

WORKING FAMILIES DESERVE BETTER THAN TRUMPCARE

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, right now Republicans are racing to pass TrumpCare, legislation that repeals and replaces the Affordable Care Act.

They are racing to pass it to because they know when the American people find out what is in this bill, they won't support it.

But let me tell you what TrumpCare does, Mr. Speaker.

It gives huge tax cuts to insurance companies and the top 1 percent.

It allows insurance companies to raise premiums by 25 percent for older Americans.

It eliminates funding for Planned Parenthood, denying millions of women critical care.

It cuts lifesaving support for the most vulnerable: children, Americans with disabilities, the frail elderly, and nursing home residents.

And it slashes funding for Medicaid.

TrumpCare is a great deal for the wealthy. TrumpCare is a great deal for insurance companies and drug companies. It is a raw deal for everyone else.

Millions will lose healthcare coverage. And let's be clear, people are going to die when this happens. Millions more will end up paying for more lower quality care, and Republicans don't even have a plan to pay for their proposal.

After 7 years, this is it. This is the best they have got: tax cuts for the rich and bad health care for everyone else.

Working families deserve better.

CONGRATULATING THE GENEVA VIKINGS

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Geneva Vikings girls basketball team on winning their first Class 4A State championship at ISU's Redbird Arena on Saturday.

Facing the Edwardsville Tigers, the Geneva High School girls fought a close back-and-forth game until its final minutes.

Beating an unbeaten team is no small feat. With just 3.7 seconds left on the clock, junior guard Stephanie Hart made a shot to give the Vikings a one-point lead. As center Grace Loberg then stole the ball from the Tigers to run out the clock, the Tigers were unable to answer, giving Geneva the win, 41-40.

Virtually the same thing had happened in the semifinal the day before, when junior guard Margaret Whitley scored the game-winning point with just seconds left.

Clearly, the Vikings do well under pressure. I applaud Coach Sarah Mead-

ows and the Geneva Vikings on their achievement and their hard work.

Go, Vikings.

OPPOSING GOP'S HEALTHCARE REPEAL

(Mrs. NAPOLITANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, good morning, and listen, America.

One of the Affordable Care Act's biggest successes was increasing mental health services for all the people through mental health parity protections and Medicaid expansion.

The GOP's pay-more-for-less bill cuts taxes on the wealthy at the expense of those who can least afford to pay for their health coverage, like low-income families.

One in five of Medicaid's 70 million beneficiaries have a mental health or a substance abuse disorder, and reports show services are needed especially for children. The bill would hurt those people by eliminating Medicaid expansion and gutting mental health services for this group, including the nearly 60,000 now covered in my district.

I strongly oppose this repeal effort and urge our Republican colleagues to work with us to strengthen the Affordable Care Act so more Americans can have access to lifesaving care.

Please, please, do that for us.

HONORING TOP SCHOOLS IN GEORGIA'S FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the academic accomplishments of several school systems in Georgia's First Congressional District.

Niche is a website which analyzes data gathered from the Department of Education that focuses on academics, student life, test scores, and college enrollment. With this data, they rank each school system and help families find the best schools for their children.

This year, Georgia's First District had the honor of placing 10 school systems in their top 100 school districts in Georgia. It comes as no surprise to me that so many of these outstanding school districts made this great achievement.

Camden County School District ranks as the top school system in the district and even cracked the top 10 for the State, ranking as the number 7 overall school system in Georgia. Camden County scored top marks in the categories of diversity, teachers, health and safety, administration, and sports.

In addition to Camden County, I am proud to recognize, today, the other school districts to reach the top 100: Pierce County, Lowndes County, Ware

County, Effingham County, Glynn County, Bryan County, Bacon County, Echols County, and Chatham County.

Congratulations to each school's administration, teachers, and students whose hard work and dedication made this accomplishment possible.

I look forward to the future success that will surely come from these schools.

TRUMPCARE IS DESTRUCTIVE LEGISLATION

(Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, President Trump and the Republican Congress promised a better plan for health care that would be good for all Americans.

Now that we have seen their plan, we know the truth. Passage of the American Health Care Act will not improve health care or reduce healthcare costs. Instead, it will cut critical health access and benefits for children, older adults, pregnant women, communities of color, and people living with disabilities.

If TrumpCare becomes law, it will destroy Medicaid as we know it, while also increasing costs of health care for working class families across the country.

It is unconscionable that this kind of destructive legislation should be shoved through Congress without hearings or stakeholder input.

I urge my Republican colleagues to reject this shortsighted bill and work with Democrats to strengthen the Affordable Care Act, a healthcare plan that is working well for millions of Americans.

HONORING CHARLES GERACI

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

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, a member of the Ohio Second District community passed away this week, and our Nation lost a hero.

Charles Geraci was a beloved resident of Norwood, Ohio. He was known as a husband of 70½ years, grandfather to 31, and a great-grandfather to 16.

But he was also an American hero. Charles enlisted in the Army on December 10, 1942, and, after basic training, was stationed in England in 1943. Just a few months later Charles was in the second wave at Omaha Beach in Normandy, where he was wounded while storming the beaches. After recovering and being sent back to his unit, Charles was wounded by shrapnel and then shot again during combat. He was in Normandy for only 5 months and credits his survival to God.

While his courage earned him three Purple Hearts and the Bronze Star Award, Charles refers to his service

during World War II with a deep humility that defines the Greatest Generation. He said: "We were there to do the job, and we did it. And I came back."

Our country can never repay Charles for his service and sacrifice, but we can stand as a grateful nation to honor his life and legacy with our deepest respect.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Helen, and the rest of the Geraci family.

Truly, it is men and women like Charles Geraci whom we can credit for the gift of freedom that we are able to pass along to our children and grandchildren. They protected and preserved that gift with their very lives. For that, we remain eternally grateful.

PRESERVING HEALTH CARE FOR VETERANS

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

Mr. GALLEGRO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise as a proud marine on behalf of countless veterans across America whose healthcare options will vanish if House Republicans succeed in repealing the Affordable Care Act. The ACA has provided an invaluable safety net for our Nation's veterans, fulfilling critical gaps in coverage within the VA system.

Mr. Speaker, in the first 2 years after the ACA's implementation, the rate of uninsured veterans dropped by an astonishing 43 percent. This was largely due to the fact that, through the ACA's Medicaid expansion, 7 out of 10 previously uninsured veterans became eligible for coverage.

The Republicans' so-called repeal-and-replace plan would slash veterans' options by abandoning our commitment to a more inclusive Medicaid program. Democrats refuse to compromise on care for our Nation's heroes, and we absolutely refuse to compromise in the fight to preserve the lifesaving Affordable Care Act.

THE PEOPLE'S RIGHTS AMENDMENT

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, it has been 7 years since the dreadful Citizens United ruling.

In upholding the rights of corporations to donate to political campaigns under the First Amendment, the Supreme Court created an election system that is now corrupted by limitless, unregulated donations. Ordinary citizens are left powerless, and politicians are increasingly beholden to wealthy special interests.

Since Citizens United, we have seen a major telecommunications company, oil companies, and the tobacco industry all attempt to dismantle regulations and disclosure rules by claiming

First Amendment rights. Today, I am reintroducing the People's Rights Amendment to overturn Citizens United and declare, once and for all, that corporations are not people.

The Constitution was never intended to give corporations the same rights as the American people. Corporations don't breathe; they don't have kids; they don't die in wars.

The Preamble to the Constitution is "We the people," not "We the corporations."

Let us hope this Congress doesn't forget that.

LAWSUIT ABUSE REDUCTION ACT OF 2017

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 720.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 180 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 720.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. JENKINS) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

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IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 720) to amend Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure to improve attorney accountability, and for other purposes, with Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 720, the Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act, would restore mandatory sanctions for frivolous lawsuits filed in Federal court.

Many Americans may not realize it, but today, under what is called rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, there is no requirement that those who file frivolous lawsuits pay for the unjustified legal costs they impose on their victims, even when those victims prove to a judge the lawsuit was without any basis in law or fact.

As a result, the current rule 11 goes largely unenforced because the victims

of frivolous lawsuits have little incentive to pursue additional litigation to have the case declared frivolous when there is no guarantee of compensation at the end of the day.

H.R. 720 would finally provide light at the end of the tunnel for the victims of frivolous lawsuits by requiring sanctions against the filers of frivolous lawsuits, sanctions which include paying back victims for the full cost of their reasonable expenses incurred as a direct result of the rule 11 violation, including attorneys' fees.

The bill also strikes the current provisions in rule 11 that allow lawyers to avoid sanctions for making frivolous claims and demands by simply withdrawing them within 21 days. This change eliminates the "free pass" lawyers now have to file frivolous lawsuits in Federal court.

The current lack of mandatory sanctions leads to the regular filing of lawsuits that are baseless. So many frivolous pleadings currently go under the radar because the lack of mandatory sanctions for frivolous filings forces victims of frivolous lawsuits to roll over and settle the case, because doing that is less expensive than litigating the case to a victory in court.

Correspondence written by someone filing a frivolous lawsuit, which became public, concisely illustrates how the current lack of mandatory sanctions for filing frivolous lawsuits leads to legal extortion. That correspondence to the victim of a frivolous lawsuit states: "I really don't care what the law allows you to do. It's a more practical issue. Do you want to send your attorney a check every month indefinitely as I continue to pursue this?"

Under the Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act, those who file frivolous lawsuits would no longer be able to get off scot-free and, therefore, they couldn't get away with those sorts of extortionary threats any longer.

The victims of lawsuit abuse are not just those who are actually sued. Rather, we all suffer under a system in which innocent Americans everywhere live under the constant fear of a potentially bankrupting frivolous lawsuit.

As the former chairman of The Home Depot company has written: "An unpredictable legal system casts a shadow over every plan and investment. It is devastating for startups. The cost of even one ill-timed abusive lawsuit can bankrupt a growing company and cost hundreds of thousands of jobs."

The prevalence of frivolous lawsuits in America is reflected in the absurd warning labels companies must place on their products to limit their exposure to frivolous claims. A 5-inch brass fishing lure with three hooks is labeled "Harmful if swallowed." A household iron contains the warning "Never iron clothes while they are being worn." A piece of ovenware warns, "Ovenware will get hot when used in oven."

And here are just a couple of examples of frivolous lawsuits brought in Federal court, where judges failed to award compensation to the victims: