

Democrats and 145 Republicans, sent a letter to CMS outlining the flaws and abuses in the program, requesting that the agency delay further implementation until such issues are fully addressed and fixed.

Despite the growing number of reported abuses under the program and strong congressional concern about the bidding design and a long overdue need for transparency and accountability, CMS moved forward with the program in 91 new bidding areas on July 1, 2013, bringing the total to 100 areas nationwide.

While CMS has admitted to the abuses, the agency has failed to detail how these failures occurred or offer a plan for corrective action. With any hope, the Office of Inspector General's efforts will shed light on how these failures occurred and impose a new level of transparency at the Medicare agency, CMS, and among the agency's administrators. In the meantime, it will be up to the House of Representatives to take corrective action.

With this said, I respectfully request that each of my colleagues join me in cosponsoring H.R. 1717, Medicare DMEPOS Market Pricing Program Act of 2013. This commonsense measure, authored by my esteemed colleague from Georgia, Dr. PRICE, will apply real market principles to the highly flawed competitive bidding model. Madam Speaker, we owe as much to our constituents, the taxpayers, and our Nation's Medicare beneficiaries.

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 10 o'clock and 27 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Harmon E. Stockdale, Mt. Vernon Missionary Baptist Church, Rochester, New York, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge You with adoration and humble gratitude. We pray for Your presence and guidance over this distinguished body before whom we stand.

We thank You for this great land in which we live, the United States of America. And we thank You for all who share in making the policies, laws, and decisions which guide and govern our Nation.

We ask Your blessings upon all of our elected and appointed leaders as they lead us to face the challenges of our

day. Grant that we, as a Nation, may be mindful of Your providence and Your grace as we give moral and ethical leadership to the people of our world.

May justice, equality, and compassion always be the guiding principles for our way of life; and may we never forget that to whom much is given, much is required.

In Your Son's name we pray.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HIGGINS 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

USE OF MILITARY FORCE IN SYRIA

(Mr. GOSAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, this week, all eyes will be upon us as we debate the use of force in Syria. This decision is not one that should be made lightly, as ultimately there are many factors to be weighed.

Make no mistake that what is happening in Syria is truly a human tragedy. That nation has been torn apart by civil war. It is without a doubt that Assad is not a friend or ally of ours. But things are very complicated. A large number of those who oppose the Assad regime are affiliated with al Qaeda. In the case of Syria, Assad, and the rebels, it cannot be said that the enemy of my enemy is my friend. In this dangerous civil war, the enemy of our enemy is still and will always be our enemy.

It is this dynamic which has led to the overwhelming response of people throughout my district and our Nation to say without an imminent threat to national security, without a plan, without a goal, without unified international support from our allies, we must stay out of Syria.

NATION-BUILDING AT HOME

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, the situation in Syria is that of a national civil war. It's a sectarian and ethnic conflict between two warring factions. This is not about democracy and freedom. There is no social contract. There is no constitution. There is no preamble. There is no unifying vision as to what Syria wants to become. This is a brutal battle between two bad sides for control. Assad is a brutal dictator, for certain; but the opposition's best fighters are al Qaeda and Islamic extremists bent on creating an Islamic state in Syria.

In the international community, 194 countries have said—but for Turkey and France—yes, the United States, go get them; just don't ask us to participate. So the American people will find themselves, once again, for the third time in a decade, in a region of the Middle East in South Asia in another civil war, essentially alone again.

The American people want nation-building. But they want it right here at home, in America.

ANOTHER SOLUTION IN SYRIA

(Mr. PITTENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the President's action in Syria.

I just returned from the Middle East, meeting with heads of state in Qatar, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and our ambassador to NATO. I'm firmly convinced that any action on our part will further destabilize Syria and cause a collapse of the government. What will happen then? What will happen is that country will then fall in the hands of Hezbollah, Hamas, al Qaeda, and the Muslim Brotherhood.

At the end of the day, what's important, Mr. Speaker, is who has control of those weapons of mass destruction. While what Mr. Assad has done has been barbaric and evil, we will never forgive ourselves for the havoc that will be played upon this world if those weapons fall into the hands of Islamic extremists. We need to work together collectively to address the problem of identifying and finding those weapons of mass destruction and securing those for the future.

There are many people who are living outside of their country now as refugees. There are tens of thousands of able men who could be recruited to be a part of that solution.

NATIONAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH

(Ms. FUDGE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, this week, I will reintroduce a resolution recognizing September as National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month. September marks an opportunity for Congress to raise awareness of the issue while also discussing ways we can engage our families and communities on how best to curb this unhealthy trend.

Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in the United States have tripled. Today, nearly one in three children are overweight or obese. These numbers are even higher in minority communities, where nearly 40 percent of African American and Hispanic children are overweight. Children today experience a different lifestyle from 30 years ago, when kids ate less and exercised more.

Many groups have stepped up to the plate to improve nutrition and physical activity for our children. Community partners like the Campaign to End Obesity, Cheer for a Healthier America, YWCA, and HealthCorps have taken the charge to achieve the healthiest lives we can give them.

Let us use the month of September to elevate the issue of childhood obesity and recognize our community partners.

VERIFICATION OF OBAMACARE SUBSIDIES

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, after 3½ years, the Obama administration has failed to make its hallmark legislation, ObamaCare, work. Instead, it has delayed or waived key portions, including the so-called “verification system.” This was ObamaCare’s way of ensuring folks who received Federal assistance to buy health insurance met the criteria. Buried within 600 pages of red tape, the administration said it will no longer verify the information provided by individuals, but simply rely on self-reporting.

Mr. Speaker, this opens a wide door to further fraud and abuse in our health care system. This fraud could amount to \$250 billion in taxpayer-funded payments. That’s no pocket change.

That’s why I urge my colleagues to support a commonsense bill, H.R. 2775, No Subsidies Without Verification Act, to protect taxpayer dollars and further chip away at this unworkable law. The American people want, need, and deserve better.

FIXING THE WAR POWER AUTHORITY

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the President has come to Congress, as he should, to ask authority for a discre-

tionary military action. The sad fact is he doesn’t have to because of a defective law passed by Congress in reaction to Nixon’s bombing of Cambodia in 1973. The bill that Congress passed is a shadow of our constitutional authority regarding war and peace.

This President has come to us. That’s good. The result is not yet known. It has already resulted perhaps in a diplomatic breakthrough. That is also good. But in the future we need to make certain that each and every President comes to us when we’re not defending against immediate interests of the United States or against imminent or real attack of our troops or our citizens.

So I’ll be reintroducing legislation to fix the war power authority. In the future, in circumstances such as this, it will require that the President come to the Congress before launching a discretionary military action. We must fix this law. This is a good precedent this President has set. Let’s make it the law of the United States of America.

OPPOSE MILITARY ACTION IN SYRIA

(Mr. MARCHANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the President and my colleagues to oppose any U.S. military action in Syria. Based on the evidence given to Congress, I have serious reservations about authorizing the use of military force in another Middle Eastern country. The President has not convinced me that we have vital national security interests at stake in Syria or a clear military objective. There are far too many unanswered questions and unclear objectives.

My constituents in the 24th District of Texas are deeply skeptical about the value of military intervention in Syria. I fully agree with their concerns. On behalf of my constituents and many concerned Americans, I respectfully urge my colleagues to weigh the evidence fully and to be realistic about what can be achieved in military intervention. Let us vote for what’s best for the United States. Keep the U.S. military out of Syria.

THE ALTERNATIVE PLAN IN SYRIA

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the Obama administration for its willingness to consider a new alternative proposal for dealing with Syria. The proposal is to hand over all—and I stress all—of Syria’s chemical weapons under the oversight of the international community and to safely and verifiably destroy them. This could actually remove those weapons from the battlefield and peacefully prevent

the further use of them against the people of Syria or her neighbors. This idea has gained support from U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, as well as Russia and France.

Mr. Speaker, this proposal needs to be vigorously pursued. The Syrian regime’s attack against its own people using poisonous gas is morally reprehensible. If this plan is successful, it could produce an outcome that everyone desires: preventing the Assad regime from using chemical weapons.

□ 1215

WILL THE SENATE AND THE PRESIDENT ACT TO GET AMERICANS WORKING AGAIN?

(Mr. HULTGREN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, the American people are still struggling with a shaky economy. During the August district work period, the number one question I heard from my constituents was: Where are the jobs?

Last week we saw the unemployment rate in August drop to 7.3 percent, but for all the wrong reasons. People didn’t find jobs; they stopped looking for them altogether. Between July and August, that amounted to more than 300,000 people.

A smaller percentage of Americans is working or looking for work than at any time in the past 35 years. It is so discouraging to be told the recession is over, but then you look and you look but you can’t find a job.

Employers around my district tell me the best stimulus for hiring is to reduce government regulations, cut taxes, simplify the Tax Code, and push for smaller government. Yet, what do they see ahead? More uncertainty as States race to meet the October 1 deadline to set up expensive and confusing ObamaCare exchanges. No wonder businesses aren’t hiring; the “Unaffordable Care Act” doesn’t give them the confidence that they need to be able to afford hiring new employees.

Let’s restore their confidence to hire and train new workers. The House has passed numerous jobs bills to reduce regulations on businesses. Let’s have the Senate act.

SYRIA

(Mr. VARGAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Syria.

The real issue is that the Assad regime gassed more than 426 children and their parents. Those who perished died a horrific, merciless, and completely unnecessary death. We must come together and act with the President to create a credible threat of force and, thereby, deter the future use of chemical weapons.