

I had the opportunity to know. I just met with a number of them last week out in the western part of the State. They do a great job, but they need more resources, especially in an economy that is so competitive for workforce and so competitive in areas like rent and housing and the cost of living.

So by allowing the local offices to keep more of the permitting fees, we can channel the resources to allow them to do their jobs better and faster, without compromising the integrity of their charge to protect our other natural resources above the ground. They do it as well as anybody, and we ought to let them do that job and empower them to do it.

H.R. 2728, the Protecting States' Rights to Promote American Energy Security Act, simply acknowledges what the Constitution guarantees, and that is that we are a Nation of States and that States are, in fact, sovereign, and that nobody is more protective of the land and the water and the air than the people who live on it and drink it and breathe it. It simply states that if you have fracturing rules in your State, that is good enough. It is your State, and the Federal Government's minimum standards ought not impose, be an imposition, on the States and their rights to develop their resources the way they want to. It frees up resources of the Federal Government, while unleashing the ingenuity and innovation of our energy economy, providing wealth, providing jobs, and, by the way, reducing the cost of energy for the rest of us, which makes us even more competitive in the global marketplace.

We have a grand opportunity today, Mr. Speaker, to pass these two bills and to put America on a path to full economic recovery and, perhaps, to bring more troops home from the Middle East to reduce our dependency on foreign oil. Let's do this not only as a country, but as a continent, acknowledging that our friends in Canada are better trading partners than Venezuela. Let's build the pipelines and infrastructure necessary. Let's unleash American ingenuity, and let's put America back to work by becoming more energy secure.

IMPACTS OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. LAMALFA Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share some of the stories that fellow Californians in my district are having with the impact under the ACA, the ObamaCare plan.

A funny thing happened on the way to government-run health care nirvana. 1.1 million Californians have lost their health care coverage. In fact, for every one person who has selected a new ACA ObamaCare plan, 40 people have received cancellation notices.

They find that their costs are going to increase, especially in rural California, where choices are more limited of plans, of places to seek health care. Their access to health care is being jeopardized. The law is creating a huge burden for rural health care, where, again, you have to travel maybe several hours, many miles, to seek the kind of health care you need.

Despite the President's promise to the public on this issue, "If you like your plan, you can keep it. Period," we heard; "If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. Period," we heard, this is clearly not the case. Less access, fewer choices, skyrocketing premiums, it is the wrong direction from the President's health care plan as promised.

I would like to share, again, some of the people from our district.

Bill and Corina Eiler from Fort Jones, California, they write, I received a letter from Anthem Blue Cross notifying me that, due to the Affordable Care Act, my plan had been canceled. My new monthly premium of \$919, it used to be \$480 a month, a 192 percent increase, which Bill finds absurd. They have two daughters in college and one more at home. How are they supposed to come up with that kind of money?

Tricia Plass of Tulelake writes that she and her husband, they are business owners. They are self-employed. They have always purchased their own health insurance. Their monthly premium has been around \$800 a month for both of them. Their monthly premium will now jump to over \$1,000 for just one of them. They still have to determine what the other one is going to do. It now appears they will be forced into California's insurance coverage, known as Covered California, where there are no plans with coverage for their doctor that they use now. Since they live near the State line of Oregon, they get their health care on the other side in Oregon. Their facility is there. Their doctor is there. They will no longer be able to see that doctor. They are going to have to drive maybe 2 or 3 hours to Redding or somewhere else to find new physicians. So they live with the constant fear that their new policy will not even provide coverage when they need it.

Janice Marquis from Redding writes:

I recently received a letter from Aetna stating that my medical care coverage policy would be canceled at the end of the year.

She is 62 and must wait 2½ years before she is eligible for Medicare. Her insurance coverage will jump from \$318 a month to over \$500 a month. The promise made by President Obama, "if you like your policy, you can keep it," she feels, was a lie.

This entire program is a nightmare.

Lastly, this one is really disturbing. A lady named Ramona Larramendy from Redding, California, says she was diagnosed with stage 3 ovarian cancer in July. With her current plan she was able to get the surgery and treatment she needed. A very large hospital bill of

\$128,000 was covered. Her insurance paid all but \$700 of that because she had good coverage. Now, because she is going to be canceled, she doesn't know what is going to happen to her. She still needs a lot more treatment in this crisis moment of her life, and yet, for her Christmas present, she is going to get uncertainty. She is going to get the worry, at a time where she is being treated for stage 3 cancer, what is the health care plan that, for political purposes, it appears, since we have done everything else to try and point out to the American people and to the politicians in this building that it needs to be fixed or changed, that we are not getting it right here.

So what are we going to do? Again, these Californians are not alone. These Americans are not alone. Millions are paying the price for the President's broken promises.

It should not be a political issue. It should be us serving the public. We cannot continue to stand by and watch as millions are losing their coverage that they want, that they shopped for, that they were diligent about, with people that are professionals that know what they are doing, unlike what we see with the people running the Web sites, which is only a small part of the whole big picture of what is wrong with this system.

We need to set the egos aside, go back to the drawing board—at the very least, set this aside for a year. I believe we should repeal it and go back to targeting the people that really do need the help and let the folks in this country that are already reasonably happy with their plan, have done the diligence, have made the efforts to get the coverage and be responsible Americans, they don't need to be bothered in this scenario. Let's help the people that need the help. The American Health Care Reform Act, as put over by the Republican Study Committee, is one way to do that.

So let's look for alternatives. We have alternatives. We have had them all along, as Republicans, as conservatives, as people that understand business. And so let's make these choices available to the American public, not force them into something that they never asked for other than for political purposes.

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 8 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 (Mr. LATHAM) at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Paul Taylor, St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, offered the following prayer:

We stand before You, O Holy God, conscious of our sinfulness, but aware that we gather in Your name.

Come to us, remain with us, and enlighten our hearts. Give us light and strength to know Your will, to make it our own, and to live it in our lives.

Guide us by Your wisdom, support us by Your power, for You are God, our God, the holy God.

You desire justice for all. Enable us to uphold the rights of others. Do not allow us to be misled by ignorance or corrupted by fear or favor.

Unite us to Yourself in the bond of love and keep us faithful to all that is true.

As we gather in Your name, may we temper justice with love, so that all our discussions and reflections may be pleasing to You and earn the reward promised to good and faithful servants.

We ask this of You who live and reign forever and ever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. TSONGAS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. TSONGAS 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 REVEREND DR. PAUL TAYLOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and introduce a good friend and community leader in my home State, Reverend Paul Taylor, and to thank him for offering today's invocation. Reverend Taylor made the trip to the Nation's Capital from the great city of Latrobe, Pennsylvania. I know my colleague, TIM MURPHY, joins me in welcoming Reverend Taylor to the House of Representatives.

For the past 17 years, Reverend Taylor has dedicated his life to the students and faculty at Saint Vincent College. As a member of the college, he has held several prominent positions, including dean of admission, dean of

students, and his current role as executive vice president.

Reverend Taylor's civic engagement and enthusiasm for improving the lives of others is not limited to higher education. Reverend Taylor also serves on the board of directors for the Latrobe Area Hospital Charitable Foundation and assists as a weekend parish priest.

In his personal life, Reverend Taylor is an avid hunter and serves as the chaplain to the six-time Super Bowl champion Pittsburgh Steelers, and he performs mass every Sunday for every home game.

Reverend Taylor is a warm and welcoming leader. He has helped build a strong foundation at Saint Vincent College that will last for decades to come. I am proud of the work he has done in the Pennsylvania community and am privileged to call him my friend.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

FRACKING

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

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2728, the Protecting States' Rights to Promote American Energy Security Act, is a commonsense bill that promotes energy independence, protects jobs, and preserves states' rights.

The 25th District of Texas contains the Barnett Shale, a major job creator, energy provider, and economic driver in the oil and gas industry. Reports this month showed that 825 out of the 1,762 active rigs in the United States are located throughout the State of Texas. That is almost half the Nation's active drilling rigs.

The shale oil boom in Texas contributes to our Nation's overall ability to cut reliance on foreign oil and get one step closer to energy independence. I will tell you one thing that can stop this progress dead in its tracks, however, and that is red tape and Federal bureaucracy.

For 60 years, States have regulated their own hydraulic fracturing operations, but the Obama administration is attempting to step in and add duplicative and costly regulations. For example, on average, it takes a State 30 days to approve permits for drilling. The Federal Government's Bureau of Land Management takes an average of 228 days.

Subjecting States to this is senseless, harmful, and unnecessary. H.R. 2728 will prevent this and many other destructive regulations from stifling energy production and job creation.

IRAN AND DIPLOMACY

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, as the diplomats gather in Geneva today, I applaud their hard work in moving toward an interim agreement on the Iranian nuclear challenge.

After years of confrontation, today marks an important moment for all of us who support a diplomatic solution. We have spent a great deal of time to get to this place: taxpayer dollars, political capital, and global influence. We must not turn back now.

Right now, we have the maximum amount of leverage for a deal vis-a-vis Iran without fracturing the international coalition. Therefore, we should focus 100 percent on reaching a deal in Geneva under the P5+1 framework. It is absolutely critical.

Like using a wrench to tighten a nut, you can strip it if you push too hard. We have pushed to exactly the right point, and I hope that we will be successful.

We must, however, remember Mr. Reagan said, "Trust, but verify." It is possible to prevent nuclear problems if we trust, but verify. That is what these diplomats are doing.

SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, over the past year, I have heard from thousands of people in the Dayton area who have been affected by the unilateral and irresponsible spending cuts known as sequestration, which I have strongly opposed. Among those are numerous business owners who have contacted my office with details about the need to cut hours and eliminate full-time jobs in an effort to keep their doors open in this time of budgetary uncertainty.

Because of this continued uncertainty in contracts and the military's ability to make commitments, thousands of jobs in the Dayton area are at risk as we head into the second year of sequestration. Many of these subcontractors are critical to the training and further education of our military personnel. As a result of these cutbacks, our readiness and the ability to deal with global conflicts are greatly diminished.

Hundreds of hardworking civilian employees are struggling to pay their personal bills as a result of furloughs, and many more will suffer in 2014 as reductions in force will be necessary if the burdens of sequestration are not lifted.

I encourage those members of the Budget Committee to find targeted and meaningful spending cuts that will alleviate the pressure that sequestration is having on Dayton and similar communities across the country that serve as strong supporters of our military.