

Phoenix Suns. They follow in the footsteps of many other mainstays from the golden era of American baseball like Horace Clarke, Valmy Thomas, Joe Christopher, and all the others who came from the Virgin Islands. And we have many young stars who are making their name in track and field and other areas.

Our boxing legends include Emile Griffith, Livingston Bramble, and Julian Jackson. There are many more, as I said, in sports that I can't name due to the time limitation.

But there are also the hundreds of thousands of Virgin Islanders who over the 93 years that we have been a part of the American family have loved it and served it in so many other ways, just like our fellow citizens of the United States who are represented by my other colleagues. And all that we ask is that we, our contributions, our service, and our citizenship be recognized and given the appropriate respect.

Madam Speaker, the Virgin Islands has a rich, diverse, long, loyal, and productive history as a part of the American family. Like many of our sister districts, we are also susceptible to all the challenges of our great country, such as the devastating recession, threats to our homeland, escalating crime, and the need for improvements in education and health care. Spending on the Virgin Islands and the other territories is not frivolous spending. And, by the way, much of those dollars that come to us are spent not only to improve the lives and services for our residents but for the millions of people from all over the United States who visit our shores every year.

It has been hard for me as a representative of these proud Americans in the U.S. Virgin Islands to have to listen to the negative rhetoric coming from the other side of the aisle as I have sought to represent, like they do, my district. It has been painful to have to work so hard to get fair treatment in Medicaid, other health programs, and to get that fair treatment in health care reform, as well as to provide SSI for our individuals who have special needs.

It has been difficult to have disparaging remarks made about our reported unemployment at 8.5 percent when the tools available in other States are not available to enable us to have an accurate count. When undertaken by our university some years ago when our unemployment was reportedly around 7 percent, a more thorough assessment determined that it was as high as 13 percent in St. Croix and a little less in St. Thomas, and that was during better times.

I consider it to be a disservice that there might be Republican objections to holding a hearing in the Virgin Islands on the Constitution that our elected delegates have drafted for this Congress' consideration in the place where it will govern if passed and adopted. It's a milestone for any territory. And why? Because it's a beautiful

place? I was to go to the Grand Canyon for a site visit today. It's a very beautiful place, and I don't think anyone objected to that.

Madam Speaker and my colleagues, thank you for the time to speak about this important part of our country's black history, our country's history, and the opportunity to remind those who don't seem to know that we are proudly American and that we ask nothing more than to be treated as such.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, those of us who have had the privilege and the pleasure and the honor to serve in this House, we create history every day. Every single day. I just hope that all of my colleagues will make their service worthy of emulation, that it will be a source of pride to our people, and that we will encourage others to seek a life in public service.

So many people look at what they call "politicians" as such a dirty word. I am a public servant. I get up every day, and every morning when I leave my apartment, I say, I am going to do the people's work. That is my job. That is what I was brought here to do. I hope there is someone out there who recognizes what we do, who understands the significance of who we are, and they will feel the same sense of pride we feel today talking about all of the people on whose shoulders we stand today.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for allowing us to have this hour this evening. It is always a sense of pride for our people to know that we are still fighting the good fight and we understand from whence we have come.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Madam Speaker, it's a privilege to be here tonight on behalf of the Republican Party and on behalf of its members here in Congress. This evening we will be led by Judge CARTER, Representative CARTER of Texas, who is on his way to the Chamber at this point, but it's my privilege to cover for him until he arrives.

We have just finished, Madam Speaker, a week in our districts where we were meeting with members of our constituency. I want to inform you that among the issues that I heard about when I was home were still concerns from automobile dealers about franchises that have been put in jeopardy due to the automobile issue with General Motors; I heard about people who are trying to build houses in Wyoming and would create jobs in Wyoming doing so and had the building permits and the need for the housing confirms but that financing for building construction in Wyoming remains impossible to get because of new bank regu-

lations that require two-thirds more security for those loans than was previously the case. Banks are simply unwilling to lend under the same terms that they would before to risk-takers who hire people to create jobs to build wealth and value in this country and who have strong credit ratings themselves and solid track records of producing jobs and producing value in the housing and the construction market in this country. That remains an issue around the United States and certainly in my State of Wyoming. Jobs must be the main criteria as we go forward this year; and the looming debt and deficit concerns continue to be voiced by people in my State throughout the week as I met with them.

As you know, we are preparing for more budget hearings now that Congress has reconvened after the President's Day recess. I'm on the Budget Committee, and we had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Orszag before the weather curtailed our activities and then the intervening district work period occurred. But we will be resuming those activities, hopefully meeting with Treasury Secretary Geithner soon and discussing the debt and deficit.

I want to remind my colleagues that last year we were approached by Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke about the need for the United States to come up with a plan, a long-term plan to address our debt and deficits. It is not possible for us to accurately and clearly address our debt and deficit issues unless we discuss entitlements: Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. There are components of those issues that will be discussed this week, hopefully, at the White House conference on health care.

We are now joined by the secretary of the Republican Conference and an esteemed Member of this body, a former judge from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) is recognized for the balance of the time as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CARTER. I thank the gentlewoman for being here to take over and for doing such an eloquent job of discussing issues in my absence. I apologize profusely that I was not here when my name was called. Thank you for taking this hour for us, and please stay and participate if you can. We're going to talk about the so-called health care summit that's coming up later this week and just exactly what it is and what we think it might be.

We're hearing a lot of spin on this issue from a lot of sources close to the White House. I have a concern that what they are offering is nothing more than another press event.

Let's start off by talking about what is proposed to happen. The White House this morning unveiled Senate bill 2, if you will, but not really, because they didn't give us a bill nor legislative language. They gave us about

12 pages of things that they said that this was Obama's offer of compromising with the Republicans. But the starting point, it seems, from what it says because it references from place to place the Senate bill, it seems the starting point for this, quote, bipartisan summit that is being offered by the White House is going to be the Senate bill, which stands about 3 feet high, and I think we don't need to really go into that. Everybody in America has seen that bill and they have seen the House bill, too. It's so heavy that the average citizen couldn't lift it without a forklift. Yet this seems to be still the starting point that the President is going forward with. The starting gate has been opened now ever since the Senate bill has come out and that's the starting place.

You hear people say, Why can't we have bipartisan effort? And we're hearing that this is an attempt at a bipartisan effort. Well, I would argue that there's a better way to show a bipartisan effort. But let's start with the work product that we have in place right now. We have a Senate bill and we have a House bill. What have the American people said about these gigantic intrusions into their private life?

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They've said, We don't want the Senate bill and we don't want the House bill. We don't want something that is so gigantic and creates so many agencies and bureaus and groups and advisers and spends so much money, a trillion dollars here and a trillion dollars there. We don't want that. We want some simple stuff we can understand. We would like to see something that we as the American people can clearly read and understand.

They're asking us to let them be part of the process, to let them be able to read without the legalese, as we used to call it in the courtroom, which nobody can understand but the lawyer who wrote it.

No, that's not what the American people want. The American people are worried about the cost of health care. They're worried about the coverage of health care. They want to see that we get what they're worried about and that we're trying to save money, not spend money; that we're trying to give them opportunity rather than give them regulation. They want to be able to pick up something about maybe the size of this half a dozen pieces of paper and read it and kind of get a concept of what the people they sent to Washington are doing to start down the road to trying to fix health care.

They don't want a bill that stands this high. They don't want that, because they've gone by their Congressman's office and some of them have actually gotten copies of that thing and tried to dig into it and it's driving them insane as it is everybody that's tried.

You say, well, Judge, how do you say that the people have spoken about it?

Well, let's look at what we've got in the way of public opinion polls. Polls, you can take them or leave them. But right now the public opinion poll on health care stands at 58 percent of the voters nationwide oppose Obama's health care reform plan.

Now when I say that, they're talking about resurrecting either the House or Senate bill. Quite honestly, I don't think they even know what he proposed as of this morning because quite frankly we didn't know until this morning.

What they're saying is, We don't like the omnibus style of health care bill. That's what they're saying. It's confusing, it scares us, we're afraid we're going to go bankrupt in this nation; and why can't you guys narrow it down to the simple things that would bring down cost and get better coverage instead of this massive changing of 18 percent of the American economy?

Fifty percent of the voters strongly oppose anything to do with the Senate or House plan, which is the Obama health care reform plan; and 78 percent of the voters expect the plan to cost more than projected. When you're in a world where people are talking about, Will the people who are buying our debt be willing to continue to buy our debt if we continue to go so far in the hole? What are we going to do about all this spending? What are we going to do about all this huge amount of accumulated debt that we've accumulated in the last 12 months and is projected to accumulate in the future?

These are questions that the ordinary guy on the street at the coffee shop on Monday morning is talking about. This is what the guy at the cafe in the small town after he finishes having his lunch, he and his friends sit around and they talk about. And they're worried about it. They know what happens to their lives when their debt is overconsuming and they're concerned, what is going to happen to our country when our debt is overconsuming. It's really telling when they are so afraid that this bill and this proposal that's going to come forth, we think, from the White House on Thursday at this summit of bipartisanship, they're afraid it's going to cost more than projected.

One of the things I wondered about when I came to this place, it seemed to me as just an ordinary citizen out there watching what goes on in Congress that one group says it costs X and one group says it costs Y, and nobody is saying who's telling the truth. And X may be a trillion dollars off from what Y says. The American people look at that and say, That place is broken. One hand doesn't know what the other hand is doing.

And then they say, Well, it's all politics. Well, they're fed up to here with all politics. The folks back home are saying, We're fed up with politics. We've got to get down to basics. It's time to go back to not spending money you don't have and creating jobs that

are real jobs. We don't want all the jobs that are created to be jobs that exist in Washington, D.C. The only place in the country that's got positive job numbers is right here.

Why is that? Because we're hiring a lot more Federal employees and those Federal employees are out there growing the size of this monster that we live in. The American people are worried about that. They look at health care and they look at this so-called summit and say, Why don't these guys kind of do what they say they were going to do and everybody push the stuff that nobody likes off the table? Let's lay new stuff or new concepts on the table and let's have a work-together session on coming up with solutions. That's what the American people thought was being proposed.

But I would argue that that's not what we're seeing from the White House. I think that it's something that concerns all of us greatly. The number one worry right now, I think, of the American people when you cut through all the stuff that you watch on 24-hour news, the number one concern of the American people is, We don't trust you to listen to us anymore. We want you to listen to what we're saying. We've told you in our polls, but not just in the polls now. Somebody will say, well, one poll favors this group and one poll favors that group.

There's another sort of a poll that has taken place in just the recent past and, that is, we have had three elections here and this is the American people casting their opinion in the media of public opinion—a vote. We used to tell jurors that the only thing more important than serving on a jury if you're a juror is casting your vote, because all of this freedom that we have depends upon your vote. All of this prosperity that we create depends upon your vote. So you should cherish that vote.

Well, Americans do cherish that vote. And I would argue that in New Jersey, in Virginia, and most recently in Massachusetts the polls are in. What those polls say is, We don't like what's going on right now in the majority. Look at these colors. Red is the Republicans. This is arguably the most Democrat State in the entire country. And look at what the polls show, that the American people said, Enough is enough. What we're looking for, we don't care what party this guy's in; we're looking for a guy that will listen to us. And BROWN is a man that will listen to them; and they voted for him.

You can't have a State with the kind of Democrat numbers that Massachusetts has and not realize that Democrats voted for him. They had to. The numbers are overwhelmingly Democrat in that State. Which is a message to us here, that we're looking for somebody we can trust; we don't care what party he's in. I would argue that the same thing happened in Virginia which, if you look at those numbers compared to the Presidential numbers, or New Jersey which you look at those numbers

compared to the Presidential numbers, there was a great shift in the public saying, We don't trust the folks that are running the show right now and we want something else.

I really don't think that they were thinking like politics. I really think they were thinking like Americans. Our Founding Fathers never wanted us to make our decisions based upon what political party we belonged to. They wanted us to make our decisions upon what's good for the country, and what's good for the people of the country. And I think the message we're hearing from the tea party groups that you hear from and from the other groups that are making very vocal, loud outcries, saying to us, Just listen. Stop talking and start listening to what we are asking you. The driver right now that they're asking us to listen to is their outcry against massive change in 18 percent of our economy in the health care field. They want to make sure that they've got coverage for their families and that medical care is affordable. They don't need a million more bureaucrats to tell them how to do that; that new regulations don't solve their problem. Commonsense solutions solve their problem.

The President has had, and I will argue still has but the time line is getting short, a golden opportunity to step up and make this a true summit on bipartisanship. But it should start at a minimum with him doing what JOHN BOEHNER did on the floor of this House and dropping those two bills in the trash can and saying, Ladies and gentlemen, we are here to work out our issues, and all previous work is not on the table. We're here to start anew, and we can do it together. And, hey, if that's what's coming, that's the way it ought to be.

I will tell you, I don't think that's what's coming, and I think the indications are clear. Just recently, the White House made a statement that the bill passage is one thing and the media event is another. So it is a media event that's being created by the White House. The campaign is over, Mr. President. It's time for us to sit down and act like we're supposed to.

This is not a parliamentary government. This is a Republic. This is a separate but equal branch of government over here in the Congress and our voices should be heard, not played with. I have great concern about what we're getting ourselves into on Thursday.

There's a couple of things that have been said by the media, and I'm not going to go into them in any detail, but they're all basically saying, Watch out. This is not really a bipartisan reachout. This is really a media performance. And because the bill—and let me make something very clear. I don't want to use the term "bill." What the President brought out this morning is not legislative language; it is not a bill that says in black and white what changes need to be made. It is a series

of suggestions and most of the references are to line and page and section of the Senate version of the health care bill. So you've got to start with 2,000 pages and then go in and tweak them.

There's only one thing harder than trying to sit down and read a 2,000-page bill. And seeing as I used to do this kind of stuff for a living, I can make this argument very effectively. It's much harder to go through and comprehend the whole bill and then reference a change on line 1, page 7, paragraph 2, because then you've got to read what was there, read what was not there, and then figure out how it fits the context of 2,000 pages.

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So amendments are even more difficult for the person who's in the business of doing it, and we're in the business of doing it. But for the average citizen, it becomes—not that they're not smart enough to do it. It is so dad-blamed tedious that you don't want to do it. It'll drive you off a cliff. And that's the kind of thing that the American people are tired of. They want it to be simple. So we're starting with 2,000 pages and tweaking 2,000 pages. This is not what we're asking for in the way of a summit.

I see my good friend from Wyoming is back, and we're glad to have her. I'll yield to her for whatever comments she wants to make.

Mrs. LUMMIS. I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding, and I have many of the same questions that Americans have.

I was on an airplane returning to Washington, D.C., today when I learned of the President's proposal; that it was not his intention to have a summit this week where members of the majority party and the minority party had an opportunity to bring ideas to the table; that it would not be an opportunity to take the House minority party bill, the Senate majority party bill, the House majority party bill, and find where the overlap is among all those bills, and then spend their time on February 25 concentrating on the areas of overlap.

That's what the American people want us to do. That's what my constituents told me they hoped would happen on February 25. They were hoping that when we were home for the President's Day work period last week that there was an effort here in Washington to find out where's the commonality among all those bills and how might that common ground be front and center to the discussion on February 25.

Now, today, as I have arrived back in Washington, I've learned that, although the Congressional Budget Office hasn't told us how much they believe President's proposal will cost, the President's own people believe that it will cost in the vicinity of \$950 billion, just under the trillion dollar mark; that it will include over \$600 billion in taxes; and that, even though it will

provide opportunities for all States to be treated under Medicaid the same way that Nebraska is under the Senate bill, that, in fact, the special deals that were cut for Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, and other States have not been altered. Furthermore, I heard one of my majority party House colleagues on another interview program this evening explaining that there's still hope that a public option, government-run health care is part of this package.

So I would ask the gentleman from Texas or our colleague from Georgia, a physician, who has joined us to let us know and enlighten me and members of the public via C-SPAN this evening, do we know what's in the President's proposal? Has it received the approval of both the majority party people who will be attending the summit and the minority party people? Do we even know who's going to be in attendance at the summit? Do we know the format of that summit? Will the President be leading this group and only explaining his proposal or will all in attendance have an opportunity to bring aspects of the health care debate forward?

For example, will there be a debate on what really are the issues that every one of us knows needs to be discussed: things like portability; things like addressing the problem of pre-existing conditions being uninsured under many insurance policies today, and the issue of having an affordable insurance policy for high-risk individuals as well as the general population, and also, the issue of having a level playing field for tax treatment, whether you're self-employed or you have an employer.

These are the issues that I've heard about for the last 8 months, over and over, that people want addressed individually, bill by bill, debated, amended, and agreed upon in the House and the Senate; not these big, comprehensive omnibus bills that have so many provisions that have not been discussed, have not been vetted and are not well understood either by the Members here or by the general public.

And I yield back to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CARTER. And I thank the gentlelady for her comments. And I agree with you. You've nailed it, what the American people are looking for. That's just exactly what I was talking about. They're looking for something, they, for the first time in many generations, and it's a real joy for those of us who believe in our Republic. They are wanting to be involved, and they're doing it by stepping up at every level and saying, Give me something I can understand because I want to be able to comment. I want to be able to tell my Representative or my Senator how I feel about it, and don't hide it in a gigantic monster omnibus proposal. Put it out there on the table in a form that I can understand so I know what you're doing to my life.

The President made some proposals, and this is a summary. I'm not reading

from proposals, but some of the proposals' details that he's put forward are going to be \$500 to \$700 billion worth of new taxes, \$500 billion of Medicare cuts again, new taxes and insurance mandates on businesses during this recession.

The White House says this bill will raise health—they admit it will raise health care costs. It'll probably cut millions of jobs over 5 years, raise the insurance premiums is what they're doing, mandates individual coverage under threat of jail time, which is why the administration wants Gitmo cleaned out, and eliminates pro-life protections in the House bill. Those are just some of the things that they've more or less admitted that they've done with this bill.

Now, that's not the kind of stuff the American people want to hear. And plus, they know, the American people have learned in this debate that the devil is in the details. And so, even if these were acceptable, the details are where these gigantic bills come from.

So I've got my good friend, PAUL BROUN from Georgia. He is here to give us the wisdom of the physician, and I yield to him what time he may consume.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Thank you, Judge CARTER. I really appreciate you yielding to me tonight and appreciate you doing these Special Orders as we look at the President's proposal.

I went on the White House Web site this morning and looked at all of the parameters that were put forth, and I was looking for some legislative language. There's no bill. All they've put out is bullet points. So I went down through all those bullet points to try to figure out what's going on so that I could help inform my constituents in the Georgia's 10th Congressional District what the President was all about.

Now, let me back up a minute and say when the President announced that he was going to have a summit with Republicans and Democrats, that it was going to be televised, actually I was very hopeful that maybe we were going to get some bipartisanship, maybe we were going to get something done for the American people in the right way. But the more I've learned about that, the more I'm very fearful that this is nothing but political showmanship. It's a ruse.

The President, in secret—we don't have any clue of who is involved in putting together all these proposals that he's put forward. But in looking at those proposals, he says, if you have insurance, you can keep it.

Well, in the House bill, we saw that if you have insurance, you can't keep it. And we have a lot of people over here on the Democratic side that are very much in favor of nobody being able to keep their private insurance. They want to go to a single-party payer system, the government-run system. And, in fact, the President himself has said that the public option, or even the government exchange, is the first step to-

ward getting the government to run everybody's health care. So a bureaucrat in Washington, DC, is going to tell my medical colleagues—I'm a medical doctor, as you know, Judge—is going to tell my medical colleagues how to treat their patients.

Well, in reading the President's proposals, nothing has changed. There's going to be a government exchange, and the vise is going to be put on small businesses as well as individuals so that they can't afford to keep their private insurance. It's going to run people away from their private insurance and run them into the government exchange so the government can control your health care, and that's not right.

It's going to be extremely expensive. It creates all these new taxes. We hear about all these tax cuts, but the tax cuts have not been fleshed out. We don't have any clue what they mean. And frankly, we do know that there are going to be tax increases on virtually everybody.

So it's going to destroy the quality of health care. It's going to mean that doctors, when they see their patients, can't make medical decisions because some bureaucrat in Washington, DC, is going to make those decisions for the doctor.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Will the gentleman yield for just a second?

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. You bet. Sure.

Mrs. LUMMIS. You mentioned something that I'm curious about. In one of the little summaries that I read when I arrived back in Washington today, it said that they were reducing the penalty for noncompliant health insurance under the Internal Revenue Code, but that implies that you cannot keep your health insurance if you want to because it implies that there is still going to be a requirement under the President's proposal that your insurance comply with government approval.

So, how can the President say, if you like your insurance you can keep it, when the fact of the matter is, if your insurance does not comply with government standards, that you will be penalized under the Internal Revenue Code for keeping that insurance?

And I yield back.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Well, Mrs. LUMMIS is exactly right. And that's the point I'm trying to make is that if you like your insurance you can't keep it. It's going to be too expensive. And this plan that the President has put forward is going to push everybody out of their private insurance on to a government insurance exchange; thus, the government is going to eventually take over the whole health care system.

But what I was fixing to say is that a patient can't make the decisions themselves either. So this is totally geared, it's a slippery slide into a government-run health insurance program so that the Federal Government is going to tell doctors and hospitals how to treat their patients, and tell pa-

tients, small businesses, individuals, about whatever kind of insurance. And if you don't take the government's insurance exchange, well, it actually mandates that you have insurance, which is totally unconstitutional.

Actually, the whole bill is unconstitutional that we saw in the House. The whole bill that we saw from the Senate is unconstitutional. I don't find anywhere in this document, the Constitution of the United States, anywhere that the Federal Government has the authority to take over the health care system in America. So that's what the President's proposal will do. That's what the House bill does. That's what the Senate bill does.

And the President said we're going to have this bipartisan meeting, and I was very hopeful, as I said previously. But our leadership, I've talked to them individually. They went to the President in a private meeting. The President said, You start with my plan. He's told our leadership, Republicans are going to have to accept some things that you don't like. He said that he would not take the ramrod over in the Senate of budget reconciliation off the table. And this is what they're talking about today.

Just today the President's spokesman has said, We're going to run it through no matter how we can get it, over all of the public's wishes. Seventy percent of the American public, in the latest poll I saw, said that either we start over or do nothing, 70 percent.

But why is this being forced down the throats of the American people? It's because this administration, the leadership in the House and the Senate, want to take over health care, and that's the only reason that they're doing this. And they think, I believe that they think that if they do it now, that maybe the economy will get better and they won't be punished so much at the ballot box in November.

But this is going to be disastrous. It's going to destroy the quality of health care. It's going to take the choice away from patients, away from doctors. It's going to mean that everybody's health care cost is going to go up. And Mrs. LUMMIS, the reason CBO has not scored it is because they said today they cannot score it because of all these gigantic tax increases and other things that the President proposed.

So this summit on the 25th is nothing but political showmanship. It's trying, in my opinion, to make it look to the American people like we're working in a bipartisan way, but we're absolutely not doing so. And it's a ruse. It's absolutely a ruse. And the American people deserve better, should demand better, should demand something totally different. And it's up to the American people to tell their Congressmen and their Senators, We're not going to have a government takeover of health care forced down our throats. We say no. And if you don't say no to this government takeover, we're going to say no to you in November. So I hope the American public will do that.

And I yield back to the judge.

Mr. CARTER. Thank you.

Reclaiming my time, you said something that I think is important because I'm going to tell you that I'm concerned that all this is is a media event and all this is—so I'm going to ask people to listen for some things that probably will come out of this event. I think you may hear that the President reached out a hand and the Republicans gave back a fist. I think you may hear that the Republicans continue to be the Party of No. Well, first, what's wrong with being the Party of No if it's bad policy?

You got elected to come down here and represent people who expected you to stand up and say, This is bad. No.

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Secondly, let's get this very clear. The Republicans don't have any way to stop this bill, especially in this House. They have an overwhelming majority. It's their party they can't get the votes from. It's not the Republican votes blocking this bill; it's the Democrat votes that are blocking this bill.

So this whole thing, if we're going with the same work product they've already created, then it is a sham to go over there and deal with the work product that has already been created because they know they can't pass it, and they know the American people don't want them to pass it. So let's do what he said he was going to do and let's start over.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. I submit the Republican Party is the party of k-n-o-w, know, because we know how to lower the cost of health care.

I introduced a bill—that's H.R. 3889—which is a comprehensive health care financing reform, and we put doctors and patients in charge of their health care dollars, health care expenses.

We know how to give patients the ownership of their insurance so that they can solve the portability problems. We know how to insure the uninsured as well as the uninsured in this country. We know how to stimulate the economy and to create jobs. But every effort that we've made to do all of these things has been blocked by the leadership of the Democratic Party.

We are the party of k-n-o-w. We do know how to do those things.

I have sent the President a letter. In fact, I have reached out to the President. He said if anybody has any ideas, please contact him. I have made many efforts to reach out to him to stimulate the economy, create jobs, to solve the health care financing crisis, to lower the cost of health care. Guess how many times I've been responded to. Zero. The White House is not interested in hearing from this doctor. And in fact, there is not a single medical doctor that's been invited to the White House on the 25th of February.

I am the vice chairman of the Doctors Caucus, the GOP Doctors Caucus here in this House. And nobody from the Doctors Caucus, the chairman,

none of us vice chairmen—me and another co-vice chairman—have not been invited. Dr. MICHAEL BURGESS, who is on the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Health Subcommittee, he has not been invited as far as I know. So not a single doctor has been invited to this meeting on Thursday, the 25th of February. They don't want to hear from us.

They have one agenda, and that is to force down the throats of the American people a government-run health care system. And that is actually what, if you read all of the parameters of what the White House put out on their Web site today, that is exactly where it's going to lead. And the President himself said that is what he wants to do.

It's up to the American people to stop it, to contact their Congressmen, contact their Senators, and say "no" to this government takeover of health care. We will not fall for this trick, this ruse, this political theater that is going to come about on Thursday, not fall for that trick and understand that this is not a reaching out.

And just like you said, Judge CARTER, I think you're going to hear a lot of things: We reached out to the Republicans, but they're obstructionists. They have no ideas, no ideas whatsoever. They're the Party of No. Well, we are the party of k-n-o-w. We can solve these problems.

And let me say one other thing before I yield back. I have challenged Democrats individually, as well as I wrote an op-ed with two of our colleagues, JOHN SHADEGG and CHARLEY DENT, challenging Democrats to introduce a bill that would do four things: Number one is to have across-State-line purchasing for individuals and for businesses; number two, to establish association pools so that anybody could join any kind of association in this country and have these huge pools to offer one or more insurance products; number three, to establish State high-risk pools to cover the uninsurable; and number four, to have tax fairness to give 100 percent tax deductibility for all health care expenses.

I've had Democrat after Democrat say, PAUL, I'd like to do that. I'd like to introduce it. I told them we'd give them the legislative language. All they had to do is write their name in the blank, and the three of us Republicans would work it on our side. I think we'd get 100 percent of the Republicans to vote for that bill, and we'd get most of the Democrats. But Democrat after Democrat after Democrat has told me individually, privately, I can't do it because my leadership will punish me if I were to introduce that bill and work it on my side.

We need to step back, clear the deck. Let's go ahead and start off and work off in an incremental bipartisan way to find a commonsense market-based solution so that people's insurance is lower than it is today and that they and their doctors are in control of their health care decisions. And that is what

we're trying to do on the Republican side.

Mr. CARTER. I will yield to the gentlelady from Wyoming.

Mrs. LUMMIS. I thank the gentleman for yielding because I have questions. My questions are the same kinds of things that my constituents are asking: Are Republicans just going to be window dressing in this event? Why were we invited if the President is going to take yet another bill drafted by Democrats just as the House-passed bill was, just as the Senate-passed bill was, and now the President has a bill? Why are the Republicans even being included now when the bill that the President is proposing is not yet in draft form, is only in talking points? How is it going to be a bipartisan summit when the party that makes it bipartisan is not really asked to participate in the crafting of the legislation?

I yield back.

Mr. CARTER. You brought up something that has bothered me about this whole process since the day it started.

First off, I would argue, and I think that the evidence shows overwhelmingly, that we are being treated as—both the Republican minority and the American people—by a group of folks who believe that the elite of their party are just smarter than the rest of us, and they don't have time nor inclination to fool with us because they are, you know, the elite of our country, the great liberal masses and progressives they call themselves now, who have figured out all of the solutions to society's woes. And our opinions are not asked for.

Now, what is the evidence that will prove that? I will submit my two pieces of evidence. To start off with will be the House bill, which basically was drafted behind closed doors by the Democrats and their elitist staff groups. I submit the Senate bill, drafted exactly the same way. I submit the rules which allowed almost no amendments offered from the Republican side in the piece of garbage that they created.

And then I would submit the President has just done the exact same thing with his talking points he submitted to us saying, Oh, by the way, here's what we're going to talk about. That is not a bipartisan discussion. That is not working together on health care. That is saying, Yes, mama. What else can I do for you? And I am not there. I am not there.

I believe it's our job as Members of this body to stand up to the White House and say, You got all of the playing cards. If you think you can get this thing done, act like a big boy and step up here and do it. But don't start laying off on Republicans, and if you want to say it's a summit, then let's have ideas.

I see I am joined by two of the most courageous colleagues that we have, and one of them is bound to say something. So let me see what my good friend, Mr. GOHMERT, has to say about what's going to happen on Thursday.

My good friend from Texas and a fellow judge, and he always has something good to say. I yield him what time he needs.

Mr. GOHMERT. I appreciate my friend yielding.

This is such a perplexing time.

The American people, the vast majority, have made clear that they don't want what has come through the House and what has come through the Senate. And you know yes, I came from east Texas. I've worked in some pretty nasty barns and fields. And one person said to me, So you're going to go in and compromise, you know, talk about the Senate and the House bill and try to work out a compromise? Because when you try to compromise between one type of horse manure and another type of horse manure, you're still not going to really like what you got unless you're going to use it for fertilizer.

But the thing is we heard last week—I read that a representative of the AARP and unions had said that they had been behind the scenes privately behind closed doors working on a compromise between these bills that the vast majority of Americans said they don't want. And that was going to be unleashed today. Apparently, it was revealed this morning.

So I am really struggling with this. We're going to have negotiations on C-SPAN, but we're not going to do it when it really counts because we got the bill.

We heard from the representatives at AARP and this administration they've been working in secret behind closed doors, like the auto task force that wouldn't even come to Congress and tell us what had been going on behind closed doors. There is no accountability in that. We don't know, as the President promised, who was negotiating for whom. Did the AARP executives get another exemption in this bill so there is no salary cap on them even though they can sell millions in insurance? Did the unions exempt themselves from something else and get a sweetheart deal? We don't know because the C-SPAN cameras weren't there.

But now that the bill has been revealed this morning that was all negotiated in secret, now we're going to have a meeting, and we're going to have Republican leaders and Democrat leaders come together and talk about the bill that was negotiated in secret?

And I tell you, credibility, as my friend, the former judge, knows, whether it's in the courtroom as we dealt with or whether it's in public, credibility is everything. And this massive bill doesn't give a whole lot of time. Seventy-two hours is not much time to go through a massive bill like that and try to figure out the sweetheart deals that are in there because sometimes it's hidden by referencing another law. And then you've got to go chase down that law and see how this affects this, and whether that controls—like the references to ERISA in the big House

bill. Well, that was a sweetheart deal to get some insurance companies on board. And then there was a sweetheart bill to get plaintiffs lawyers on board, and then there was a sweetheart deal for pharmaceuticals in there. But you had to know where to look, and you had to know the other references, and you had to know the effect of bureaucrats' rules on all of those laws. We hadn't had that chance.

But going back to the issue of credibility. Right there at that podium as an invited guest in this Chamber the President of the United States came in here and said as a matter of record, "There are those who claim that our reform efforts would insure illegal immigrants. This too is false." That came out of the President's mouth. "This too is false. The reforms I am proposing would not apply to those who are here illegally." Yet he knew, he knew when he was saying those things that this body passed a bill, and the Senate passed a bill, that did not require identification. And at every level Republicans tried to inject the amendment that you had to identify yourself in order to get access to this Federal taxpayer-funded health care insurance, the public insurance.

Well, he surely had to know that those efforts were beat back at every turn. So there was no requirement to show your identification that you're legally here to get insurance.

So giving the President the benefit of the doubt or just, you know, giving him the benefit of everything, then you'd have to figure, well if he didn't know that that's what had happened, then you're going to have to go in and negotiate with a man who doesn't know what's in a bill or isn't in the bill or what the effect will be, because clearly that bill was going to allow illegal aliens and will, if it's passed. And I haven't had a chance today because we've been so busy up here, haven't had a chance to go through the brand new bill.

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But then the President also said, "Under our plan, no Federal dollars will be used to fund abortions." But the very House bill that we had in here, was the only bill we had to work with at the time, and there was a provision in there that was titled, basically, "Abortions for which Federal dollars may be used."

Obviously I am sure the President would never misrepresent things, so he clearly did not know what he was talking about. And you are going to come in and negotiate about a bill that people there don't know what is in it? You know, we dealt with that with the crap-and-trade bill.

Mr. CARTER. Reclaiming my time for just a moment, there is no bill. The President has given us no legislative language. He has only given us 12 pages of talking points of what he says he is going to propose in a bill. But I know you, and I know you very well, you are

one of the guys around here who want to see the bill, see the legislative language. You go to the trouble to dig down in there. It is kind of I guess a weakness of being an old trial judge. We all want to see what is in the law before we want to rule on it. Well, there is no bill in this particular thing. There is only the President's talking points. And that is another thing. We have got to get this straight. They don't have a bill.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you. That is what concerned me back in September. The President repeatedly said, my bill will not do this, my plan does this, my bill does that, my plan does this. And he says, if you misrepresent my bill, I am going to call you out. Well, I know what it means to be called out back in Texas, but I didn't know what the President meant by calling out. Well, I don't want to give the President rise to call me out because I have misrepresented something. So all I would ask for is what bill he was talking about.

How can anybody say this bill, my bill, this plan, my plan, and they don't have a bill that they are talking about? How can you misrepresent what is in a bill that doesn't exist? It makes it rather frustrating.

But I do know in this document here, and this was put together by the Republican Study Committee, it is a list of just different Republican proposals. This whole thing is one summary after another. And each one of these bills represents many pages. My bill in here is 25 pages. It has some great information, not that I dreamed up, but after visiting with real experts that deal with this stuff all the time, and some of the brightest minds in America. Newt Gingrich did me a favor, sending over some people to visit with me about some of the ideas. That is 25 pages.

There are some great ideas contained in all these many different Republican proposals. And yet we are told you can't make any preconditions for this meeting, and yet here is our 12-page proposal, and that is our precondition. You would meet with Ahmadinejad—and this is something my friend Mr. KING pointed out—how could somebody agree to meet with a man who is proud of being the former President of a terrorist country and wants to destroy the United States, clearly wants to wipe Israel off the map, and you will sit down with a nut like that with no preconditions. But that is a terrorist, it is okay, we will meet with no preconditions with him. But with Republicans, they are worse than terrorists. We have got our preconditions, and you can't have any. That is really not right.

It is not right when we are talking about something as important as not merely the health of Americans, but we are talking about government control of virtually every private aspect of your life. If this were just about health care, it would be rough enough. But you don't have over 2,000 pages, as we

did in the health care bill here in the House, and not intrude into so many areas, including the requirement, a shall, one of the many shalls it required was a study by the Secretary of Health and Human Services with the Secretary of Labor shall conduct a study of businesses.

And it goes through a list of different things they are supposed to look for, the kind of benefits the employees get. And one of them is whether or not particular companies are making decisions that will allow them to remain solvent. It is government at an intrusion like never seen before in this country.

Mr. CARTER. Thank you, Mr. GOHMERT. Reclaiming my time, Mr. KING, I think we have about 3 minutes. Do you want to be heard very briefly?

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the judge from Texas, and I appreciate the chance to address you, Mr. Speaker, here on the floor of the House.

I tell you, I am full of amazement that the President of the United States can make a proposal that he wants to come out here and negotiate on health care, and yet he doesn't want to negotiate on health care. He insists on bringing forward one or another of the bills that passed the House or the Senate, but he apparently doesn't have a bill yet. Bill Clinton had a bill. Hillary Clinton actually had a bill. This President actually doesn't have a bill. He has a position.

We asked him if he was going to keep his word and present his legislation at least 72 hours before it would be voted on. It is quite interesting that the platitudes that the President has released in bullet points this morning at 10 o'clock happens to be 72 hours precisely until such time as the meeting starts at the Blair House on Thursday at 10 o'clock in the morning. So there is 72 hours to digest some platitudes, but all the while that is going on, and you have spoken of it very well, then the secret meetings have been taking place in the White House and wherever. This is something that is clearly being done behind closed doors, in formerly smoke-filled rooms, with guards on the outside, albeit there for the security of the people inside the room. We don't know what went on in there.

But the President is not coming to the table looking to negotiate. The President is coming to the table looking to put the reconciliation gun to our head, cock the hammer and say, you can say "yes" on Thursday or we are going to pull the trigger on reconciliation. That is the nuclear option. That is the thing that was intolerable when Republicans discussed it, and I would like to think it is going to end up being intolerable to the American people. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. CARTER. That is a great summary. And that is exactly what the American people need to be looking for. They need to be looking for those words, reconciliation, because the truth is the real loaded gun that is

going to be held to the heads of those who go to negotiate is reconciliation, which will mean we are not interested in Republican input, and we are going to bypass it.

RESTORE FISCAL DISCIPLINE

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

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

They say that talk is cheap, but for hardworking Americans, the President's talk is very expensive. President Obama has spent the past year making speech after speech about the need for Washington to restore fiscal discipline. But what he says isn't what he does.

During the campaign, Obama promised he would go through the budget line by line to reduce spending. But it seems as though a few lines is all that he has cut. The President began his campaign last spring when he rushed to the microphone to announce his order to his cabinet to reduce spending by \$100 million. Then he went to the podium to tout more fiscal restraint by announcing a spending freeze. But we quickly learned that it affects less than 20 percent of the budget.

Recent press reports reveal he cut \$1 million in funding for an Olympic scholarship program, and another \$2 million subsidy for cotton and peanuts. If the President is serious about fiscal discipline, he is going to have to remove more than a couple of peanuts from his Federal budget. These meager cuts are just another example of the administration's arrogance, ignorance, and incompetence.

The President has proposed a \$3.8 trillion budget for 2011, boosting the deficit to a record high of \$1.6 trillion, a record he broke last year when he introduced a budget with a \$1.4 trillion deficit. Let me put that into perspective. The average deficit when Republicans were in power was \$104 billion. The average deficit now that Democrats are in control is \$1.1 trillion. What that means is each man, woman, and child owes \$46,000 apiece.

As hardworking Americans are struggling to balance their checkbooks, they are frustrated that Congress can't do the same. They aren't just frustrated, they are angry. I share the concerns of the American people. That is why I have introduced H.J. Resolution 75, which is a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution, aimed at reigning in the chronic deficits in spending.

We absolutely must stop the outrageous spending by Congress. Our children and grandchildren's future depend upon our doing so. My amendment would make sure that government does not spend more than it takes in. My amendment would also make sure that any extra revenue would be returned to the taxpayers at the end of the year.

After decades of deficit spending it is time to make balancing our budgets the rule, not the exception. For too long Congress has acted as if it has a credit card with no limit and a bill that our children and grandchildren will be forced to pay. Individuals cannot spend more money than they earn, and neither should Washington. The fact is if the family budget cannot afford to go into debt, neither should the Federal budget.

The only way we are ever going to get our economy back on track is by leaving dollars in the hands of individuals, and particularly leaving dollars in the hands of small businesses so that they can buy inventory and can hire permanent employees. Small business is the economic engine that pulls along the train of prosperity in America. We need to stimulate small business, not bigger government.

Congress must now make tough decisions, slow down the rapid growth of government, and get back to the fiscally responsible government that the American people expect and demand. I am committed to doing just that. I urge my colleagues to join in this effort, and I urge the American people to demand a balanced budget from this Congress.

DEFENDING THE CONSTITUTION

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

Mr. KING of Iowa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate being recognized to address you here on the floor of the House of Representatives. I appreciate my colleagues that have spoken in the hour previous and those that will perhaps join me in the hour that ensues at this point.

As one can tell from listening to that dialogue, we can clearly see that there is a high degree of concern about the direction America is going. I would like to get into that pretty deeply, but I also recognize that my friend from Georgia has something left unsaid, and so I would be very happy to yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN).

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Thank you, Mr. KING. I appreciate you yielding.

You have a document there that I know you are going to explain it, but I want to say before I have to leave that my name is on that document. It is the Declaration of Health Care Independence. In fact, I recently signed a copy of the Declaration of Independence. I was honored to do so, as I was honored to sign the Declaration of Health Care Independence.

But what I want to say is the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States cannot be separated. And in fact, the Declaration of Independence in itself, the original declaration penned by Thomas Jefferson, set out the philosophies of