

His loving arms the families who've given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I ask God to please bless the Brow family and the Gruber family. Bring peace to these families, God, by helping us get this misinformation corrected.

And I'll ask God to please bless the House and Senate that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for God's people.

I will ask God to bless the President that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for God's people.

And I'll ask three times, God, please, God, please, God, please continue to bless America.

I yield back the balance of my time.

BUDGET AUTONOMY FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 30 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I've come to the floor today to inform the Congress of exciting new developments about the major priority for the District of Columbia for this year's Congress. These developments have come very quickly, both in the Congress and in the Nation.

We now have unprecedented momentum, both in the country and here in the Congress, to allow the District to spend its own local funds without coming to the Congress of the United States. That will seem very strange to Members of the public since they've never heard of a local jurisdiction having to bring its own local funds to a national legislature, which had nothing to do with raising those funds, for approval to spend them.

It is an anomaly whose time has passed. And I'm very pleased at the response we are getting in the Congress, and that we have gotten in very little time, less than 6 months.

We see it culminating in a national poll that, in essence, blesses the momentum we are seeing in the Congress for budget autonomy for the District of Columbia. This poll was released just this week, and it's been an important week for the District of Columbia, because the District has just celebrated Emancipation Day. The slaves who lived in the District of Columbia were emancipated 9 months before slaves in the rest of the United States. And there's some analogy here, my friends, because what was not emancipated was the budget of the District of Columbia. And that's what we're trying to free now.

And that's what the American people seem to want, by a very large majority. A polling organization that is bipartisan, called Purple Insights, using the traditional methodologies that you see in all the national polls, asked this question of Americans in all parts of the country, from both parties and Independents.

The question was preceded by the following: The budget of the city of Washington, DC, is funded by local residents' tax dollars. Do you think that decisions about Washington, DC's local budget should be made by Washington, DC, taxpayers and their own elected officials, or should those budget decisions be made by the U.S. Congress?

And here are the results. Seventy-one percent of the American people said the DC budget should be decided exclusively by the DC government. Only 23 percent said that the decisions should be made by the U.S. Congress.

What is most gratifying is the way in which these numbers reflect both parties. The polling organization broke down these numbers, and they were careful to ask people from both parties. For Democrats, the notion that the budget should be decided only by the DC government was 71 percent. But Independents were at 75 percent, and Republicans were at 72 percent. So, no matter where my colleagues come from, their constituents support the bedrock principle—no principle is more American—that if you raise the money, you get to decide how to use it. And you certainly don't go to a national body for approval.

And they looked at men and women. 68 percent of men, and 72 percent of women believe that the local government should decide the local budget and be the final decisionmakers.

If you look at regions of the country, Mr. Speaker, they had the same kind of virtually even breakdown in support of local control. If you look at the Northeast, it's 69 percent. You look at the Midwest, it goes up to 74 percent. You look at the South, it's 68 percent. You look at the West, it's 72 percent.

No red-blooded American is going to say, with a straight face, that you can take my local budget with my money in it and make the Congress the final decision-maker on that budget. That's what this poll shows.

The Republicans and the Democrats are virtually even. But more Republicans say that DC budgets should be made by the local DC government; that's 72 percent, 71 percent Democrats.

If you look at those who oppose, the opposition shows the same breakdown. You have 24 percent of Democrats saying Congress should control the DC budget, and you have 22 percent of Republicans.

Where's your majority here?

The majority is where I think most people would have expected it to be. But I am grateful for a local organization called DC Vote for commissioning this poll. And DC Vote realized that the poll might come under some scrutiny, so it went to a polling organization which is known for its bipartisan reputation in polling.

□ 1600

That, of course, should be all we need to hear, but the fact is we have a parallel development right here in the Congress.

This week, Senator JOE LIEBERMAN announced that he was preparing his own budget autonomy bill for the District of Columbia. Now, Senator LIEBERMAN, who works in a very bipartisan way in the Senate—I am so sorry to see that he has decided to retire—has long been the foremost Senate champion of equal rights for residents of the District of Columbia.

The momentum for budget autonomy began with a Republican chairman in the House, DARRELL ISSA. I will have something to say about how that happened. We then had two more Republican leaders—House Majority Leader ERIC CANTOR and the Republican Governor of Virginia, Bob McDonnell—weigh in for budget autonomy for the District of Columbia. This week, citizens from the organization DC Vote were here in the Congress, speaking to Members about the latest poll results. But let me say something about the Members because it's the Members who have the last say here.

As chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, DARRELL ISSA is responsible in the House for matters that involve the District of Columbia. His committee, and I've been here more than 20 years, had never had a hearing on the DC budget. He decided to have one. He listened to his witnesses, and he listened to the chief financial officer of the District of Columbia and to other District of Columbia officials.

What he heard was that the District of Columbia had the largest budget surplus in the United States, here in the middle of a recession, and that its budget and finances were in better shape than those of virtually any State in the United States. He heard the witnesses from his side as well as our side—the Republican side as well as the Democratic side—and from objective witnesses from the outside saying that the major problem the District faces are the inefficiencies and the premiums it pays on Wall Street because its local budget cannot be implemented until it is approved by the Congress of the United States. This creates huge uncertainty, of course, among bondholders and on Wall Street not of the making of our citizens but due to the fact that the Congress has to approve the City's budget.

Now, I can tell you that no one can remember when the Congress of the United States has changed the City's budget itself, and you can imagine why. A budget is a very delicate document to put together, and Congress does not have the kind of hearings you would have here to know what to take out and what to put in and how to sew it back together again. So what's the point of bringing it over here except tradition? The chairman listened to the problems with bringing the D.C. budget to the Congress and heard even more problems than he expected.

School begins in September, but by the time Congress finishes with the Federal budgets, even the earliest

point is September 30. The reason that most jurisdictions are on a July 1 fiscal year and not a fiscal year that begins on October 1, as the Federal Government does, is precisely because of the importance of schools in every jurisdiction. But in the District, our schools and our city are handicapped by the fact that the budget isn't approved by the time school opens.

That impressed the chairman, apparently, and he was impressed by the fact—and I will soon get to this issue—that the District government has faced shutdowns because its budget was here during fights over the Federal budget, which has resulted in the possibility of the shutdown of the D.C. government.

Chairman ISSA listened at the hearing and did something I've never seen a chairman of a committee do before in my years in the Congress. He listened so intently, heard so well that he announced as the hearing ended that he intended to write a bill for DC budget autonomy. Everyone was surprised. His staff told us they had no idea in advance. Mr. ISSA decided upon hearing the witnesses at his hearing.

That is, I must say to my colleagues and to members of the public, a civics lesson in committee work at its best. The chairman listened. The chairman made a decision. The chairman then went to work.

He worked on several versions of a budget autonomy bill, and exchanged them with me, with the mayor, and with other officials in the city. There were some issues, and we indicated what those difficulties would be operationally. Then, he announced his final proposal for a DC budget autonomy bill. I can tell you that, while it has its own form that clearly bears his signature, in many ways it mirrors my own DC Budget Autonomy Act.

You can imagine how thrilled we were that the chairman of the full committee had, indeed, decided that it was in the best interest of the District of Columbia and in the best interest of the Congress for the District's budget to remain in the District and to be implemented in the same way that the budgets of every other jurisdiction in the United States, except the budget of the District, are implemented. June 30 comes. On July 1, other jurisdictions begin to implement their budget. They prepare for school, and they are ready when school begins.

Mr. ISSA's bill came to the attention of the President of the United States. The President had weighed in the year before for budget autonomy, but upon hearing of Mr. ISSA's bill, he included in his own budget, which was submitted this year, the following language:

Consistent with the principle of home rule, it is the administration's view that the District's local budget should be authorized to take effect without a separate annual Federal appropriation bill. The administration will work with Congress and the mayor to pass legislation to amend the D.C. Home Rule Act to provide the District with local budget autonomy.

That's the President's statement, inspired by the Republican chairman's proposal for budget autonomy. I know that there are many in this Chamber and in the public who see rare instances—perhaps none—of bipartisan ideas from this Congress. There you see one. You see a Democratic President. You see a strong Republican chairman. Mr. Speaker, that is not all.

Mr. ISSA was moved, in part, to address budget autonomy because of the problems the District has had with Federal shutdown threats. Most of America is aware of the shutdown threats. By the skin of our teeth, we barely missed a shutdown a year ago. No one believes, of course, that the underlying issues had anything to do with the District of Columbia budget. Those issues are well-known. They involve disagreements between Democrats and Republicans over Federal issues like the Federal deficit. The District has long had a balanced budget, and as I indicated before, beyond its balanced budget, it has the highest surplus in the United States.

So why is the District of Columbia caught in Federal fights that lead to the possibility of shutdowns of the Federal Government?

□ 1610

If the D.C. budget is here, if the budget of the District of Columbia is here and has not been passed by the Congress—and it usually is not passed until, of course, the Federal budgets are passed, or certainly no sooner than September 30—then the District of Columbia's local budget gets thrown in the pot with a budget of—for instance—Health and Human Services, the Department of Defense, all of the Federal agencies that get shut down, though there's nothing that the District can do to extricate itself from this fight, because this fight does not involve any concession that the District can make—it involves only Federal issues—nevertheless, the District government will get shut down with the Federal Government.

There were three shutdown threats in 2011. The Federal Government didn't get shut down, although I can tell you it came so close to being shut down I don't even like to think about it. The problem is that every time there is the threat of a Federal shutdown, the local government of the District of Columbia has to spend time and money preparing to shutdown, whether or not it occurs.

Imagine your county, imagine your city pulling people together three times to prepare for a shutdown, to prepare for which agencies can keep going and which agencies to shut down. Because in the event of a shutdown, the only agencies that can be kept in operation are essential agencies. Three times the District of Columbia government had to do that. The District of Columbia is going through the same problems that every local jurisdiction is having as we climb out of the Great Recession. You can imagine what a waste of time and energy that was.

That was one of the issues that made Chairman ISSA think through the notion of budget autonomy. I myself have had several bills to keep the District government from shutting down in the case of a Federal Government shutdown. I put in a bill each fiscal year saying that if the Federal Government shuts down, the District can spend its own local funds, no other funds, no Federal funds, nobody can spend those, but its own local funds. Those bills have not passed.

Just 2 months ago, I warned the mayor that we could be headed for a shutdown this year because the Senate and the House have different budgets. An agreement was reached between the two Chambers in the Budget Control Act about the level of spending in 2013. While the Senate has stuck to that number, the House is using another number. So if the two don't agree, and they each come forward with different appropriation bills, the country could be faced again with the possible shutdown of the Federal Government.

That's bad enough for the country, but suppose you were the mayor of the District of Columbia or a member of the city council and had to consider that there could be a shutdown of the District government over the fact that the House and the Senate are using different budget numbers this year? That would be enough to make you, I think, tremble, as I'm sure the District is now as it considers what to do. Of course, Congress is going to try to reach some agreement. But at the moment, they're going in absolutely divergent directions, despite having reached an agreement on what the number would be for the budget this year.

The President, noting these shutdown threats and the cost to the taxpayers of the District of Columbia, did something quite unusual. He not only submitted his views on budget autonomy—that he favored it—he submitted actual language that would keep the District open in case of a shutdown. I would like to submit that language for the record.

The language referred to is as follows:

Consistent with the principle of home rule, it is the Administration's view that the District's local budget should be authorized to take effect without a separate annual Federal appropriations bill. The Administration will work with Congress and the Mayor to pass legislation to amend the D.C. Home Rule Act to provide the District with local budget autonomy.

When the President submits the language to the Congress, that puts a very special emphasis on the need for what he is asking for.

Mr. Speaker, not only have you had the President and Mr. ISSA; the majority leader of this body, Mr. CANTOR, has indicated that he supports budget autonomy. His spokesman said that "he is certainly willing to work with the District toward its goal of budget autonomy." That's the first time that a leader of my friends on the other side of the aisle has indicated public support for budget autonomy.

This afternoon, I want to thank Mr. CANTOR personally for doing so. Mr. CANTOR may have been moved by his own Governor. The Republican Governor of Virginia, Governor Bob McDonnell, wrote to Majority Leader CANTOR indicating that he supports budget autonomy for the District.

One of the reasons he gave was that 100,000 Virginians come to the District of Columbia to work every day in the private and Federal sector, and that if the District government shuts down, those 100,000 residents from Virginia, who had nothing to do with this fight—just as the District of Columbia had nothing to do with the Federal fight—are seriously inconvenienced.

The fact that these two Virginians from our region have spoken out speaks to the practical reality behind budget autonomy. In addition, the Governor of Virginia made it clear he did not see how the mayor of the District of Columbia could run his city when he could not be certain when his budget would be passed. Here you have one chief executive speaking to another, and both from different parties.

The case we think, Mr. Speaker, has been made. It has been made here by the leadership of this body and the leadership of the Senate, and it has been made in the country as leaders have stepped forward to indicate that the rational thing to do, the American thing to do, if you will, is to respect the right of a local jurisdiction to spend its own local money without coming to a national body which has had nothing to do with raising those funds.

If I could inquire, Mr. Speaker, how much time I have remaining?

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 4 minutes remaining.

Ms. NORTON. I want to summarize how much on the same page Democrats and Republicans are on the proposition that D.C. should control D.C.'s local budget. There's nothing radical about that one, my friends. It would be hard to go out in the street of your city or your county and get a different response.

So it's not surprising, but it's very important to have these poll figures, which back up where Chairman ISSA is trying to take us, where Mr. CANTOR is trying to take us, where the Governor of Virginia is trying to take us, where D.C. officials, and, I hope, the Congress will come this year. The polls show very gratifying numbers, but they are numbers that reflect where Americans always are. Americans are, first, local people. They want to do as much locally as possible. They understand that there are national issues. They know that one of those issues is not their own local money.

Mr. Speaker, this week, the District of Columbia celebrated D.C. Emancipation Day, and, of course, it's worthy of celebration, when this city was the first jurisdiction whose slaves were freed by Abraham Lincoln. Isn't it amazing that the Nation's capital had slavery in 1862?

□ 1620

But it is very hard to celebrate Emancipation Day in the District of Columbia when your own local funds cannot be spent by your own local people. We raise about \$6 billion in local funds. It is a very diverse city of people from all walks of life with all levels of income, and there is absolute agreement across all political lines that the one thing we deserve is budget autonomy.

This year was the 150th anniversary of the liberation of slaves by Abraham Lincoln in the District of Columbia. We noted that the slaves had to be very grateful to be liberated because there was nothing they could do to liberate themselves. Armed struggle was certainly not possible for slaves here or anywhere else. Peaceful opposition to slavery would have brought armed struggle against their peaceful opposition, so they had to wait to be liberated.

The people of the District of Columbia understand it is up to them to liberate themselves, but they, too, cannot free themselves entirely. They do not have a Member who has a vote on the floor of the United States Congress. I vote in committee. I do not have the right to vote for final passage of any legislation.

Yet my residents have been in every war the Nation has fought since the Nation was created. We pay federal income taxes at the highest levels. We're second per capita in federal income taxes among the 50 States and the District of Columbia. So you can imagine that it is with some anguish that we send our own local budget to people we respect but people who have contributed nothing to the money we have raised in our city.

I thank all who have supported us here in the Congress, and I look forward to the day, which I hope will be this year, when there will be budget autonomy for the District of Columbia.

I yield back the balance of my time.

“The following is the actual proposal the president included in his fiscal year 2013 budget to prevent a D.C. government shutdown in the event of a federal government shutdown.”

SEC. 817. Section 446 of the Home Rule Act (D.C. Official Code sec. 1-204.46) is amended by adding the following at the end of its fourth sentence, before the period “: Provided, That, notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, effective for fiscal year 2013, and for each succeeding fiscal year, during a period in which there is an absence of a federal appropriations act authorizing the expenditure of District of Columbia local funds, the District of Columbia may obligate and expend local funds for programs and activities at the rate set forth in the Budget Request Act adopted by the Council, or a reprogramming adopted pursuant to this section.” (Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2012.)

PURPLE INSIGHTS POLL, APRIL 5-9, 2012

Q: The budget of the city of Washington, D.C. is funded by local residents' tax dollars. Do you think that the decisions about Washington, D.C.'s local budget should be made

by Washington, D.C. taxpayers and their own elected officials OR should those budget decisions be made by the U.S. Congress?

71% of Democrats believe D.C. should control D.C. local budget

72% of Republicans believe D.C. should control D.C. local budget

75% of Independents believe D.C. should control D.C. local budget

68% of Males believe D.C. should control D.C. local budget

73% of Females believe D.C. should control D.C. local budget

60% with High School or Less believe D.C. should control D.C. local budget

78% with Some College believe D.C. should control D.C. local budget

80% of College Graduates believe D.C. should control D.C. local budget

69% in the Northeast believe D.C. should control D.C. local budget

74% in the Midwest believe D.C. should control D.C. local budget

68% in the South believe D.C. should control D.C. local budget

72% in the West believe D.C. should control D.C. local budget

24% of Democrats believe Congress should control D.C. local budget

22% of Republicans believe Congress should control D.C. local budget

20% of Independents believe Congress should control D.C. local budget

26% of Males believe Congress should control D.C. local budget

20% of Females believe Congress should control D.C. local budget

33% with High School or Less believe Congress should control D.C. local budget

18% with Some College believe Congress should control D.C. local budget

13% of College Graduates believe Congress should control D.C. local budget

26% in the Northeast believe Congress should control D.C. local budget

19% in the Midwest believe Congress should control D.C. local budget

25% in the South believe Congress should control D.C. local budget

6% in the West believe Congress should control D.C. local budget

5% of Democrats do not know whether D.C. or Congress should not control D.C. local budget

6% of Republicans do not know whether D.C. or Congress should not control D.C. local budget

6% of Independents do not know whether D.C. or Congress should control D.C. local budget

5% of Males do not know whether D.C. or Congress should control D.C. local budget

7% of Females do not know whether D.C. or Congress should control D.C. local budget

7% with High School or Less do not know whether D.C. or Congress should control D.C. local budget

4% with Some College do not know whether D.C. or Congress should control D.C. local budget

7% of College Graduates do not know whether D.C. or Congress should control D.C. local budget

5% in the Northeast do not know whether D.C. or Congress should control D.C. local budget

7% in the Midwest do not know whether D.C. or Congress should control D.C. local budget

7% in the South do not know whether D.C. or Congress should control D.C. local budget

6% in the West do not know whether D.C. or Congress should control D.C. local budget

METHODOLOGY

National omnibus interviews of 1,007 adults age 18 and older in the continental United States on April 5-9, 2012 conducted via a random digit dialing methodology telephone and cell phone methodology.

The sample consisted of:

- 757 interviews from the landline sample
- 250 interviews from the cell phone sample
- 504 men
- 503 women

The data is weighted to reflect the geographic, demographic, and socioeconomic information that are known for the population as well as measured in the survey.

HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I'm going to talk about health care. I'm a medical doctor. I'm a primary care physician. As a medical doctor, I'm very concerned about where we are going as a Nation.

Back during the debate over the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as ObamaCare, I presented several alternatives to that bill. Most people know in this country that the U.S. Supreme Court a couple of weeks ago, 3 weeks ago, had hearings about the constitutionality of the individual mandate, whether the Federal Government, under the Constitution, can demand that every single person in this country buy health insurance that's dictated by the Federal Government, that the Federal Government actually puts out all the parameters for that health insurance.

We recently saw Kathleen Sebelius, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, say that everybody's health insurance in this country is going to have to provide free birth control pills, free pills that are designed for nothing but to cause an abortion and free sterilization for everybody in the country. That's whether you are male or female. Who pays for that? Well, we all will.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about birth control. It's about government control. Because, you see, under ObamaCare, if it stays in place, it's going to be a tool where the Federal Government can mandate every aspect of our lives, what we eat. In fact, Justice Scalia, during the hearings a few weeks ago, said, if it stays in place, couldn't the Federal Government demand everybody in the country eat broccoli? I love broccoli and I eat a lot of it, but it's not the Federal Government's business to mandate that I eat broccoli—or anybody else, for that matter—and he's absolutely right.

In fact, under the auspices of health care, the Federal Government could control every aspect of our lives, could tell us what kinds of cars that we drive. The Federal Government could basically say, We believe everybody should drive a Chevy Volt or a Ford Focus, and if you don't, we're going to fine you.

There are already doctors that are associated with the CDC in my home State of Georgia that say it's a health hazard for people to have private ownership of firearms and it's a particular

health hazard to children. They could outlaw private ownership of firearms. They could outlaw anything that the Federal Government decided to do.

ObamaCare is going to be a destroyer. It's going to destroy the doctor-patient relationship. It will destroy the quality of health care, because the Federal Government is going to decide who can get care and who is not. It can decide whether a person is fit to receive surgery or go in the hospital or not. Age is going to be a determining factor, and it's all going to be based on economics, on cost. The high cost of health care today is because of government intrusion into the health care system. In fact, I will just give you two quick examples.

Back when I was practicing medicine down in rural southwest Georgia, in my little office I had a fully automated, quality-controlled laboratory. If a patient came in to see me that had a fever, aching all over, sore ribs, swollen throat, coughing, nose running, I would do a complete blood count, a CBC, to see if they had a bacterial infection which needs to be treated with antibiotics or whether they had a viral infection which is not helped by antibiotics, the patient doesn't need to go spend the money on those antibiotics. The best practice is it is not a good standard of care to treat viral infections with antibiotics. I would do a CBC. I could do it in 5 minutes. I charged 12 bucks.

Congress, in its infinite wisdom, decided that I might make a few pennies off of doing CBCs and, thus, would have an incentive to do too many. Well, they passed CLIA, the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act. Instead of being able to do the test in 5 minutes, 12 bucks, I had to send patients over to the hospital. It took 3 to 4 hours, \$75 for one test—from 12 bucks to \$75—because of a law that Congress passed.

What do you think that did to everybody's insurance all across this country? What do you think it did to the cost of Medicaid as well as Medicare? It markedly elevated the cost.

The second issue, Congress passed and is now law, HIPAA. It's a totally unneeded act. It has cost the health care industry, alone, billions—billions with a B—billions of dollars, but a totally unneeded act, and it has not paid for the first aspirin to treat the headaches it has created. There are other industries—like the insurance industry, legal industry, accounting industry, and a whole lot of others—that are affected by HIPAA also. It's government intrusion in the health care system.

The President promised us that ObamaCare would not cost over a trillion dollars. They went through a whole lot of budgetary gimmicks to try to get it under a trillion dollars. Just recently, CBO said that ObamaCare is going to cost \$1.75 trillion.

The President promises, if you have insurance and you like it, you can keep it.

□ 1630

Nobody is going to be able to afford it. I talked to a businessman, and his insurance went up this year over last year by 43 percent because of the mandates in ObamaCare. Hopefully, the Supreme Court is going to throw out ObamaCare because it's going to destroy the doctor-patient relationship and the quality of medicine. It's also going to destroy budgets. As I've already mentioned, it's very, very expensive. The expansion of Medicaid is going to destroy State budgets. The whole bill is going to destroy the Federal budget and destroy our economy. And as I've already mentioned, it's going to destroy our freedom.

So what's the alternative? What happens if the Supreme Court throws out ObamaCare, as hopefully they will—and they should—because it's blatantly unconstitutional. Well, the first thing, this chart shows us what ObamaCare is like. And this isn't all of the new bureaus and agencies that are created under the plan. Right in the middle is the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Kathleen Sebelius, if she's still in office a year from now, has the potential to be the greatest tyrant to take away our freedom because of this law.

We must get rid of ObamaCare and replace it with something that makes sense economically and we put patients and doctors in the business of making their own decisions.

Well, I introduced a bill a few weeks ago called the Patient Option Act. It's H.R. 4224. What would it do? The first thing, it repeals ObamaCare completely. Gets rid of it, as we should. It also makes health care cheaper for everybody. It will lower your cost of insurance. It makes all health care expenses cheaper for everyone. It will provide coverage for all Americans, and also it will save Medicare from going broke.

Today, I heard some of my Democrat colleagues talk about Republicans want to destroy Medicare as we know it. And that's what their mantra keeps being. But their policy is characterized by four Ds. The first D is that they deny that Medicare and Social Security has any problem whatsoever. The actuaries of both Social Security and Medicare say they're going to go broke within just a few short years—within the life span of almost every American, except for the extreme elderly. So they deny there's a problem.

The second D, they're delaying fixing the problem. Their mantra of let's save Medicare as we know it is going—they deny the problem.

The third D is they're going to destroy Medicare as we know it because it's just totally not feasible to go forward and not fix it. That's what Republicans have been trying to do.

And the fourth thing that my Democrat colleagues do is they demonize all of us who want to try to fix it. The Patient Option Act will fix it, and that's what we need to do. We need to have