

better control of their health care by allowing them to spend their healthcare dollars as they see fit.

Simply put, our plan moves us from an unsustainable path to a sustainable one.

SKINNY BUDGET

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

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, this morning, President Trump has released the first budget proposal of his administration.

In reading through the budget proposal, I am reminded of what President Trump said in the summer when he was speaking to the African-American community in a rally in Philadelphia.

He said: What do you have to lose?

This is what we have to lose: eliminating the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant program, whose sole purpose is to combat poverty nationwide.

This is what we have to lose: cutting funding for Head Start and before- and after-school programs for our kids does not give them a chance to get ahead.

This is what we have to lose: stripping funding for Medicaid in your new healthcare law that provides critical services for our most vulnerable.

This is what we have to lose: all of those cuts do not give our seniors, our children, and our working families a chance to get ahead.

Our communities have too much to lose, Mr. President. Our communities need the opportunity to make crucial investments that make our neighborhoods stronger block by block.

WE MUST IMPROVE FOOD ACCESS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, a healthy diet for many Americans may have nothing to do with commitment, but, rather, accessibility.

Limited access to supermarkets and grocery stores with fresh nutritional food can be a challenge in both rural and urban communities. These are often called food deserts.

This is a particular concern for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which intends to provide nutrition to millions of Americans.

According to the USDA, to qualify as a low-access community, at least 500 people and/or at least 33 percent of the population must reside more than 1 mile from a supermarket or large grocery store. For rural areas, the distance is more than 10 miles.

It is difficult to eat healthy when the easiest store to get to primarily provides packaged and processed food. SNAP recipients may find a local mar-

ket convenient, but it often offers high-calorie foods with minimal nutritional value. These foods can often be a staple for families with limited resources.

It is my hope that we can increase access to fresh food for communities throughout the country. Our families deserve no less.

I look forward to working with the Agriculture Nutrition Subcommittee to continue to look at the SNAP program so that it serves those it is intended to serve.

JANUARY TRADE DEFICIT

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the Commerce Department just announced that America's trade deficit for January 2017 was \$48.5 billion, the largest monthly deficit since March 2012. That translates into more lost jobs in our country.

In the campaign, President Trump criticized our trade deals. He promised to do better for American workers. And now, nearly 2 months into his Presidency, what action has he taken to stop the erosion of this deficit and the jobs that go with them?

It continues to get worse.

What hope can he give to the hundreds and hundreds more steelworkers in Lorain, Ohio, who just received pink slips over the weekend due to the permanent closure of another steel line, due to Chinese imports and predatory trade practice?

It is going to put a lot of steelworkers back to work, President Trump said during the campaign and after as he revived the Keystone and Dakota Access pipelines. But his talk turned out to be empty and a pipe dream because the pipes have already been purchased from foreign sources.

Next month, China's President, Xi Jinping, will visit President Trump at Mar-a-Lago in Florida. President Trump talked tough on China throughout the campaign, but what will he do to reform Chinese trade practices that are resulting in these increasing trade deficits?

Mr. Speaker, I hope our President begins to keep the long list of campaign promises that he made to working people across this country, reverses these deficits, and starts increasing good jobs again.

LET'S FIX AMERICA'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

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

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, whatever possessed someone to think that a faceless, nameless bureaucrat in an ivory tower in Washington, D.C., who has never been to my district, who has never met with the people, think

they know more about what is good for the family and the children of my people than they do?

That was a question that was asked of me by a constituent this weekend.

What makes you think you know better what is best for my family and my children than I do?

He was referring to the Affordable Care Act.

He went on to tell me that he used to have an insurance policy that cost \$300 a month that he could use. Today, he is paying \$1,600 a month for something he cannot use and he doesn't want, but by the force of law, he is forced to have.

He went on to say: Will you please, please do something now to fix this problem?

Another person said: Are you going to be able to get to a reform to fix America's health care that you like?

My answer was no.

We are not going to get to something I like, but that is not the issue here. Why? Because America is not ready for what I want. That is true Federalism, that this place has nothing to do with health care.

We can't get there right now because we don't have the votes, but we can get to something we need. I call upon my brothers and sisters in the House: Let's fix America's healthcare system. We have the opportunity to do it now.

□ 1230

COMMEMORATING THE TRANSFER OF THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS FROM DENMARK TO THE UNITED STATES

(Ms. PLASKETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, later today, I intend to reintroduce a resolution commemorating the transfer of the U.S. Virgin Islands from Denmark to the United States. In that resolution, it discusses the 1733 slave revolt, the first slave revolt in the Western Hemisphere; the 1848 slave rebellion and emancipation, 17 years before the United States; and, of course, the 1917 transfer of ownership of the Virgin Islands from Denmark to the U.S.

We also discussed great Virgin Islanders, such as Alton Adams, Edward Blyden, Camille Pissarro, Judah Benjamin, and Roy Innis.

What does the transfer mean, and what have been the gains and benefits to the people of the Virgin Islands because of the purchase by the United States? The Americans were able to receive a pristine, geopolitically strategic location in the Caribbean with a people who are loyal to and proud of this country.

What has been given to the Virgin Islanders, a people willing and eager to take on the responsibilities of that citizenship but who, in fact, have moved from a system of serfdom, under Danish rule, to second-class, limited

privileged citizenship by the United States?

We need to take this time in this centennial transfer year to look at what have been the gains and for the U.S. to make a more perfect Union by more perfect citizenship and more inclusion of the U.S. Virgin Islands into the United States.

STOP MILITARIZING LAW ENFORCEMENT

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, for nearly three decades, State and local law enforcement agencies across America have been flooded with surplus military-grade weaponry through the Pentagon's 1033 program.

Late last year, law enforcement in North Dakota responded to protesters in Standing Rock in a well-documented, militarized fashion, reminding us of the danger which the use of military equipment by domestic law enforcement poses to the civil liberties of Americans.

During the elections, President Trump ran on a promise to restore "law and order." I am deeply concerned that the administration will follow up on that promise by making more military equipment available to State and local law enforcement agencies. This would further blur the line between the military and civilian police officers and violate a founding principle of our Nation.

For this reason, I am, today, reintroducing the bipartisan Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act to rein in the Pentagon's excess property management program and ensure that our communities are not just safe, but that the civil liberties of ordinary Americans continue to be protected.

IT IS CRUCIAL TO REPEAL AND REPLACE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my concern about how crucial it is that we repeal and replace the poorly named Affordable Care Act.

We are working towards a better healthcare plan and doing it in a better fashion than the other side did 8 years ago. We are actually going through regular order, allowing the committees of jurisdiction to do their work in public, and have the text for all to see and debate.

Mr. Speaker, ObamaCare is failing and will collapse on its own. Many more will lose their insurance, and the healthcare system will get drastically worse if we simply leave it in place. The worst thing we can do is nothing.

4.7 million Americans were kicked off their healthcare plans by the ACA. I

was one of them. Under the ACA, there has been a 25 percent average increase in premiums for the midlevel plans in 2017 for millions of Americans trapped in the healthcare.gov exchanges. Nearly one-third of U.S. counties have only one insurer offering an exchange plan.

ObamaCare is unsustainable. Mr. Speaker, it is time for Congress to do its job and replace the failed ObamaCare. We guarantee we will read this bill before we pass it.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1259, VA ACCOUNTABILITY FIRST ACT OF 2017; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1367, IMPROVING AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO HIRE AND RETAIN PHYSICIANS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1181, VETERANS 2ND AMENDMENT PROTECTION ACT

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 198 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 198

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1259) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-7. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole

to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. At any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1367) to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-6. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 1181) to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the conditions under which certain persons may be treated as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman