

MMM, MMM BAD HEALTH CARE POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) for 2 minutes.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, today, Republicans in the House will once again bring up a repeal of the Affordable Care Act.

We've seen a lot of repeal from them, but not as much with respect to their so-called plan to replace. I think I've figured out what the GOP wants to replace the Affordable Care Act with.

Here is what I assume must be the Republican plan for health care in our country: chicken noodle soup. Chicken noodle soup? Many of our mothers and grandmothers have told us that chicken noodle soup is a cure-all for anything, but I think the Republican plan takes Grandma at her word a little too literally.

Can't afford health care coverage and need medical care? Have some chicken noodle soup. Have you been diagnosed with a serious disease and can't afford the prescription drugs you need to treat it? Have some chicken noodle soup. At least you can rely on good old-fashioned chicken noodle soup. Have a preexisting condition like diabetes that lets your insurance company deny you coverage? That's okay. Have some chicken noodle soup and you'll feel better in the morning.

The truth is, it won't be all better in the morning. That's why we enacted the Affordable Care Act, to ensure that people could get the affordable, quality coverage they need; that seniors can afford their prescription medications; and that an insurance company can no longer deny you coverage because you have a preexisting condition.

I don't know why Republicans want to go back to the day when chicken noodle soup was the only option for hardworking families who couldn't afford care. The truth is, chicken noodle soup might be mmm, mmm good for lunch, but as a health care policy, it is mmm, mmm bad.

LET'S STOP THE POSTURING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) for 3 minutes.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, we have heard hours of impassioned speeches on the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, most defending all or nothing, and pitting us against them. But the American people aren't interested in the politics. They want us to focus on what we can do moving forward to make good health care more affordable for them without breaking the bank.

I believe the ACA is flawed, and I parted ways with the majority of my Democratic colleagues in voting against it in 2010. As I said then, "The bill does not do enough to lower the skyrocketing costs of health care, cuts more than \$400 billion from Medicare, is not fiscally sustainable over the

long-term, and breaks with the status quo by allowing Federal funding for abortion and abortion coverage."

But we all agree there are good provisions. The bill expanded access to care and improved health insurance by doing things such as prohibiting discrimination based on preexisting conditions and extending family coverage to children up to the age of 26. Why, then, are we being asked to blindly throw out the good with the bad, or alternatively, to simply let the law stand with no changes at all?

A few months after I voted against the ACA, in a town hall meeting in Hickory Hills, I was asked by an opponent of the law if I would vote to repeal it. I said, "No. We need a fix, not a repeal that would take us back to the status quo." He said, "Okay. Repeal and replace. Keep the good parts, and make other necessary changes."

I agreed, and that's exactly what I have been working to do. I helped pass into law a bill to repeal the burdensome 1099 requirement for small businesses and helped introduce and pass legislation to repeal the ACA's CLASS Act program, which would have added tens of billions of dollars to the deficit. In addition, I worked to pass legislation to ensure that no taxpayer money is spent for abortion under the law, and I continue to fight against portions of the HHS mandate that violate Americans' religious liberty.

At the start of this Congress, I hoped we could work on major fixes to the health care law. Instead, a bill was brought to the floor in January 2011 which would have eliminated the entire law with no exceptions. I opposed that bill. I voted for a resolution instructing four House committees to develop replacement legislation. Yet, 18 months later, there still is no replacement. Instead, we're again voting on a repeal, period. And once again, we all know this bill will pass the House and die in the Senate.

A Chicago Tribune editorial recently stated: "If Democrats want to save the ambitions of this law, they're going to have to find a way to write a Truly Affordable Care Act." And the Tribune concluded that Republicans "ought to engage Democrats in a real effort to contain the costs before the law takes full effect in 2014." I wholeheartedly agree.

Let's stop the posturing, roll up our sleeves, and work to make health care more affordable for all Americans in a fiscally sound manner. That is what the American people want us to do. That is what we need to do.

REPEAL OF THE ACA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) for 3 minutes.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe we are asked for a 31st time to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

This isn't just a policy issue. This is a moral test. This is one of the great

moral tests of our time. Those who vote to repeal the Affordable Care Act are failing that moral test. They are utterly failing that test.

Paying health insurance premiums and other health care bills has become very difficult for American families. Premiums have gone up each year and the cost of health care has escalated. Insurance companies have shifted costs to consumers through increases in deductibles and copayments and decreases in covered services. Low- and middle-income families need relief from skyrocketing health care costs.

The constitutional ACA provides real relief to American families. First, the Affordable Care Act provides direct financial relief to millions of insured American families that struggle to pay health insurance premiums today. The new law allows families to shop for a plan in new State insurance exchanges and allows them to receive a big discount on their premiums.

□ 1120

The ACA protects people from high deductibles, high copayments, and unexpected gaps in their insurance coverage in three ways. It eliminates lifetime and annual limits on how much an insurance plan will pay for covered benefits. That means payments won't suddenly run out. It caps how much a person must spend each year on deductibles and copayments for covered benefits. That means that families won't be forced to lose their homes because they get sick. And it provides additional help with out-of-pocket costs for lower-income families.

Second, the ACA expands the affordable insurance options to families who could not afford coverage before. Medicaid will now be available to families at or lower than the 133 percent of the Federal poverty level. For people with incomes above that level and up to 400 percent of poverty, new premium tax credits will help them afford coverage. Reducing the number of uninsured will help reduce the "hidden health tax" that is imposed on insured families. We all pay higher premiums to pay for the care of the uninsured.

Third, the Affordable Care Act will slow the growth of underlying health care costs and help all Americans.

As I have said on this floor before, the ACA is the greatest improvement in women's health in decades. Under the ACA, millions of women are gaining access to affordable health care coverage. Women will not have to pay more than men for the same insurance policy, and women will not be denied coverage because they are sick or have preexisting conditions. Women will be guaranteed preventive services, such as mammograms and cervical cancer screenings, with no deductibles or copays.

Senior women will have access to coordinated care.

Senior women will save thousands of dollars as reform closes the Medicare prescription drug coverage gap.

Family caregivers—who are typically women—will benefit from new supports that help them care for their loved ones while also taking care of themselves.

Mr. Speaker, as the great Progressive Hubert Humphrey said:

“The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped.”

By voting to repeal the ACA, my colleagues are failing that test, Mr. Speaker. They are failing that moral test.

DON'T LET BAD POLITICS DRIVE BAD POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) for 3 minutes.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, just to set the record straight, I'm a family physician and the first female doctor in the Congress.

Just less than 2 weeks ago, the Supreme Court issued a final ruling that the health care reform law is, in fact, constitutional. It is now the law of the land.

Despite this, today my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are revisiting old political battles instead of using the final weeks in this session to fully implement a current law that will protect the health of every American, instead of creating jobs during a time when unemployment is at a persistent high, instead of strengthening the American economy and ensuring that taxes on middle class families are not raised.

I have heard the scare tactics and spin that my colleagues are using to mislead the American public. The truth is this: repealing the health care reform bill would set this country back on a course no American—Republican or Democrat—wants to go back to.

With the list of horrible consequences, H.R. 6079 reads like a dishonor roll.

The Republicans' repeal of health care reform will raise taxes on 18 million middle-class people.

More than 6 million young adults will lose the option of being covered under their parents' health care plans.

More than 5 million seniors will pay more in prescription drugs, leaving many having to choose between paying their rent, food, or medicine.

129 million Americans, 17 million of whom are children with so-called pre-existing disease, which before health care reform included acne and pregnancy, may be denied health care coverage when they need it, and 33 million currently uninsured Americans will stay among the ranks of the uninsured.

More than 32 million seniors and 54 million other Americans will pay more for mammograms, colonoscopies, annual wellness exams, and other often lifesaving preventive care that detects cancers and diseases at their earliest stages when they are most treatable.

105 million Americans would again have lifetime limits on their health insurance, which often puts health care services out of reach when people need it the most. Also, 15 million Americans would be dropped from their insurance companies altogether.

Many of the provisions of the law may never get funded that would close the shameful gaps in health care that cause people of color, the poor of every race and ethnicity, even those who may be Republican or Tea Party, rural Americans and those who live in our Nation's territories, to die in excess numbers from preventable deaths and cost the country billions of dollars every year. There's nothing appropriate, just, fair, or worthy in this attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act. It turns back progress. It closes a door to wellness that is now just being opened to over 30 million Americans. It sets this Nation on a path that is unhealthy and less financially secure, and it threatens our position of leadership in the world.

Even though we know this is just an empty exercise, that it's not going anywhere, we do have the opportunity to stand together and do the right thing to not let bad politics drive bad policy. When the bill comes up for a vote, vote “no” on H.R. 6079.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 25 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan) at noon.

PRAYER

Rabbi David Algaze, Havurat Yisrael Synagogue, Forest Hills, New York, offered the following prayer:

God, from Whom all blessings flow, bless this assembly to steer this great Nation to the prominence You bestowed upon her; a land where even a humble bicycle messenger can soar to serve in this Hall, where every man has dignity and the capacity to prosper, where the ignorant can reach knowledge and the persecuted sanctuary. Move it from finiteness to infinity, from constriction to amplitude, from isolation to leadership, from cynicism to faith. Uphold its pre-eminence among the nations, for its message of freedom is beneficial to all men.

Let us pray for wisdom, not passion; for knowledge, not shallowness; for truth, not trend; for enduring amity to allies and steadfast stand against its foes.

Bring us the day when all men shall turn to one another in pleasantness, when they combine regardless of differences in a union under Your reign, as the prophet Zachariah proclaimed: “On that day, God shall be One, and His Name one.”

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. COHEN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING RABBI DAVID ALGAZE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TURNER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. TURNER of New York. Madam Speaker, fellow Members, I am privileged to have had the honor of inviting Rabbi David Algaze here to lead us in the benediction. Rabbi Algaze serves as the senior rabbi of Havurat Yisrael Synagogue in Forest Hills, Queens, a position he has held since founding the congregation in 1981.

Rabbi Algaze has always held a commitment to academics both as a student and as a teacher. He holds multiple master's degrees and has served as a professor in all levels of academia. He is a former president of the Association of Sephardic Rabbis of America, and is the founder and president of the World Committee for the Land of Israel.

He has always been a strong advocate for the Jewish community in Queens and throughout New York. An ardent supporter of the State of Israel, Rabbi Algaze continues to fight to ensure its safety, security, and well-being. A prime example of these efforts is his work to educate the world about the current situation in Iran and the threat it poses to Israel and the United States.

A scholar, educator, and pillar of religious leadership in our community, he has been a terrific friend to me and has always been there for all those in need.

I thank you, Rabbi Algaze.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 further requests