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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 20, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RANDY HULTGREN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

REFORM OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for continued reforms to our health care system. The Affordable Care Act was a huge step in the right direction, but we can do more because the path we are on is unsustainable.

The U.S. spends approximately 18 percent of its GDP on health—close to twice as much as other developed Nations—and yet we don't have better health care outcomes. Health care

costs are rising faster than inflation and wages, meaning they are eating a larger portion of Americans' paychecks and the government's budget.

If we continue on our current path, the Medicare trust fund will be insolvent by 2024. And Medicare and Medicaid will grow from 24 percent of the Federal budget to almost 30 percent, crowding out other needed investments.

We have to reduce health care costs in both the private sector and the public sector in order to ensure America remains competitive in the global market. But there is a right way to reform our health care system and there is a wrong way. With all due respect, Mr. RYAN's plan is the wrong way.

Mr. RYAN's plan for Medicare and Medicaid misses the point. His solution simply shifts the costs from the government to patients, rather than reducing health care costs. Under the Ryan budget, seniors would pay as much as \$1,200 more each year by 2030, and \$6,000 more by 2050. For over half of Medicare beneficiaries with incomes less than \$21,000, a \$1,200 increase is a huge piece of their budget.

He also proposes block-granting Medicaid, which would cut Medicaid funding by approximately \$700 billion over the next decade and result in 14 to 19 million people being kicked off Medicaid, many of them children and seniors.

These steps might make the budget look better, but they do nothing to actually reduce the cost of health care, and they hurt patients. We can reduce health care costs without harming beneficiaries.

Here are five steps we should take to reduce health care costs the right way:

First, and most importantly, we have to change the way we pay providers. Right now, we pay for each individual test and surgery. We pay for quantity rather than quality of care. Providers across the country are adopting pay-

ment for quality models, but they need Medicare, the largest payer, to get on board and pay for quality as well.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, or CMS, just completed a pilot where it bundled payments for 37 procedures and reduced spending by 10 percent. This needs to be replicated across the board, and CMS needs to move the majority of its patients to physicians off fee-for-service over the next 10 years.

Second, CMS needs to restructure and expand competitive bidding. It just completed a competitive bidding pilot for durable medical equipment and was able to reduce prices by double digits. While I have some concerns about the structure of that competitive bidding program, I believe it does need to be restructured to prevent suicide bidding and expanded to include more medical tests and services such as lab tests, CT scanners, and other items.

Third, States need to be empowered and incentivized to reduce their health care costs. States like Arkansas have taken bold steps to reduce their health care costs by requiring their two largest insurers and their Medicaid program to join a shared savings plan. They are expected to save the State's Medicaid program \$4.4 million in FY '13 and \$9.3 million in FY '14. We should be encouraging other States to follow the path of Arkansas and reduce Medicaid costs and improve care.

Fourth, we have to modernize Medicare cost sharing and ask a bit more from those who can afford it. We should combine Medicare part A and B deductibles and cap them. We should increase means testing for premiums for part B. And we should limit first-dollar coverage for high earners. We have to protect our sickest seniors from high costs while asking a bit more from those with greater means.

Finally, we have to improve price and quality transparency. We should prohibit gag clauses, which currently

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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prevent hospitals from sharing health care pricing information. Without pricing transparency, hospitals can't negotiate for the best price for medical devices and physicians can't make cost-conscious choices for their patients.

We do have to reduce health care costs, but there is a right way to do it and there is a wrong way. Mr. RYAN's plan is the wrong path. It harms seniors and fails to reduce underlying health care costs. By pursuing the five proposals I just outlined, we can reduce costs and improve quality, strengthening both our budget and our citizens.

TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN SERVICEMEMBERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DESANTIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DESANTIS. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the 10-year anniversary of the start of combat operations in Iraq. Most of discussion in this town focuses on politicians, pundits, and writers. And while I don't begrudge people the ability to indulge in those types of debates, I do think what has been missing is a tribute to the sacrifices that have been made by American servicemembers.

Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War wrote:

This extraordinary war in which we are engaged falls heavily upon all classes of people, but most heavily upon the soldier. For it has been said, all that a man hath will he give for his life; and while all contribute of their substance the soldier puts his life at stake, and often yields it up in his country's cause. The highest merit then is due to the soldier.

The Iraq conflict is much different than the Civil War. One of the ways it is different is that the burdens fell perhaps even more directly on our American servicemen and -women. After all, we did not have, and do not have, a military draft.

Most of the folks who were going over there volunteered, and a lot of them knowing that they would be sent to places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of our servicemembers did multiple combat tours, not just for 4 months or 6 months, but 12 months and 15 months, in very hazardous duties.

And what did they volunteer for? This was not a piece of cake. These were very difficult fights against an enemy that by and large dared not show its face. The enemy preferred to blend into civilian society and wreak havoc with improvised explosive devices and suicide vests. This was a daily reality for our men and women who were on the ground during this period.

When direct combat operations did occur between U.S. forces and the enemy, they were often fierce fights in urban centers in the streets of cities like Ramadi and Baghdad.

And, of course, being on multiple deployments and being gone for so long provided the opportunity for a lot of stress on families. It is difficult to be

in a situation where you are missing a holiday. Some of our troops had to miss multiple holidays over multiple years. That is a sacrifice both for the folks who have to be back home but also for the troops who are on the front lines.

So Lincoln said: "The highest merit is due to the soldier." Indeed.

As we look back on the 10th anniversary of Iraq, what we see are soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who were given the most difficult of tasks and yet they discharged their duties with courage and skill. Henceforth, nobody will be able to recount the great feats of some of our services, such as the Marine Corps, from the shores of Tripoli to Belleau Wood to Guadalcanal, without also mentioning the great feats performed by brave marines in places like Fallujah.

□ 1010

When recounting the unparalleled skill of our Special Operations Forces, credit will have to be given to those Navy SEALs who ruled the night during Iraq's most perilous moments.

So, for braving the storms of war with honor, tenacity and distinction, we thank you, the American servicemember, for the sacrifices you made on behalf of our country; and for those who gave the last full measure of devotion, you have earned a place in the pantheon of America's greatest heroes. We thank you for your service and your sacrifice.

THE CREATION OF A COMMISSION ON HEALING THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WOUNDS OF WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, after a painful decade of war, the United States needs to take the time to regain its equilibrium and find peace. Without a formal process for acknowledging the physical and psychological costs of war, our collective trauma can undermine our country for decades.

As Ernest Hemingway wrote:

The killing is necessary. I know, but still the doing of it is very bad for a man, and I think that, after all this is over and we have won the war, there must be a penance of some kind for the cleansing of us all.

War involves staggering amounts of loss and—equally important—of killing. Despite great efforts by our soldiers to protect civilians, an overwhelming majority of casualties in modern war are innocent people. This incurs a deep spiritual and emotional cost to those who witness it and are sometimes responsible for it. Many initiatives exist that provide help for the men and women who have fought, but we must go beyond the policy initiatives. Soldiers returning from war need to share their experiences and unburden their souls.

Our soldiers volunteered to serve their country in war, but they did not volunteer to take over the entire moral burden that comes with it. Our Nation needs to discuss the complicated spiritual and emotional obstacles faced by any society that has waged war. This is not a partisan debate about the rightness or wrongness of war. This is a national effort to take care of our soldiers by publicly sharing some of their burdens. We must be willing to explore the responsibility that comes with asking them to fight.

In preindustrial societies, leaders were intimately involved in war, itself—often with a sword in hand—and religious and spiritual leaders were fully engaged in the aftermath. Rituals and ceremonies decommisioned the fighters and made the entire community conscious of the sacrifice. These processes are missing today, and they remain vitally important. The agony suffered by our veterans is vivid testimony: 22 veterans commit suicide every day while an average of almost one active duty soldier a day took his or her life in 2012. That's higher than in combat. Many other soldiers suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder, become addicted to drugs and alcohol, or fall into violence and prison.

If a society fails to address these emotional and moral issues publicly, soldiers and vets will struggle with them privately. Many of them will lose that struggle and leave us all affected by their loss.

The Nation requires concrete ways to address the wounds of the war. We need a national day of solemn ceremonies that acknowledge the costs in lives, trauma, lost limbs, families, a renewed commitment to the social and health issues of veterans, a discussion about national service for young, nonmilitary Americans, and a systematic interaction between combat veterans and civilians.

I worked with Karl Marlantes, who wrote the book "What It Is Like to Go to War," and with Sebastian Junger, who did the documentary called "Restrepo," which was about Afghanistan, in order to create this bill that would address these issues. We propose a commission to examine and articulate the spiritual challenges and to help heal the psychological wounds faced by a Nation emerging from a decade of war.

We call on the President, on the Senate majority and minority leaders, and on the House Speaker and minority leader to appoint a group of distinguished citizens to explore ways to heal this society. The committee should include veterans, spiritual leaders, psychologists, journalists, maybe even a poet. It should strive to reach beyond the politics of war and into the true moral and emotional consequences that violence always incurs. It may be hard for us, but we must do it if we are to remain a humane society.

Some see things as they are and ask why. I dream of things as they never