

And that is just the way it is.

REPUBLICANS PUSH THROUGH THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, this week we will consider the most important bill that this House will consider in this Congress.

Every day we are hearing from more and more Republican Members of this House and of the Senate who oppose—who oppose—who oppose—the dangerous healthcare bill on the floor this week.

Just yesterday, conservative Republican Representative JUSTIN AMASH tweeted the following—a very conservative Republican from the mid-part of our country said this: “While I’ve been in Congress, I can’t recall a more universally detested piece of legislation than this GOP healthcare bill.” Or health no care bill.

This is just the most recent in a long list of statements by Republicans on the demerits—demerits—of the bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

It is interesting that they have named it the American Health Care Act. The only thing they struck from our title was “affordable.” It should tell you something about the bill. They replace it with a system that requires Americans to pay more and get less.

This bill has been rushed through the committees without a single public hearing—not one, no testimony or expert view. And when the committees marked it up, it did not have what we call a CBO score.

That is simply Washington-speak for the agency that is nonpartisan, bipartisan, with the Director appointed by the Republicans to give us the advice of the consequences of the enactment of such legislation.

They came back and told us that there would be 24 million less Americans insured by 2026. That would total 58 million uninsured Americans as a result of this bill just 9 years from now.

Republicans are rushing it to the floor for two reasons. First, they know that if the American people see what this bill would do and what it would cost, it wouldn’t pass.

As a matter of fact, we have some information on that already because, at town meeting after town meeting after town meeting that Republicans have held and Democrats have held on this bill, the overwhelming number of people that came to those town meetings said: This is a bad bill. It will hurt us. It will hurt our health care. It will hurt our families. It will hurt our children.

We are rushing this bill that was introduced just some 2½ weeks ago. It was introduced on a Monday night, late at night. It was marked up less than 36 hours later in both committees. And they were so intent on getting it marked up and speeding it along that

they held a hearing for 26 hours straight. Excuse me. It was not a hearing. No witnesses. They just held a markup for 26 hours straight.

Now, I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that millions of Americans were awake at 4 a.m. in the morning to see what the committee was doing. Obviously, I am not sure of that at all. Perhaps that was the strategy.

Now that the CBO score which I just related to you has been released, we know the harm that this bill will bring. As I said, 24 million Americans kicked off their insurance, including 7 million Americans who are currently covered under plans provided by their employers, premiums for individual policyholders rising 24 to 29 percent.

This is not my view. This is the Congressional Budget Office, whose Director was appointed by this Republican Congress. His predecessor, Dr. Elmendorf, testified in a hearing that we held, because Republicans refused to hold a hearing on this bill, and he agreed with the Republican-appointed Director and Congressional Budget Office.

So you have a bipartisan agreement that this bill will harm Americans—and not just those 24 million Americans. It will harm all Americans because their premiums and copays and deductibles will go up. States will be forced to drop 14 million Americans from Medicaid—and I understand there is a manager’s amendment that is going to make it worse—while cutting benefits and provider payments.

A less fiscally sustainable future for Medicare, they shorten the life of Medicare’s fiscal sustainability by 3 years, from 2028 down to 2025.

The list goes on, Mr. Speaker, of the reasons why this bill would be a disaster for families in our country.

The second reason they pushed the bill through so quickly is because they wanted to bring it to the floor this week—not next week, not the week after, not after thorough consideration, not after hearings, not after listening to the American people, but this week.

Why this week? Because this week marks the seventh anniversary of the enactment of the law they are seeking to repeal, in other words, optics, spin, propaganda, message. That is what their timeline and their bill are all about: messaging—not results, not reform, political messaging.

This is the fulfillment of a campaign pledge based on a premise that is no longer sustainable. Seven years after the law’s enactment the facts are clear. It has expanded coverage, improved benefits, banned discrimination against women and people with pre-existing conditions and disabilities, and prohibited annual and lifetime limits on coverage.

Now, they keep some of those things in their bill because they were so popular they thought they couldn’t get rid of them. But they have voted 65 times to repeal all those benefits.

Is the Affordable Care Act perfect? Of course not. In the areas where it has fallen short, let’s fix it—together.

But this bill—this bill repealing the law and making Americans pay more for less—will throw our healthcare system into turmoil and put millions of families and small businesses at risk. That is why doctors oppose it. That is why hospitals oppose it. That is why senior organizations like AARP oppose it. There are literally 1,000 organizations, plus, that have opposed this legislation.

We are now hearing reports, Mr. Speaker, that Republican leaders are making secret backroom deals with individual Members in order to win their support, the kind of desperate maneuvering that shows how unpopular this bill is.

Republicans, Mr. Speaker, must remember that, as the governing majority, they will be responsible for what happens to our healthcare system under their watch. And I do not just mean this bill. I mean the lack of certainty and the turmoil that they have been creating for the Affordable Care Act market since not only Trump was elected, but since they started attacking this bill some years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my Republican friends, for the sake of their constituents, for the sake of the children of this country, for the sake of those who are at risk because of health challenges that confront them, I urge my Republican friends to abandon this dangerous bill and instead work with us to strengthen our healthcare system for all of our citizens.

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CONGRATULATING ROTARY CLUB OF MIAMI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Rotary Club of Miami on its 100th anniversary, which will be celebrated through the Century of Service Gala this Saturday, March 25.

The Rotary Club of Miami is the fifth oldest rotary club in Florida, and has been working around-the-clock to make positive and long-lasting contributions to our beautiful south Florida community. Through community service projects and philanthropy, this organization has helped establish several institutions that aim to assist some of the most vulnerable members of our society, including the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, the YMCA of Greater Miami, and Boys Town of Florida.

Since its inception, the Rotary Club of Miami has been headed by extraordinary individuals with a vision to make south Florida an even better place in which to live. Its first president was Dr. James Jackson, who was

instrumental in establishing Jackson Memorial Hospital, which is now the third largest public hospital and the third largest teaching hospital in our great country.

Another Miami staple of the Rotary Club of Miami is the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, which was established by one of the club members, and is ranked the number one eye hospital in the United States.

The Rotary Club of Miami also helped found one of the largest burn centers in the south, the Bone and Tissue Bank at the University of Miami. And the Rotary Club of Miami has also supported education by providing scholarship opportunities for high school, college, and postgraduate students.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the Rotary Club of Miami for its impressive legacy. I thank everyone who is involved in this club supporting this wonderful organization. And I wish the members of the Rotary Club of Miami much continued success in the decades to come.

TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSMAN ROBERT GARCIA

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a former Member of the House, Robert Garcia, or, as we used to call him, Bobby, who passed away nearly 2 months ago.

I had the opportunity to serve with Bobby for only a few months before his retirement, but during that short time, I was able to see firsthand his commitment to our great Nation.

Bobby was a patriot. After graduating from high school, Bobby joined the Army and went on to serve as part of the Third Infantry Division in the Korean war, where he earned two Bronze Stars.

As the first Hispanic woman elected to Congress, I have been invigorated by Bobby's unwavering passion to fight for better opportunities for our Hispanic community. He was a founding member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute and NALEO, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, to ensure that more Hispanics become involved in our political arena.

Bobby was also instrumental in guaranteeing that Hispanics were counted in the U.S. Census. One of Bobby's legacies, Mr. Speaker, was the creation of free enterprise zones designed to spur job creation and economic opportunities in inner city neighborhoods. Bobby also led the effort to establish the Martin Luther King national holiday.

The loss of Bobby's experience and knowledge is felt in New York, in Puerto Rico, and all across our country by everyone who benefited from his contributions. Bobby Garcia's memory will stand as a great example of a tenacious public servant and a remarkable life lived.

REPUBLICAN ATTACK ON MEDICAID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, one of the most disturbing aspects of the Republican attack on the Affordable Care Act and the success we have had in extending care to Americans has been the specific attack on Medicaid. Fourteen million of the 24 million people who will lose coverage under the Republican bill are under the Medicaid program. Medicaid is critical to the provision of health care in the United States. Medicaid covers more people than Medicare.

Medicaid expansion has been transformational in the 31 States that took advantage of the provision in the Affordable Care Act to provide coverage to people who make up to 138 percent of poverty—roughly \$16,600 for a single individual and almost \$34,000 for a family of four.

Until then, Medicaid has provided extension of care to the elderly, to the poor, and to the disabled. It was helpful, but very restrictive. In some cases, people who earned a modest sum—\$7,000, \$10,000, \$12,000—were ineligible, especially in those 19 States that refused to take advantage of the opportunity to expand the Medicaid coverage at Federal expense.

Mr. Speaker, this is America. So even though these poor, disabled people did not have access to Medicaid, many of them did ultimately secure health care. But they got it too late. They got it in the emergency room. They didn't get it in a clinic in a timely fashion. And, of course, the cost for that charity care in emergency rooms or in clinics was borne by the rest of us in increased costs for our insurance.

The Republican draconian provisions, even before they put into effect an absolutely unnecessary and unenforceable work requirement, will be devastating to millions. Bear in mind, these people now are receiving care in an appropriate clinic session. They will be getting it now when it is too late, and that burden shifted on to the rest of us.

There will be a tax credit that doesn't help people who don't have enough money to buy meaningful coverage in the private market. Under the Republican plan, coverage will become worse, deductibles and copays will become higher, and we risk destabilizing the insurance market for the rest of us.

Now, we have heard on the floor, in committee, and on the news shows our Republican friends and the President talking about the Affordable Care Act is in a death spiral and that the insurance industry is collapsing. Hardly.

There was a fascinating article in the weekend New York Times that looked at the insurance industry. Since March of 2010, with the passage of the Affordable Care Act, the overall stock market has more than doubled. It has increased 136 percent. But the managed care health organizations have increased their stock value almost 300 percent. The largest, UnitedHealth, 480 percent.

A signal of an industry in a death spiral?

Absolutely not. The companies are healthy and investors are bidding up their stock. The CBO report that our Republican friends did not want us to have before we voted on the bill in committee in the middle of the night testifies to this underlying stability of the insurance market and the Affordable Care Act.

Medicaid under the Republican plan will be shifted back increasingly to the States, which have repeatedly proven that they are incapable of maintaining high eligibility funding to help the poor and the near poor. And when budget crunches hit, it is the poor who suffer most with restrictions in their coverage.

We have also heard that the Republican plan will provide much-needed flexibility. That is nonsense. There is already ample flexibility under the Affordable Care Act. I represent Oregon. We were able to negotiate an agreement with the Federal Government under the 1115 waiver program that other States have that represented a unique partnership with the Federal Government to achieve better care, better results, and restrain Medicare costs. We have got the flexibility. There is no need to destroy the program.

OBAMACARE IS FAILING HOOSIERS

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

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come here to the floor and talk about what is really happening under the Affordable Care Act, better known by the American people as ObamaCare.

I just left a meeting with the President of the United States where he lobbied my colleagues to make clear to the American people what a disaster this law has been and why the law needs to be repealed and replaced with something far better.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that ObamaCare is failing Hoosiers. Healthcare costs continue to rise, and people have less coverage and less choice today than ever before. No doubt, some have benefited from the law, but millions more Hoosiers have been hurt by the law and are worse off today than they were before this law was passed.

I have heard from countless Hoosiers in the Sixth District of Indiana, who are hurting under ObamaCare and who have sent me here to repeal this disastrous law.

There is one message from a constituent from Greenfield who said: "I am a perfectly healthy human being, and I used to pay \$230 a month with a \$500 deductible for my health care. Since ObamaCare, my premiums have risen to over \$1,480 a month with a \$10,000 deductible."

Or a dad in Shelbyville, who lost the healthcare plan he liked when