

How many people will lose the health coverage they have right now?

The American public demands and deserves to know.

Madam Speaker, this is not regular order and this is not why I came to Congress. When Democrats introduced the Affordable Care Act, whether you supported it or not, we held 79 hearings over 2 years, heard from 181 witnesses from both sides of the aisle, and posted the bill online 30 days before markup.

The Republicans have done none of these things. That is hypocritical and shameful. We will resist this dangerous repeal proposal, Madam Speaker.

TRUMP HOTEL

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss another glaring and scandalous drama involving President Trump's conflict of interest that has been lost in the shuffle of the President's nightly tweets and the daily Russian revelations. I would like to talk about the Old Post Office Building down the street on Pennsylvania Avenue.

The General Services Administration solicited proposals for redevelopment of the Old Post Office Building in 2011, selected The Trump Organization in 2012, and signed a 60-year lease in 2013 to redevelop the building.

For the first time in U.S. history, a sitting President now operates and profits from a private business in a taxpayer-owned Federal building. The Old Post Office Building lease agreement explicitly prohibits any elected official of the U.S. Government from serving as a lessee or from profiting under the lease.

Before the President took office, career officials at GSA confirmed that the prohibition on elected officials benefiting from the lease is a categorical ban on any elected official, including the President, being a party to or benefiting from the lease. The prohibition not allowing elected officials to benefit from GSA leases exists because of the outsized influence elected officials, especially the President, have over the funding and management of GSA.

President Trump has violated the very terms of the lease agreement that his company entered into with the United States Government for the Trump International Hotel the very moment that he took the oath of office to become President of the United States of America.

Soon, President Trump will appoint the administrator who serves at the pleasure of the President. That same administrator will be responsible for administering and managing the lease where the guy who signs his paycheck is the guy who benefits from the lease. That, ladies and gentlemen, is a classic conflict of interest.

To try to hide this conflict, President Trump has announced a so-called di-

vestment plan that has two of his adult children responsible for negotiating with the GSA on behalf of daddy. If you think daddy's kids won't make sure that daddy is happy with the administrator and if you think that the administrator won't make sure that the kids are happy with him, then you would be the one who would buy some ocean-front property in Chicago. Essentially, the President controls the man exercising judgment on his lease.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has repeatedly written to the GSA trying to get more information about this glaring problem, but we have not received a substantial response. On March 7, 2017, Ranking Member PETER DEFazio and I wrote to the GSA Inspector General requesting that they examine administration and management of the Old Post Office Building lease.

□ 1030

Congress needs an independent investigation to determine how and when GSA plans to resolve this breach of the lease and eliminate this conflict of interest, how GSA is shielding the career officials working through this conflict, and whether GSA is receiving fair market value for any amendments to the lease. This lease has already been amended five times, without any congressional oversight.

There is also the elephant in the room as to whether this Trump hotel business is violating the U.S. Constitution. It is unclear whether payments by foreign governments to the Trump International Hotel provide evidence of a violation of the Emoluments Clause of the Constitution. There are also serious allegations of whether foreign diplomats are steering business toward the Trump International Hotel. Could it be that Putin has already made arrangements to rent the presidential penthouse suite in the Trump Hotel for \$10 million a year for the next 4 years? Or perhaps he has paid \$100 million for an option to lease the Grand Ballroom at the Trump Hotel over the next 4 years. The American people need and deserve answers to these very important questions.

President Trump and GSA need to come clean and address these conflict of interest issues in a transparent fashion that protects the interests of the American taxpayers.

COACH STEVE CHAPMAN

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

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Madam Speaker, today I am here to congratulate Calallen High School baseball coach Steve Chapman on his recent induction into the Texas High School Baseball Coaches Hall of Fame.

Coach Chapman was born and raised in Hallettsville, Texas. After graduating from Hallettsville High School, he attended Blinn College and the Uni-

versity of Mary Hardin-Baylor, where he received a degree in education. After graduation, he began his coaching career at Victoria Stroman High School as an assistant coach. In 1983, he became head baseball coach at Calallen High School.

In Coach Chapman's 33 years at Calallen, his Wildcats have won or shared 25 district championships and have been to the Region 4 finals 19 times. The Wildcats have reached the UIL State tournament on 12 occasions, played in the State championship game 8 times, and have won 3 State championships. Coach Chapman's overall record is 967 wins, 204 losses, and 2 ties.

Coach Chapman's induction into the Hall of Fame is a testament to his hard work and the thousands of lives he has touched while coaching the Wildcats, including my long-time legislative director, Blake Adami. I offer my congratulations to Coach Chapman, his family, and everyone at Calallen.

REPLACING THE ACA

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

Mr. HECK. Madam Speaker, today I would like to share a letter I received from Sherry, who lives back in my hometown of Olympia, Washington.

Sherry writes to me:

My husband was a veteran. He worked as a civilian with high security clearance at White Sands Missile Range and later as a paramedic and firefighter. When I met him, I was working as a paramedic, also. We were crazy in love. But I lost him to cancer in 2009, at the age of 56.

Since the day my husband died, we lost his income. I had to figure out how to raise our son, who was then 6. I sold my business on the Oregon coast, lost my house in Newport, and moved to Washington to be with my sister. I found Olympia a year later and have been here since. I have qualified for food stamps for the last 8 years. We have depended on the food bank on and off.

When all this happened, that was before ObamaCare, and the \$1,000 monthly premium for insurance for my family was simply not sustainable. At first, I was able to keep my insurance through COBRA. But after that ran out, we were left to paying for some cut-rate insurance that provided very little coverage.

When the Affordable Care Act was enacted, I finally felt relief. I got covered through the ACA, and that allowed me to direct some of the money I was paying to insurance toward food, books, clothing, or tuition. My son is now 13, and 6 foot 1, with a size 14 shoe, so we go through clothes and shoes for him like crazy.

I still struggle. I still have medical bills and collections. I still struggle with food and clothes for both myself and my son. I still go to the Thurston County Food Bank in downtown Olympia. But ObamaCare allows me to follow my health closely and helps me pay for the medical care my son and I require.

I have a spot on my lung that needs constant monitoring, and ObamaCare has allowed me to go in for those routine MRIs. Preventative services like mammograms are also paid for.

Since my husband died, I have been focused on raising my son and getting a higher education degree. I went to massage school, and

then I earned my degree at The Evergreen State College. I will graduate with a master's degree in psychology in August. Not only will I be employable and be able to help others in the mental health field, I will also get to start whittling away at paying old medical bills and my student loans.

Although I will no longer need ObamaCare since I will have health insurance through my employer, the ACA has forever changed the insurance marketplace. The insurers can't charge me more for my preexisting condition like they could before.

If the ACA had been in place when my husband died, I would have been able to keep my business on the Oregon coast. If the ACA had been in place when my husband died, I would have immediately qualified for insurance under the ACA, and I may have been able to keep our house. I want you to know, I am not lazy. I am a determined, self-improving mom who is raising her son alone. Before the ACA, I had to decide whether to pay for insurance or food. I depend on the ACA.

That is the letter from Sherry.

Madam Speaker, this past Saturday, I had the opportunity to meet with more than 300 of my constituents who support accessible, affordable health care in our country. I heard from many, but still a small portion of the 750,000 Washingtonians who gained coverage through the ACA.

The ACA is working for many people across America, and Congress should not reverse the progress we have made under it. That being said, I know there are parts of the ACA that could be improved upon. We all know that. We can and should make improvements in order to make healthcare insurance more affordable and more accessible to more people across our Nation. As we began this Congress, I had hope that we could have a productive, bipartisan discussion about the steps we could take to do just that, but I was saddened and, frankly, dismayed by the lack of serious policy efforts from my friends on the other side of the aisle.

Well, the majority finally released their proposed replacement for the ACA, the so-called American Health Care Act, after weeks of hiding this secret bill behind closed doors. Frankly, I am not impressed by the bill. This bill offers no attempts to improve healthcare coverage or insurance coverage, no attempts to reduce healthcare costs or the rate of inflation. This bill allows insurance to charge older people more while, at the same time, reducing the subsidies for many of those very same people. The bill was presented without any indication of how it will affect our budget or how many people will be kicked off their insurance under this plan.

This bill does not address the barriers that prevent working class and middle class people from accessing and securing health insurance. In fact, the bill would likely put health insurance out of reach for millions of Americans who are in the working and middle classes.

Madam Speaker, to earn the label "American," a bill had better be exceptional. The American Health Care Act is a lot of things, but exceptional is not

one of them. People like Sherry are exceptional. Let's put Sherry and people in her circumstances first.

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 39 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

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

God of the universe, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We ask Your blessing upon us this day. During these days, the American people can see the difficulties of legislating for this great Nation of ours. Disagreements between and within parties emerge when important and sweeping laws are being considered.

So also the push and pull of local, State, and national governmental interests and responsibilities can be seen to contribute to the enormity of our way of government. Be it health care or immigration, the wisdom of our Founders can perhaps be seen in their designing a governmental process that is difficult, resistant to hasty solutions, and demanding of those who engage.

May the American people be patient with and supportive of this process, and may the Members of this House, especially, merit the trust of their constituents, those who voted for them and those who did not.

And may all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

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 Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WOODALL 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.

AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

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

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in gratitude—yes, gratitude—for the opportunity that we have to serve the American people and by beginning the process of repealing and replacing ObamaCare.

As Republicans, we understand that even \$1 trillion in new taxes—as the Affordable Care Act dropped on our friends and families—cannot save a healthcare system that is based on government interference and overreach. We as conservatives defend compassion, fairness, and freedom. These values are mutually inclusive, and I submit the American Health Care Act is a case study in their application.

As insurance markets contract and healthcare options for Americans evaporate across the country, Medicaid continues to give more Federal dollars toward able-bodied Americans than toward the elderly and disabled neighbors that the program was designed to help.

ObamaCare has ushered in a brave new world of diminished health care and skyrocketing costs, and we cannot let these directives stand. Republicans are protecting our most vulnerable neighbors by putting conservative principles back in place. Limiting government, thoughtful budgets for Federal programs, free markets, and choices are the best medicine we have to bring relief to struggling Americans, and we are here to deliver.

AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans have introduced their healthcare plan. The President said it would be better and more cost effective than the Affordable Care Act and it would offer insurance to everybody.

Well, if you believe that, you believe the President has got a secret plan to defeat ISIS which he was going to give us within 30 days, that there were thousands of Muslims in New Jersey cheering 9/11, and that President Obama was born in Kenya. It is not true.

What the plan they have introduced is is something that will give the wealthy unbelievable tax breaks. The 400 wealthiest people in America will get tax breaks of \$7 million apiece; and the Americans who earn \$200,000 a year or less will get none of those breaks, but they will pay more for their insurance and get less for it.