

The more we learn about the so-called Affordable Care Act, the worse it gets. It should be called the "Unaffordable Care Act" since cost estimates are already double or triple the estimated cost when it was passed, and Federal health plans have always been lowballed on the front end. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, Medicare was supposed to cost about \$12 billion after 25 years. Instead, CRS reports that it costs almost 10 times that much, and this year, it will cost six times that amount, or over \$600 billion.

Premiums are going way up for most people in preparation for the requirements of the new law.

The Associated Press reported on August 8:

One casualty of the new health care law may be paid coverage for families of people who work for small businesses.

Employers are either not hiring as many workers as they ordinarily would, with many trying to stay under 50 employees so as not to be hit by the new law, or are switching people to part-time work. The State of Virginia notified 10,000 part-time workers they would not be allowed to go over 30 hours a week, and some have said the new norm all over the country is two 20-hour-a-week jobs.

One leading supporter of the act was famously quoted as saying that we would have to pass the law before we could find out what was in it. Now we are finding out all of the promises about keeping your plan if you liked it, keeping your doctor if you liked him, and that premiums would go down by as much as \$2,500 a year were all false, exaggerated, or at least incorrect. Millions have lost or will lose their coverage. Millions more are facing huge increases in their premiums.

In our offices, we have helped many people with Medicare and Medicaid problems, and no one wants to see anyone denied medical care. However, before we start another program that we can't afford, we need to do more to eliminate the tremendous waste, fraud, and abuse that exists in Medicare and Medicaid today.

More significantly, some people and companies have become rich off of these two programs. The administrators of Medicare and Medicaid need to crack down on those who are turning Medicare and Medicaid into monetary bonanzas. One place to start is in the huge discrepancies in charges by hospitals.

A May 8 New York Times article reported that one hospital in Dallas billed Medicare \$160,832 for lower joint replacements while another just 5 miles away and on the same street billed the government an average fee of \$42,632. Two hospitals in New York City varied by 321 percent what they charged for complicated asthma treatment, one billing an average of a little over \$34,000 while the other charged an average of a little over \$8,000.

Columnist Charles Lane of The Washington Post wrote that Medicare reim-

burses power wheelchair suppliers \$4,000 to \$5,000 for a basic chair that costs the supplier \$700. Just yesterday, in the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, we had a hearing about the botched rollout of the Affordable Care Web site. Already, over \$600 million has been spent on this messed up, convoluted, confusing system. It is going to cost billions to straighten it out and keep updating the technology. None of this is going for actual health care. It is just going to some well-connected government contractors who are getting rich at great expense to American taxpayers.

What a great law this is, destroying jobs for average Americans but wonderful for lobbyists and government contractors. Pete Sepp of the National Taxpayers Union said:

How ironic that while the Affordable Care Act is being blamed for slowing job creation outside the beltway, the law is offering plenty of job opportunities to firms inside the beltway willing to promote it.

How sad this is.

ARTICLE 32

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, recently, a courageous 21-year-old female Naval Academy student was bold enough to report that three men on the Navy football team raped her while she was drunk. Little did she know that when she came forward, she would be put on trial, forced to testify, and be cross-examined for more than 30 hours. She was harangued by the defense team and asked humiliating and abusive questions for hours, with the clear objective to intimidate her and destroy the case.

What is so unbelievable is that her case hadn't even made it to trial. This was only the equivalent of a preliminary hearing, called an Article 32 hearing under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. It is supposed to be used to determine if a case should go forward to trial. The truth is that Article 32s have mutated and now serve to put the victim on trial, not the accused.

Her experience of not only being sexually assaulted but revictimized by the judicial system is all too common in the military. In Article 32 proceedings, it is standard operating procedure for the defense team to subject the victim to every irrelevant, indecent, and outright degrading question you can imagine.

In the Naval Academy case, the victim was asked by one of the defense attorneys, "How wide do you open your mouth for oral sex?" Another question was asked of her, "Did you feel like a 'ho' the next morning?"

These questions would simply never, ever be permitted in a civilian criminal trial, let alone in a preliminary hearing. None of this is in pursuit of the truth, of course. It is all an effort to make victims think twice about even coming forward or pursuing a case.

At one point in the Naval Academy proceedings, the victim asked for a recess because of fatigue. Lawyers for the alleged rapists scoffed, "What is so stressful about this?"

In the civilian world, a preliminary hearing is used to determine if there is probable cause and if a case should go to trial. Oftentimes, the victim is never even called, and the victim is certainly not berated for hours about their previous sexual history. These proceedings are very brief, and the scope of the hearing is limited to the question of probable cause.

The 5-day, 30-hour proceeding is such a glaring example of the difference between what justice looks like in the civilian courts and what it looks like in the military justice system. Simply put, Article 32 hearings are rigged in favor of the accused. The scales are so tilted in favor of the accused, the system is upended.

The proceedings also have a significant chilling effect on sexual assault reporting. Although the numbers have climbed, only 10 percent of the estimated 26,000 annual assaults are actually reported. Now, think about this: 26,000 assaults every year in the military of both men and women—and mostly men, I might add—with only 3,000 reported. Are we at all surprised that the numbers of reports are so small? Less than 1 percent of the offenders are ever convicted. This is called military justice?

After Air Force Lieutenant General Richard Harding testified that 30 percent of the victims drop out during the investigative process, it is time for us to do something meaningful about Article 32 hearings. That is why I am introducing the Article 32 Reform Act along with my cosponsor, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Congressman PAT MEEHAN, which will align these proceedings with what happens in a civilian preliminary hearing and will give victims the option of whether or not to testify at all.

Ironically, civilian victims are currently afforded this right in military courts but not servicemembers. That is right. We allow civilian victims not to testify in Article 32s but force the brave servicemembers who are victims to be subjected to this abusive process.

This bill has bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate and will finally put an end to these open-ended, abusive hearings that revictimize those who come forward and prevent others from reporting for fear of being savaged by defense attorneys who have only one goal: to shut up the victim and sully their reputations. The proposed reform will put prosecutors in charge. It will shift the focus to probable cause, and the threshold will be what it should be: whether there is sufficient evidence to go to trial.

It is time that we give the same rights to brave servicemembers who come forward to report a crime, the rights that the rest of us have in civilian society. If we are serious about addressing the epidemic of sexual assault,

we must stop treating the victim as the criminal and stop protecting the sexual predators. It is time for us to clean up the military justice system.

HELP FOR THE PHILIPPINES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a mission of mercy, with a message of gratitude.

I am grateful today to members of the Foreign Affairs Committee; the chairperson, Mr. ROYCE; and the ranking member, Mr. ENGEL. I am grateful that they have filed a resolution to support the people of the Philippines.

My mission of mercy is to ask for help for the people of the Philippines. This resolution, H. Res. 404, speaks to some of what we may be able to do, and it also addresses our sympathy for the people of the Philippines.

□ 1045

It expresses our solidarity with the people of the Philippines. It expresses our continuing support for relief and reconstruction assistance for the people of the Philippines, and it goes on to commend the Filipino community in the United States of America for their efforts to organize and to help with the disaster relief.

The Philippines are our allies. The people of the Philippines have been there with us through many struggles. They are the victims of a force of nature, but they can survive this with our help.

I want people to understand that there is a special relationship between America and the people of the Philippines. They were there with us during World War II. They fought side-by-side with our troops. Many of them fought and died together. My hope is that this special bond, this special connectivity that started long before World War II but that continued through World War II, is something that will cause us to remember that these are our friends. They need our help.

They were also there during this war at the Battle of Bataan. More than 70,000 troops marched in the Battle of Bataan. They were marched to a camp where they were to be incarcerated. Many died along the way. Many of them were Americans. More than 10,000 Americans were a part of that Bataan Death March, as it is called.

We have more than 17,000 troops that are buried in the Philippines. These persons are the ones that took up the clarion call to answer the call to duty in a distant place. My hope is that we will remember that they sacrificed their lives and that the people of the Philippines mean a lot more to us than just a simple place on a map.

I would remind us that on August 30, 1951, 62 years ago, we signed a Mutual Defense Treaty with the people of the Philippines. This is not defense in the

traditional sense of defense, but it is defense in the sense that people are defenseless because they have been impacted by a force of nature unlike any other we may have seen on our planet.

This force of nature, according to USAID, has caused 9.7 million people to be affected. It has caused more than 23,000 people to have their homes damaged or destroyed. It has caused more than 600,000 people to be displaced. It has caused more than 700,000 people to find themselves being evacuated. The death toll is still climbing. It is at more than 2,000.

Today, I rise on a mission of mercy with a message of gratitude. The gratitude is to the United States of America and to this administration for sending in our troops. The Marines have landed, and more are on the way. We have an aircraft carrier, the USS *George Washington*, one of our finest. It will be there to provide support services and produce water.

\$20 million in aid is good, but the world has to come to the aid of the people of the Philippines, and we have to do more.

I know that these are times of great austerity. I understand that we have cuts. I also remember something that happened in my family when a person who lived in our community lost their job. We were poor. We were not born into plenty. We were born into poverty. While we were poor, we still understood that someone who had lost a job merited some support. I can remember my parents talking between themselves about how we could help this family, notwithstanding our sense of poverty. When I say we were poor, I was telling a Member just yesterday that the subsidized public housing would have been a step up in life for us. We called it the "projects," and we looked forward to moving to the projects. We never did, but we looked forward to it.

My point is this. Even when we were poor and when we had little, we still made room to help others who had less, and this is what a great country does, I believe.

A great country doesn't ask what will happen to us if we take up the cause of the people of the Philippines. A great country will ask what will happen to them if we do not take up the cause of the people of the Philippines.

So I beg today that we do all that we can to help and that we sign onto H. Res. 404, expressing our sympathy for the people of the Philippines.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. Let's pray for the people of the Philippines.

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 49 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 Larry Phillips, Midway Baptist Church, Mount Airy, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, giver of eternal life, we thank You for this great Republic, a Nation conceived in religious liberty and the free exercise thereof. Today, as generations before us, we seek Your divine hand of providence to guide the affairs of our Nation and those who serve.

Guide our Representatives, we pray, on a path consistent with the original intent of our Constitution. Grant them the strength of character to defend life, liberty, and freedom for future generations. Lead them in the path of righteousness which will exalt this Nation.

As public servants, keep them from the sin of arrogance and self-centered pride by reminding them they are accountable to the people and to You for their decisions.

And I pray each Representative of this House may know that they are greatly loved by You.

As a follower of Jesus Christ, I pray this in His name.

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.

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois 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.