

Mr. POE of Texas. We keep hearing about how great the trillion-dollar stimulus bill was and how well it has worked. It has been 1 year or so, so lest we forget, let's see where some of that stimulus money got spent.

In Buffalo, New York, the State university got about \$400,000 to study the effects of drinking malt liquor while smoking pot. For 3 weeks, 100 people are paid \$45 a day of taxpayer money to drink malt liquor and smoke a little marijuana—this party stupor paid for by Americans throughout the country.

Taxpayers are footing the bill for other parties, like the one in Boca Raton, Florida. But this one is not for people, this one is for lab mice. That is right, Atlantic University is getting about \$15,000 for two summer researchers to measure how alcohol affects a mouse's motor functions. I wonder where the PETA people are on this one. Now, do these drunk lab mice count as jobs saved or jobs created? We don't know.

We are not through. In Nebraska, we are funding another wasteful bridge project. First we had the Cornhusker Kickback, and now Americans are sending \$7 million to Thelford, Nebraska, to build a bridge. That doesn't sound so bad, but this \$7 million bridge is so 168 people don't have to wait so long to cross a railroad track. Sounds like we are wasting money. By the way, that is \$43,000 per person waiting for that train.

And the U.S. Forest Service is getting \$2.8 million in stimulus money to spend on wildfire management in Washington, D.C. But the problem is Washington, D.C. doesn't have a national forest. But that doesn't make any difference to the bureaucrats. In Washington, you don't need a forest to get wildfire management funds; you just need out-of-control spending.

The Florida Department of Transportation, and this is my favorite one of all, is spending \$3.4 million in stimulus funds to build a turtle tunnel in Tallahassee. A turtle tunnel in Tallahassee, Florida; \$3.4 million. That is about four times as much money as the average working American will earn in their entire life. But the stimulus slush fund is doling out \$3.4 million for the turtle tunnel for turtles to cross the highway. Before we had a stimulus bill, Mr. Speaker, how did the turtle cross the road? For that money we could get the turtles limos to cross that street.

The Picher Housing Authority in Oklahoma, here is another one, received \$135,000 in stimulus money to remodel homes and businesses at the Tar Creek Superfund site. The most obvious problem with that scenario is the Tar Creek Superfund site is scheduled to be destroyed. It is going to be remodeled and then destroyed. Only the Federal Government would spend taxpayer money to fix up a home and then a few years later pay to tear it down.

Mr. Speaker, this whole philosophy of the stimulus project and fiasco is a flawed premise. It is the idea that we

can take taxpayer money and give it to the government, and then the government can decide how special folks, special projects will get that money and spend that money for government make-work programs. See, these aren't real jobs; these are jobs that the taxpayers have to pay for, jobs that aren't permanent, that will eventually go away.

Real jobs are not created by Uncle Sam. Real jobs are created by the private sector. We call those people small business communities. And they can make real jobs where other taxpayers don't have to pay for those jobs. And that is when more businesses have more of their own money, rather than paying taxes to the Federal Government so the government can decide which special friends throughout the government to get this stimulus money.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are fed up with this insanity. They are telling Washington stop the spending. They are saying no, stop the spending. Stop the wasteful projects. Stop the fraud, stop the abuse. Stop borrowing money. We don't have the money for all these projects, so we borrow it. And of course we borrow it from our friends, the Chinese. Sixty percent of our debt is owned by the Chinese. And of course someday there is going to be a day of reckoning. We are going to have to pay back that money. And that will be paid back in the form of taxes or it will be paid back by people yet to be born.

The White House seems to want to spend the people into the poor house, mortgage off their homes, the mineral rights, and then pay for this massive spending bill.

And that's just the way it is.

PROBLEMS WITH THE REPUBLICAN HEALTH CARE PLAN

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, after more than 70 years of false starts on fixing health care, the Congress is on the brink of passing sensible, comprehensive reform legislation. We are extremely close to giving all Americans access to quality, affordable health care, while reducing the deficit. After a year of trying to instill fear in the American public about the Democratic approach to fixing our broken health care system, my Republican colleagues have really entered the debate. I commend my colleague from Wisconsin for putting forward the Republican plan.

The sweeping Republican bill lets the public know where their party truly stands. Their bill would radically reorganize both the health care system and the Social Security system. Once again, they want to spend more time hating government than helping people.

The Republicans want to give the seniors a voucher. A voucher government. If you qualify, you get a little check and then you are on your own to deal with the insurance companies and Wall Street. The Republicans wish the American people the best of luck. If you aren't lucky enough to outsmart Wall Street and the insurance executives with the rules stacked against you, well, that's too bad.

Under the Republican plan, you will likely end up sick and poor, but they think you will love the free market choices you have had on the way down. Sadly, the Republican plan is filled with the same old policies to dismantle Medicare and Social Security that they have been putting forward for decades.

To understand the clear difference between the different approaches, let's look at health care. Health care is big, and a complex part of our economy, and it needs thoughtful and common-sense approaches. Instead, the Republicans have put forward a plan that would put more Americans at risk, drive millions into bankruptcy, lock in the skyrocketing costs, and enrich the insurance companies. In the Republican plan, insurance companies could get richer while Americans get poorer and sicker.

The Republican approach to health care has two parts. First, the Republicans would give American seniors a voucher for health care and do nothing to keep the insurance companies from taking them to the cleaners. The Republican plan would essentially do away with the Medicare program as we know it today, which many seniors rely on.

The hypocrisy of the Republican plan is maddening. They say one thing and do another approach is really reprehensible. The Republicans not only want to dismantle Medicare, but at the same time they denounce the Democratic plans to stop wasteful spending in the program.

The second part of the Republican plan puts health savings accounts at the center of the program. Health savings accounts have existed for years. These accounts are small, and history shows that many Americans underfund them or can't use them. When illness strikes, any significant co-payment or deductible can wipe out a family's savings in a minute.

Finally, the Republican plan does more to take our health care system down the road to ruin. It goes another step and privatizes Social Security. After the Wall Street meltdown, the crazy lesson the Republicans learned was to trust Wall Street with the future of our seniors.

This week we learned that by 2019, national health care spending will be over 19 percent of our economy. That is \$4.5 trillion. If we don't act to control those costs now, people will no longer be able to afford the essentials like housing and food. When the public has to deal with the market to satisfy basic needs, the government has to

make sure the system is fair and that all Americans have access. When it comes to health care and retirement, we have to have commonsense rules.

We must finish the job on health care, and we are going to do it beginning tomorrow at the White House. The Republicans have shown the public their plan, and it is not the solution. They are a rehash of old theories that make things much worse. Instead, we have to pass the commonsense health reform that is on the table and protect Social Security from crazy theories.

AND NOW IT'S ASSASSINATIONS?

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

Mr. PAUL. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What have we allowed ourselves to become? Are we no longer a Nation of laws? Have we become instead a Nation of men who make secret arrests? Are secret prisons now simply another tool of Federal Government law enforcement? Is secret rendition of individuals now permitted, out of misplaced fear? Have we decided that the writ of habeas corpus is not worth defending? Is torture now an acceptable tool for making us safe? Unfortunately, the single answer to all of these questions from the leaders of our country and to many of our citizens appears to be "yes".

And now we are told that assassination of foreigners as well as American citizens is legitimate and necessary to provide security for our people. It is my firm opinion that nothing could be further from the truth. Secret arrests, secret renditions, torture, and assassinations are illegal under both domestic and international law. These activities should be anathema to the citizens of a constitutional Republic.

The real threat doesn't arise from our failure to torture. Rather, desensitizing our Nation to the willful neglect and sacrifice of our civil liberties, fought and died for over the centuries, is the threat.

The concept of habeas corpus existed even before King John of England was forced in 1215 by his rebellious barons to sign the Magna Carta. This basic principle and expression of individual liberty, which has survived 800 years, greatly influenced the writing of our Constitution and our common law heritage.

Today we hardly hear a whimper, either from the American people or a stone silent U.S. Government as our cherished liberties are eradicated. Instead, we have a government that deliberately orchestrates needless fear and makes people insecure enough to ignore the reality of their lost liberties.

The latest outrage is the current administration's acknowledgment that we now have a policy that permits assassination not only of foreign suspects, but of American citizens as well.

Of course the CIA has used secret assassinations in a limited fashion for decades, despite international, domestic, and moral law. When done secretly, as in the past, our government at least recognized that assassination was illegal and wrong. Frighteningly and astonishingly, however, the policy is now explicit.

National Intelligence Director Dennis Blair, in open testimony before the House Intelligence Committee on February 3 of this year, acknowledged that American citizens can indeed be assassinated at our government's discretion. The U.S. Government attempted to assassinate Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen without even charging him with a crime. We are told this evidence is secret, that he does not deserve any constitutional rights, and that some unknown individual in the administration has the authority to declare him a threat, and therefore a legitimate target for assassination.

Yes, I know, he is probably a very bad person. Yes, I know that only a few Americans are on the assassination hit list.

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Yes, I know that artificially generated fear makes a large number of Americans inclined to applaud this effort which supposedly will make us safe. But if this becomes standard operating procedure and a permanent precedent is established, let me assure you that this abuse of the law will spread.

It's time for Congress and the American people to wake up to the realities of the dangers we face. We must remember, as Members of Congress, that we have taken an oath to protect and defend the Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic. It should not be that difficult to distinguish the difference between the danger posed by the underwear bomber and the danger posed by a government that endorses secret prisons, torture, and assassinating American citizens.

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.)

HEALTH CARE SUMMIT

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Tomorrow is an extremely important day here in Washington, D.C., and across the Nation. Tomorrow's a day in which the President will hold a summit on health care. The outcome of that meeting is of extraordinary importance to individuals, to families, and to millions upon millions

of Americans, indeed, the entire Nation. A successful outcome would be one in which we have bipartisan consensus on the critical issues of health care, on how we're going to provide coverage for all Americans, how we deal with the pernicious and all too common insurance company practice of terminating policies when a person becomes ill or denying coverage because of some preexisting condition.

Tomorrow's summit is extraordinarily important in that the outcome of that summit may very well give us insight into how we control the extraordinary increase of cost in health care, a cost that is not sustainable either for individuals or for this economy. We're currently spending somewhere in the range of 17 percent of our current GDP on health care. Compared to the rest of the industrialized nations, that's nearly 60 to 70 percent more than they spend of their wealth. Most every other industrialized nation spends 10 percent or less. We're giving away an extraordinary advantage to our competitors.

Now, if our health care system actually produced extraordinary outcomes for all the population, we might say it was worth it, but the fact of the matter is that our health care system does not. Our population statistics, which are the statistics on how well we are, how long we live, how well our children thrive, how many of them die at birth and in early childhood, all of those statistics would indicate that this Nation's health care system is very, very poor. In fact, we rank below Colombia and other emerging nations around the world.

So what are we going to do?

This House passed a very important piece of legislation that goes to address many of these issues—the issue of how we contain our costs, how we improve our system, how we provide for wellness rather than just sick care—a very complex bill, but one that also provided a very, very important element, the element of a public option.

I'm from California, and 2 weeks ago the largest insurance company providing policies, more than 80 percent of the single-person policies, said, well, I think we're going to increase our rates by up to 39 percent, and that was on top of a similar rate increase in the previous year; some 60 percent increase for those individuals that are not in a group that have to go out and buy insurance on their own, a totally unaffordable situation. And they also announced that in the intervening year, or the year after these increases went into effect, they would willy-nilly, and at their own will and their own desire, increase the cost of those policies, an extraordinary and new event.

Those individuals, in fact, every individual in America needs a public option, a place to go to get a competitive health insurance policy that provides real benefits at an affordable cost. This House passed such a public option.