

complications from undiagnosed diabetes, prediabetic, and gestational diabetes.

November is American Diabetes Month. I have cosponsored H. Res. 1690, a resolution recognizing November as American Diabetes Month, and I encourage Members to visit diabetes.org to learn of the ABCs of diabetes and keeping it under control.

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

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

PUTTING WASTEFUL DEFENSE SPENDING ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, last week the cochairs of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform released their draft proposal. I don't agree with all of their recommendations, but I am encouraged to see that they believe wasteful Pentagon spending can and must be a prime target.

For years I have been calling for substantial cuts in the kinds of defense systems and programs, many of them left as relics from the Cold War, that are doing absolutely nothing for modern-day military preparedness.

The Congressional Progressive Caucus has outlined specific cuts totaling more than \$600 billion. I am pleased, for example, that the Commission shares our contempt for the V-22 Osprey, which has been notorious for cost overruns as well as safety problems that have led to the accidental deaths of 30 servicemembers; billions of dollars over budget for a weapons system that is killing our own people. Not a good deal. Not a good deal for the taxpayers, to say the least.

Likewise, I am inclined to support the Commission's proposal to eliminate one-third of overseas military bases, and I agree that it is time to pull the plug on the Marine Corps' Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, which breaks down every 8 hours on average and doesn't steer well in water.

On the other hand, I don't agree with the Commission that any kind of salary freeze is the way to go. The last thing we should do is take out our fiscal woes on the men and women, civilian or uniformed, combat or noncombat, charged with protecting the country.

My hope instead is that this body will consider some of the other Congressional Progressive Caucus recommendations. For example, has our military defense system really justified its enormous expense? And what about

our nuclear weapons stockpile? We could save \$15 billion a year by reducing that number of warheads to 1,000, which is still enough, Mr. Speaker, to blow up that world many, many times over.

There has been much noise made on the other side of the aisle about the size of government and supposedly out-of-control Federal spending. But many of the same folks using those talking points haven't exactly shown great restraint when it comes to the defense budgets. So I will be curious to see when they take over the majority in January, will they move to cut bloated defense programs, or does their zeal for spending cuts extend only to those domestic programs that are helping struggling families get through a recession?

That bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is this: You are not serious about closing the deficit unless you are prepared to put military spending on the table. By recommending specific cutbacks on the defense side, the Deficit Commission has at least started the conversation.

Of course, the Commission doesn't really address the elephant in the room, the ongoing war in Afghanistan and our continued military commitment in Iraq. Together their cost has already exceeded \$1 trillion over the last decade. And what have we gotten for the expense? A foreign policy blunder of epic proportions, one that has cost thousands of Americans their lives without truly stabilizing the countries we invaded, without combating terrorism in a meaningful way, without advancing our national security interests.

Fiscal responsibility, Mr. Speaker, and enormous cost savings; yet one more reason to bring our troops home and bring them home now.

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

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

FAREWELL REMARKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I will leave Congress at the end of this session with a sense of duty fulfilled, having given my all to the people of the 21st District of Florida, who have honored me by electing me and reelecting me to nine terms in Congress.

I feel deep satisfaction not only in the achievements of my term of service, such as the codification into law of the U.S. embargo on the Cuban tyranny, requiring the liberation of all po-

litical prisoners without exceptions, and the scheduling of free and fair multiparty elections in Cuba before the President of the United States can lift U.S. sanctions; or the Nicaraguan adjustment and Central American Relief Act, which granted legal residency in the United States to hundreds of thousands of our Central American brothers and sisters who were previously facing deportation. My most profound satisfaction comes from having given my all, each and every day, to my constituents.

□ 1810

I, as a private citizen, will work to help the freedom fighters inside Cuba who are resisting the brutality of the Castro tyranny with ultimate courage and patriotism. They are my heroes. As Cuban political prisoner Angel Moya wrote from his dungeon in the Castro-Cuban gulag a few days ago: "My spirit is the same; it is full of joy because I am in prison for fighting for the dignity and rights of the Cuban people. I am ready to continue resisting—physically, morally, and spiritually." Mr. Speaker, I will continue to do all in my power to help in the struggle for the freedom of Cuba.

This country, the United States of America, is a miracle—a miracle of generosity of spirit, a miracle of freedom, of human dignity, and opportunity. May God forever preserve and protect this great land and people. For the rest of my days I will feel deeply honored to have been a Member of the Congress of the United States of America.

To all of my colleagues, those who have helped me and those who have opposed me, thank you. Thank you for the honor of having been able to serve along with you.

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

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

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

(Mr. PAUL 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 Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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

(Mr. GRAYSON 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 New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

HEALTH CARE AND THE NEW CONGRESS

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I want to do what I do often, which is come to the floor of the House and talk to my colleagues on both sides about the issues that remain in health care. This Congress, as it winds down in its last days, has certainly seen and done some dramatic work and has seen some dramatic pushback by the American people on some of the work that's been done.

So I thought it might be useful as we wind up this last part of the 111th Congress, the Congress that will forever go down in history as that which has fundamentally changed the way every man, woman, and child in this country receives and will receive health care for the next several generations, I thought it appropriate to talk a little bit about how we got to where we are, and quite frankly what I see over the horizon, what is likely to occur in the next Congress that convenes in the early part of January.

Certainly, when you look at the history that was written by this Congress, starting off with all the bright prospects in early 2009, in January 2009, and even going back a few months before that, I honestly thought that the health care bill that would see the light of day in the House was something that would actually be written by the Senate Finance Committee before this Congress was ever sworn in. I was, frankly, surprised when the Congress was sworn in and in fact inauguration day came and went and there was no introduction of a health care bill.

Then, of course, we all remember that there was a former Senate majority leader who was asked to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services, but that nomination got derailed by some tax difficulties and that post remained vacant for several months. During that hiatus, no health care bill came to the floor of the House. And it really wasn't until Senators Kennedy and BAUCUS in early June of 2009 wrote a letter to the President and said, We will in fact introduce our health care bill through our committees, that the

country got a glimpse as to what was in store for this fundamental restructuring of health care that had been promised by the new administration.

The health care bill that came through the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee in June of 2009 was originally scored by the Congressional Budget Office as costing over a trillion dollars and providing insurance for an additional 13 million people. Well, wait a minute. We were told there were 37 million uninsured. Thirteen million is only about a third of that. Is that all we get for our trillion dollars?

And then, after that Congressional Budget Office report, really all of the discussion for almost the rest of that year became all about cost and coverage numbers and no bill was introduced without a CBO, Congressional Budget Office, score to say what the cost and coverage numbers were going to be. So in fact the Senate Finance Committee did not introduce a bill until much later in the year 2009.

Now in the summer of 2009, three House committees—my committee, the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Committee on Education and Labor, the Committee on Ways and Means, all three simultaneously introduced a health care bill that was large, voluminous, and contained a lot of government control over the lives of every ordinary American. People were concerned when they saw that bill come to the floor of the House in the middle of July of 2009. But every committee reported it out with some amendments by the end of July of 2009, which took us to the August recess.

The August recess of 2009 is something that I suspect no Member who was serving in this body, again, on either side of the aisle, will ever forget, those summer town halls in August of 2009, when people showed up in numbers that were absolutely unprecedented for town halls, at least in my experience, and were concerned about the direction the Congress was taking with this restructuring of the Nation's health care; and in fact of what they had seen, they quite frankly didn't like it and wanted to tell us so.

I had an advantage in my summer town halls in August of 2009 in that having voted against the bill as it left committee, my committee of Energy and Commerce, late in the evening of July 31 before coming home for the August recess, I could honestly say I voted against the bill in committee and would oppose it when it came to the floor because in my opinion it was a terribly flawed product. But during the course of the month of August we heard over and over again from people who were, again, concerned about the direction Congress was taking. And they didn't tell us that some reform was not necessary. What they told us was, You are making us uncomfortable with this approach that changes everything fundamentally about how health care is delivered in the country.

Arguably 60, 65 percent of the country was okay with the way health care was being administered and did not want to see that change. Yes, there were people who had problems. There were problems with preexisting conditions. There were problems with people who lacked the ability to get insurance. But what the country told us during those summer town halls is we'd like you to work on that and not restructure the whole health care system which the rest of us are depending upon to get our health care. But we did precisely the opposite of what we were told.

The other thing we were told is, Could you do something about cost? Is there a way to rein in cost. Is there a way to help us with the cost of health care in the future, because we are legitimately concerned about the rapidly escalating cost of health care and whether that will price us out of the market at some point as well. So those two things: don't disrupt the system as it exists today and help us with cost for the future. Those two things seemed to be absolutely ignored by this United States Congress as it went through the process.

Now, I thought after those very contentious summer town halls that Congress would come back to town in September of 2009 and maybe hit the pause button or the rewind button or at least the stop button for a short period of time and recalibrate this. Clearly, a big, long, thousand-page bill dealing with health care upset a lot of people. Is there a way to come back and do this in a more reasonable fashion. Perhaps just tackling some of those things that the people told us they wanted to see fixed, things like the equal treatment of the Tax Code; things like help for people with preexisting conditions; things like the ability to buy insurance across State lines; things like reform of the medical justice system. Maybe those were the places where we could actually do some good and show some value for the American people.

But, again, it was not to be. In fact, the President of the United States came here to the well of the House and gave us a long discussion about the health care process in the bill and how it was going to go forward. At no time did I hear that maybe we ought to stop for a short period of time and listen to what the August town halls were telling us.

So it was full speed ahead. And later on that fall—actually a year ago, early November of 2009—this House passed the bill that had come through the three committees. Oddly enough, it was a thousand-page bill when it left the committees. It was a 2,000-page bill when it came back to the floor after it emerged from the Speaker's office, presumably with a fair amount of input by the White House and the administration as to the writing of this bill.

□ 1820

It came to the floor of the House. It passed the floor of the House by the