

Taxpayers subsidize this plan. I believe by increasing the minimum time-frame, I think it would, obviously, result in considerable savings. I have conducted no survey to support that, but commonsense tells me that. In fact, this is a commonsense proposal.

For example, Mr. Speaker, a Member of Congress now must complete only 5 years of credible service to become vested. I know of no plan, other than this one, that would vest at 5 years. Such a Member would be required, if my bill is enacted, to complete at least 12 years of service prior to becoming vested.

I figured after 4 or 5 weeks I would have attracted at least 20 to 25 cosponsors. Today, I have no cosponsors. So, to walk you through how it would work if my plan is adopted, a Member of the Congress must complete not 5 years, but 12 years of service. That can be done through six 2-year House terms or two 6-year Senate terms or a combination thereof.

It is a commonsense proposal. Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, I will anxiously await the knock on the door for cosponsors willing to sign up. The welcome mat is out. It is a good proposal.

GIVE DIPLOMACY A CHANCE TO SUCCEED

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, in the rush to wrap up and go home, there is too much unfinished business, including leaving 2.15 million long-term unemployed in the lurch.

But one item should not be on the agenda: an attempt to undermine the diplomatic breakthrough with Iran, the most encouraging development with that country in 34 years. We would give the hardliners in Iran who really hate the preliminary agreement an excuse to walk away. It would be a continuation of 60 years of mismanagement by the United States with our relationship with that proud nation with deep ties to America.

The worst thing we did was team with the British to overthrow their democratically elected government in 1953 and replace most of that with the Shah, who for 25 years, was a repressive dictator.

Few remember, if they ever knew, that the Iranians helped stabilize Afghanistan after we drove the Taliban from power. They don't know that the people in Tehran had candlelight vigils in sympathy to the United States after 9/11 where some of the supposed allies of the United States were celebrating our loss in the streets. For that, the Iranians were rewarded with the label of being part of the Axis of Evil.

We must make diplomacy the key. We are not going to be able to bomb away the knowledge of how to develop nuclear weapons. Experts I have talked to say they could have made a nuclear

bomb years ago if they had really been bent on that creation.

Torpedoing the agreement will be counterproductive. It risks collapse of sanctions which depend on the Chinese, the Indians, and the Japanese not buying Iranian oil. If we appear unreasonable, we lose international support, and we can lose ground.

It would undercut President Hassan Rouhani, elected by the Iranians who want change and a more moderate approach to the world. Iranians—people who have been there and testify—actually like Americans. They don't much like the repressive government. But that support can help reach more than just a nuclear deal.

Iran is key to solving the nightmare that is Syria, prying them back from supporting the insurgents in support for a long-term solution. Iran is key to holding Iraq together and not having it spin off into civil war and to defeat or at least contain the Taliban resurgents in Afghanistan.

A recent poll showed 57 percent of the American public supports the agreement. When they are given greater detail about what it entails, that support increases to 63 percent.

Don't undercut the best chance to reorder the Middle East in a third of a century. I think we ought to give diplomacy a chance to succeed for a change.

THE NEW YEAR OF OBAMACARE

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, a great tragedy is now unfolding across America as we prepare for the new year.

Millions of Americans are losing their health plans. Millions more are facing staggering price increases. Millions more are having their hours cut back at work or seeing their salaries pared back because of ObamaCare.

Sadly, this is just the beginning. In coming days, millions of employer-provided plans face cancellation, multiplying this disaster many fold.

The administration recently held a contest for videos to promote ObamaCare. Its grand prize winner featured this message: Don't worry about the price tag. Don't worry about the price tag? Isn't that helpful and compassionate advice to the millions of Americans who are struggling through the fifth year of Obamanomics and who are now also facing the reality of seeing their premiums doubling or tripling.

Just don't worry about the price tag, skip the House payment, and cough up the extra cash. That is the best that this administration can offer? Many millions of Americans who had health coverage on New Year's Eve will not have it on New Year's Day because of ObamaCare.

What awaits those who actually can sign up? According to the government's

own numbers, about two-thirds of exchange applicants have been forced into Medicaid. That includes many on limited incomes who have maintained bare-bones policies because they are desperately trying to stay out of Medicaid. Some have found that nearly by looking at prices they have ended up trapped in this dreaded welfare program.

A major study documents that Medicaid patients have worse health outcomes than those without any insurance. If you doubt that, just see how long it will take you to see a Medicaid doctor, if you can find one, for a bad cold.

If you are a part of the one in three exchange visitors who escaped this fate, the next problem will be to find a doctor—any doctor. The president of the California Medical Association reports that 70 percent of California doctors will not accept ObamaCare patients. That means the remaining 30 percent will be overwhelmed, resulting in life-threatening waiting lines.

As patients desperately seek doctors in emergency rooms, actual emergencies will go waiting. Top-flight specialized doctors and facilities will become increasingly inaccessible as they opt out of the system.

Those patients who actually can get an appointment may then discover that there is no record of their policy because the government hasn't been able to connect patients with their new insurers. Patients will next face the cold reality of sky-high deductibles and copayments that many will be unable to pay. Many hospitals that serve large populations of the poor can only do so because of supplemental payments, but ObamaCare is phasing those out. Some may be forced to close their doors.

Those ObamaCare patients fortunate enough to stay well in this brave new world can expect a highly elevated risk of identity theft in what the founder of McAfee Security Software calls a "hacker's dream." And there is no need to wait for hackers. In some cases, the government has already accidentally released patients' private financial and medical information.

Since so many people—particularly the young—are choosing not to pay inflated prices to subsidize others, we can expect another major round of rate increases next fall on those remaining in the system in order to make up the shortfalls.

That is what the new year will bring to our country. Many of us in the House warned of this coming train wreck, and we tried at least to delay it. For this, we were called arsonists, terrorists, jihadists, and demagogues; but now those warnings have proven chillingly and entirely accurate.

This program has devastated the lives of millions of Americans. This damage now cannot be undone by delaying it or tinkering with it. It must be repealed and replaced with the patient-centered plan proposed by House

Republicans, a plan guided by individual freedom of choice and open competition.

This will only happen if there is a massive change of heart by the congressional Democrats who imposed this nightmare on our country. Now is the time for all Americans whose lives have been upended by their folly to share their stories with their Representatives and to pray that they actually can touch some hearts and change some minds during this holiday season. Otherwise, I am afraid that New Year's Day will be nothing to celebrate.

CLOSING GUANTANAMO BAY

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, when it was first opened in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the Guantanamo Bay prison may have seemed a reasonable stopgap measure as a shocked Nation marshaled its resources and figured out how to dispose of detainees taken in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

But even in those early days, the problems we were creating with Guantanamo's patchwork of military rules and commissions were readily apparent. Since 2002, I have introduced numerous bills and amendments to try to bring Guantanamo into conformity with American and international law and to stop it from becoming a jihadi recruiting tool.

But reform of this prison system has been elusive and progress towards bringing its detainees to justice almost nonexistent, as U.S. courts have taken strong issue with its improvised legal process.

In one of his first acts as President, Barack Obama ordered the closing of Guantanamo, but the Congress almost immediately stepped in and erected a series of statutory barriers that have prevented the transfer of detainees to the United States and made transfer to third countries extremely difficult.

Today, there is a renewed push by the administration to shutter Guantanamo for good. Doing so will not be easy, but the cost of keeping the prison open—to our values, to our pocketbook, to our reputation, and to our security—have become too great to bear.

There are now 164 detainees at Guantanamo, 84 of whom have been cleared for transfer to their home country or another country willing to accept them. These detainees should be processed and transferred as soon as security considerations will allow.

This would leave 80 remaining detainees, who are roughly split into two groups. The first group, which includes Khalid Sheikh Mohamed and other key 9/11 plotters, consists of detainees slated for trial under the military commissions that were established by the Bush administration.

These proceedings have been mired in pre-trial wrangling; and the longer

they drag on, the less legitimate the overall system appears. Meanwhile, our civilian judicial system, which many congressional critics have derided as not up to the task of handling terrorism cases, has disposed of a long line of defendants—from Richard Reid, the Shoe Bomber, to Omar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the Underwear Bomber, and Faisal Shaizhad, the Times Square Bomber—all successfully prosecuted in America's civilian courts, and none will ever be released again.

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By lifting its restriction on transferring these detainees to the United States for trial, Congress could give the administration the flexibility to transfer many of those now in the military commission system to Article III courts for prosecution. These civilian courts can be more expeditious, more effective, and, in the eyes of the world, more just than military tribunals.

The remaining detainees—some 46 men—will be the most difficult cases. These are detainees considered too dangerous to release or transfer, but who cannot be prosecuted. For some, evidence cannot be presented without revealing critical sources of intelligence and methods. Others were tortured, or evidence against them was collected through torture or some other unlawful means. For still others, the evidence of past acts and future dangerousness, while not sufficient to prosecute, argues compellingly against any release or transfer.

The administration announced over the summer that it would begin a review of these cases, and as a result, others may be cleared for transfer or prosecution. It is likely that many, if not most, of the detainees in this final category will remain in American custody. But where?

Even if we ultimately decide to maintain these detainees in custody, that does not justify continued operation of Guantanamo Bay. Instead, they should be transferred to civilian or military confinement in the United States, an option currently blocked by Congress.

Every day that it remains open, Guantanamo Bay damages the United States. Because there are other, better options for prosecution and detention of these inmates, we are not safer for Guantanamo's existence. In fact, it makes us more vulnerable by drawing new generations to the jihad.

The Congress, the administration, and the military can work together to find a solution that protects our people even as we maintain our principles and devotion to the rule of law. The President has indicated that he would like to work with Congress to end the Guantanamo era. We should take him up on that important challenge.

SUPPORTING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the Food Network recently broadcast an episode of their hit reality-based cooking television series, "Chopped." Aspiring teen chefs highlighted their culinary skills and competed for a scholarship that would be put towards a leading culinary school. Competition aside, these young chefs are ambassadors of career and technical education programs. They amazed professional judges and made the viewing public second-guess mom's cooking.

As cochair of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus, which I am proud to lead with my good friend, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN), I congratulate the Food Network and "Chopped" for promoting these young culinary professionals.

Mr. Speaker, inspiration is like lightning; it doesn't strike in the same place twice. With 2014 quickly approaching, we should do everything in our power in order to support the culinary arts and the entire range of other career and technical education programs and fields that offer aspiring young minds and transitioning adults a gateway to success in a rapidly evolving and dynamic job market. The future of America deserves as much.

RECOGNIZING LAWRENCE LIVERMORE NATIONAL LABORATORY FOR OUTSTANDING WORK

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

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory for its outstanding scientific work and the dedicated scientists who played a role in the effort that was recently awarded the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize.

Yesterday, in Oslo, Norway, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, OPCW, received the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize for its work enforcing the global ban on chemical weapons. The OPCW received this prestigious award in part because of the contributions from over 21 scientific laboratories around the world. That work, in different capacities, led to identifying and destroying chemical weapons across the world. One of these laboratories is from the 15th Congressional District, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

Over the past 13 years, Lawrence Livermore Forensic Science Center has worked closely with the OPCW to analyze samples and test for the possible presence of chemical weapons. The OPCW and Lawrence Livermore Laboratory were recognized specifically for actions that OPCW has recently taken in Syria—to identify, destroy, and dismantle the Assad regime's chemical weapons that they most recently used back in August on their own people.