in are not so good. There was once a guy who was a pharmacist and he had good intentions; but, unfortunately, he prescribed too much of a particular chemical and killed his patient. He had good intentions, but the result was the death of the patient. That could easily happen to many Americans with the false assumptions that are built into the START negotiations and this Nuclear Posture Review.

The first thing I would like to take a look at is going to be the world without nukes and is that a reasonable assumption; is that something that we should be working toward and exactly how are we going to produce this world where there are no longer nuclear weapons.

The next assumption is whether or not it's reasonable to trust Russia when you negotiate arms treaties.

The third question would be the overall whether or not we're going to be advancing missile defense and whether or not we're going to develop a missile defense. Is that connected to the idea of the START Treaty?

The fourth point would be does it make sense to say we're not going to develop any future nuclear weapons or devices.

And, lastly, to define when we might or might not use a nuclear weapon.

These are all kinds of assumptions built into these documents. I think they need to be discussed and discussed very carefully by those of us who are dealing with our nuclear posture.

I'm going to start off by recognizing my good friend, ROB BISHOP from Utah.

Congressman TURNER also is joining us, MIKE TURNER from Ohio. And I know that they have their own perspectives on this and are very well qualified in certain areas here, and I also have some charts we could go to.

But I would like to take a look at some of those assumptions because the devil is often in the details.

I would yield time to my good friend, Congressman TURNER from Ohio.

What part of Ohio are you from?

Mr. TURNER. Dayton, Ohio.

Mr. AKIN. A good industrial area, too. Good for you.

Thank you, MIKE. Please.

Mr. TURNER. I appreciate your leadership. We serve in the Armed Services Committee together so these are issues that we take up frequently.

We held a hearing today on the Nuclear Posture Review and on the START Treaty, and there are a number of things as you outlined that I think people should be very concerned about.

One, of course, is what they're referring to as the negative assurances where in the Nuclear Posture Review they've included a statement where the President has taken off the table the prospects of using nuclear weapons in defense of this Nation in circumstances where we are attacked by a nation that is in compliance with the nonproliferation treaty, and even if that attack is with either chemical or biological weapons.

Before we always had the posture of we'll do whatever it takes, whatever is necessary to defend this Nation. And the President himself last May said—he clearly stated, I don't take options off the table when it comes to U.S. security. Period. Unfortunately, this administration's Nuclear Posture Review does just that. It delivers a muddled message to both our allies and our adversaries that only seeks to weaken the strength of our deterrent.

It's really unclear as to why the administration has done this if you look at the issue of threat. Certainly the threat has not been reduced to the United States. So to take a posture where you're going to restrict what we would use in order to defend ourselves is not based upon some change that has occurred in the threats that the United States is facing.

They have said that they are pursuing this policy of restricting our use of our own defensive weapons in order to encourage others not to seek nuclear weapons. But there is no historical basis for that. The United States has continued to reduce the overall number of nuclear weapons, as has Russia. As we've seen, Iran is seeking to be a nuclear power; North Korea is becoming a nuclear power. Without any historical basis for an assumption that others would not seek nuclear weapons if the United States agrees to not use theirs, this administration has proceeded down this path.

Mr. AKIN. Could I interrupt for a second?

I think what you brought up is an interesting point. First of all, the President said all of the options are on the