

now and the noon hour, but at 2:15 we are going to have a motion we will be voting on to move to the consideration of this bill. It doesn't say you have to be for it or against it or you want to change it.

If you want to have amendments, you have to get to the bill before you can have amendments. So a motion-to-proceed vote will take place at 2:15. Now, I want to tell all of the Members who are out there that if you have amendments—we are going to try to knock this thing out in 2 weeks. We are going to be down here talking about it for 2 weeks. But if you have amendments, if you want a chance to offer your amendments, you can offer them, but bring them down, file your amendments. If you do not do that, we will pass a deadline and you will not be able to do that. So I encourage our Members to do that. I look forward to the next 2 weeks of discussing and passing the second most significant bill we will consider this year.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WASHINGTON EXEMPTION FROM OBAMACARE

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to again bring up a very important issue. It is important because it impacts a major part of our lives, a major law that Congress passed several years ago. It is important because it goes to a fundamental principle—what should be a fundamental principle of American democracy—that what Washington passes for the rest of the country it should live with itself. I am talking about the Washington exemption from ObamaCare and my effort, with others, to end that double standard.

As the Presiding Officer remembers, during the ObamaCare debate several years ago, this issue came up. It came up in the context of a floor amendment. It was an important floor amendment, one of the very few that conservatives in the Senate passed on the Senate floor.

That amendment to the ObamaCare bill said that all Members of Congress and our staff would get our health care through the so-called ObamaCare exchange, just as millions of other Americans would under this plan—no special rules, no special treatment, no special exemption or special subsidy. That was important to say that Congress would live under whatever law passed for the rest of America, and that amendment was passed on the Senate floor. It became part of the broader bill, and it was eventually passed into law. Obvi-

ously, as you know, I opposed—strongly opposed—and continue to oppose the ObamaCare bill and the law, but that amendment was made a part of it.

Well, after it was passed into law, it was sort of one of those cases of which NANCY PELOSI said that we have to pass the law to figure out what is in it. After the fact, lots of folks on Capitol Hill in Washington started reading the law more carefully, read that provision, and said: Oh, you know what. How are we going to deal with this? Surely, surely we aren't going to be subjected to the ObamaCare exchanges the same as millions upon millions of other Americans—even though that is exactly what the statute said.

Well, at that point a very determined lobbying campaign got under way—a lobbying campaign of many Members on Capitol Hill—of the President. And the campaign was simple. People rushed to the administration, rushed to President Obama and said: Oh, you need to change this. We can't live with the statute and the significant section of the statute that says all Members of Congress need to go to the exchange for their health insurance, just as millions of other Americans do.

Sure enough, after months of that very determined and, sadly, bipartisan lobbying campaign, President Obama issued one of his countless Executive orders and edicts to essentially change, with the stroke of his pen, contrary to statute, a significant part of the ObamaCare statute.

He has done that dozens—if not hundreds—of times, and this is one significant example of that. He changed what the statute said and took a lot of the sting out of that provision of the law for Members of Congress.

Through an OPM rule, he said two things. First, Members of Congress, when you go to the exchange, which is mandated, don't worry; you are going to have a big taxpayer-funded subsidy follow you to the exchange—unavailable to every other American at our income level and completely unique to Members of Congress. No other American going to the ObamaCare exchanges enjoys this. But out of thin air, we are going to give you a big, taxpayer-funded subsidy that is nowhere in the statute.

Then the second significant thing President Obama did through that OPM rule was to say this: Members of Congress, this doesn't have to apply to your staff even though it says it does. You can designate whomever you want on your staff as “nonofficial” and they don't have to go to the ObamaCare exchange at all.

Well, virtually all of my Republican colleagues regularly come to the floor and rightly complain about President Obama changing statutory law with the stroke of his pen, acting beyond his authority. This is a crystal-clear example of that. If we complain about it in other context, I think we should speak up and complain about it even when it benefits us. So that is what I am doing.

We should not stand for this Washington exemption from ObamaCare. We should not stand for this complete, complete double standard. We should insist that we live by that clear language of the ObamaCare statute so that every Member of Congress gets his or her health care on the so-called ObamaCare exchange, just as millions of other Americans do—no exemption, no special subsidy, and no special treatment in any way, shape or form.

I have been fighting since that OPM rule to make sure we do exactly that. There will be a floor amendment this week to pursue that end, and I urge my colleagues to do the right thing, to support that important floor amendment. It is important to do that for two reasons—one, focused on principle and one focused on real practicality.

First, as to the principle, I think it is a basic fundamental principle of American democracy—it certainly should be—that what Washington passes on the rest of the country it lives with itself. That should be a fundamental principle of American democracy.

So my legislation, the No Exemption for Washington from Obamacare Act, the floor amendment which embodies exactly that legislation, would say that every Member of Congress, the President, the Vice President, and their political appointees get their health care from the ObamaCare exchanges just like millions of other Americans—no special exemption, no special subsidy, no special treatment, no special insider deal.

The second reason we should support that is a lot more practical, and that is that when you make the cook eat his own cooking, it often improves dramatically. When you force the chef to have every meal out of his own kitchen, the product often improves dramatically.

So that is what I want to do in a simple, straightforward way, abiding by the clear language of the ObamaCare statute itself. All of official Washington—every Member of Congress, the President, the Vice President, and all of their political appointees—should have to go to the exchanges for their health care, just like millions of other Americans who have to as their fallback option. And we should do it in the same way—no special exemption, no special subsidy, no special treatment, and no special insider deal.

It is important we say this, and it is important we do it. We have an opportunity to do it on the floor as we debate the bill before us.

I urge my colleagues to support this important floor amendment and to lend support to the free-standing bill that I have introduced.

As I travel to Louisiana, I have regular townhall meetings, and I have regular telephone townhalls when I am stuck here in Washington and voting. Probably, the biggest single complaint I hear that really and rightly gets under the skin of my fellow Louisiana citizens goes to the heart of this discussion.

Why the heck does everybody in Washington think they are above us? Why do they pass laws and never have to live under them themselves?

Well, this is a crystal-clear example of that. What is worse is that the statute itself sets out that we would live under ObamaCare, getting our health care from the ObamaCare exchange just like millions of other Americans.

If you don't believe that is what the statute mandates, look exactly at the particulars of how Congress and the President are currently getting around that through the special OPF rule that President Obama issued. This rule says that Congress can get its health care from a special small business exchange in the District of Columbia and can have a huge taxpayer-funded subsidy applied, even though it is unavailable to every other American at our income level.

Now, what is wrong with that? Well, under the ObamaCare statute itself, that small business exchange is specifically set up and regulated and limited to small businesses of 50 employees or less.

How did Congress define itself as a small business with 50 employees or less? It is interesting, if you pull the paperwork that the leadership of the House and Senate sent over to allow Members to participate in this exchange. The folks who submitted that paperwork on behalf of the House and the Senate, who signed off on it saying that everything contained therein was true and accurate, said: How many employees does the Senate have? Forty-five. How many employees does the House have? Forty-five.

Really? That is interesting. This is a flatout lie. It is a flatout lie submitted in writing by the House and Senate on behalf of all of us to shoehorn Congress in to this small business exchange to get extra added benefits, to get this taxpayer-funded subsidy unavailable to every other American at our income level. And that proves how outrageous this end run around the statutory language is.

So again, I urge all our colleagues to come together in support of this fix and to say: Yes, it should be the first rule of American democracy that what we pass for the rest of America we live by ourselves. That is important, and we are going to do it in this case and in every case.

I urge my colleagues to support our freestanding bill—the No Exemption for Washington from ObamaCare Act. I urge our colleagues to support the floor amendment, which is the same as that freestanding bill, and to pass it as a floor amendment—to pass it into law through that mechanism.

Before yielding the floor, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time during the quorum call be equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO ADMIRAL JAMES WINNEFELD, JR.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to ADM James Winnefeld, Jr., who is retiring at the end of this month after serving with distinction for more than 37 years, culminating his career as the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Throughout his service as a senior military leader, Admiral Winnefeld has provided this body, and in particular the Senate Committee on Armed Services, with valuable testimony and candid military advice. Over the last 4 years, Admiral Winnefeld has served as the ninth Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His vast experience, knowledge, outstanding leadership, and professionalism, combined with his deep respect and consideration for our service men and women, will be greatly missed.

During his tenure as Vice Chairman, Admiral Winnefeld provided military advice to not only the legislative branch but also to the President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on a wide range of complex military and national security issues during an extremely challenging period in our country's history.

In a challenging fiscal and security environment, Admiral Winnefeld helped to lead our military through global events and threats, to include the Department of Defense's rebalance to the Pacific, Iraq troop withdrawal, Afghanistan transition, the global threat of ISIL, instability in Syria, and Russia's provocative actions in Eastern Europe. In addition, the Vice Chair played key roles in advising our Nation's leaders on various counterterrorism efforts.

As Vice Chairman, he led the development and implementation of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review, an effort that involved thousands of senior leadership man hours. Pivotal to his role as the Vice Chairman, he also chaired the Joint Requirements Oversight Council, where he worked tirelessly to transform the requirement processes to become more agile, transparent, and inclusive. Admiral Winnefeld focused his efforts on the immediate capability needs of the combatant commanders and the most pressing military issues of the joint warfighter.

As cochair of the Defense Acquisitions Board, Admiral Winnefeld worked to link the requirements, resource, and acquisition communities in developing

programs to deliver appropriate capabilities to the joint warfighter at the right time and for the right price.

Admiral Winnefeld's work as a co-chair of the Nuclear Weapons Council ensured our military's nuclear enterprise and No. 1 priority remained viable and relevant as a strategic deterrent to our Nation's adversaries.

Admiral Winnefeld graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology—also known as Georgia Tech—and received his commission from the Navy ROTC Program there. He subsequently served with three fighter squadrons flying the F-14 Tomcat and as an instructor at the Navy Fighter Weapons School. Admiral Winnefeld's unit commands at sea include Fighter Squadron 211, the USS *Cleveland*, and the USS *Enterprise*.

He led the "Big E" through her 18th deployment, which included combat operations in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom immediately after the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001.

As the commander of Carrier Strike Group TWO, he led Task Forces 50, 152, and 58 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and maritime interception operations in the Arabian Gulf. He also served as the commander of the U.S. 6th Fleet, the commander of NATO Allied Joint Command Lisbon, and the commander of Striking and Support Forces NATO.

His shore tours include service in the Joint Staff Operations Directorate, as senior aide to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and as executive assistant to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

As a flag officer, Admiral Winnefeld served ashore as the director of Warfare Programs and Transformational Concepts at U.S. Fleet Forces Command, as the director of Joint Innovation and Experimentation at U.S. Joint Forces Command, and as the director for Strategic Plans and Policy on the joint staff.

Prior to becoming the vice chairman, Admiral Winnefeld served as the commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command and the U.S. Northern Command.

As the commander of NORAD and NORTHCOM, Admiral Winnefeld led historic advances in the working relationship between NORTHCOM, Homeland Security, FEMA, the Drug Enforcement Administration, Customs and Border Protection, and the National Guard, specifically with the dual status commander concept. In addition, he led the U.S.-Mexican military-to-military relationship to a historic level of collaboration and brought tangible results to our Nation's important struggle against the fast-growing transnational criminal organizations.

Through his distinctive accomplishments, Admiral Winnefeld culminated a long and distinguished career in the service of our Nation. His tenure leaves a lasting, positive legacy on our armed services. I appreciate his extraordinary service which reflected great credit