

a little girl being boarded at a hospital for 21 days while they searched up and down the East Coast to find a bed where she could stay.

At 14 years old, she has now spent half of her life in residential care. But it was how her mother ended that story that has stuck with me. She looked me in the eyes and told me that: “Compared to other people I know, we have been lucky.”

Mr. Speaker, that is not luck. This is a mental health system so broken that it is hard to recognize.

And how have our Republican colleagues followed up in response? They have offered a piece of legislation that is one of the largest assaults on our mental health system in recent history.

The GOP repeal bill will remove guaranteed behavioral health coverage for everyone covered under the Medicaid expansion. It will abandon those suffering from substance abuse disorder to fend for themselves in a country ravaged by opioid abuse. It will allow work requirements for care, forcing countless people to somehow choose between getting treatment and keeping their job. It will help insurers further skirt parity laws that require them to treat the mentally ill fairly. It will send out-of-pocket costs soaring for the most vulnerable among us.

Mr. Speaker, one in five Americans today suffer from mental illness. These brave men and women and their families that love them deserve more than the cheap luck of a broken system. They deserve more than the empty rhetoric of a bill that “might” cover or “could” cover the care that they need. They deserve an ironclad commitment from their government that we will have their back. This bill does not do that.

DON'T REPEAL AFFORDABLE CARE ACT—MAKE BIG FIXES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, the healthcare plan supported by President Trump and Speaker RYAN will raise premiums and deductibles.

Let's tell the truth here on the floor of the House of Representatives. It will raise premiums and deductibles. It will throw millions off of their insurance. It will shift the cost of health care to the States who are fiscally strapped today, causing a rationing of care at the State level. And, yes, it will cover less and less people and raise the insecurity that people have today about whether or not, if they get an illness or someone in their family does, they are going to have healthcare coverage.

The result is that working people, older Americans, will pay more; and, in fact, with older Americans, it will impose an age tax. The irony of this is that working people and older Americans are going to be paying for the tax

breaks in this bill, tax breaks to millionaires and to billionaires. I will explain.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office recently estimated that 14 million Americans will lose coverage in 2018; 24 million Americans will lose their insurance coverage by 2026. In my State of Connecticut, 220,300 individuals are projected to lose their health insurance by 2026.

Again, older Americans will be hit the hardest. They will see their premiums spike. Yes, it is an age tax. And the reckless cuts in this bill rob, in addition to this, it robs the Medicare trust fund, which people rely on, of over \$170 billion, shortening the life of that trust fund by years. Long-term care that older Americans rely on will be hurt, as well as folks who are disabled. And children will be hurt as well.

Over the next 10 years—and again, these are not my numbers, but the Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that two of the tax breaks in the repeal bill will provide \$275 billion in tax cuts to individuals who have an income over \$200,000, and nearly \$190 billion will go to tax cuts for health insurance companies.

Do we believe that they are hurting? It is also going to provide a tax break for drug companies, for pharmaceutical companies.

Are they hurting today? No. They are reaping profits every single day. That is the case with medical device manufacturers as well.

While the wealthiest Americans and corporations reap the benefits of this Trump bill and Ryan bill, roughly 160 million households with incomes below that \$200,000 level will pay for the repeal of these taxes.

I have heard from thousands of my constituents about how the Affordable Care Act has positively impacted their lives. I have submitted testimony for the record from women in my district who depend on the Affordable Care Act to manage life-threatening illnesses, get back to work, get them the mental health services that they need.

Just think of that injustice when you think about Mnikesa Whitaker, whom I spoke to just 2 weeks ago. She has an autoimmune disease which is called scleroderma. I regret to say that this has put her life in danger, but she now has the protection because she is no longer threatened by preexisting conditions. In her words, she said: “I will die without the Affordable Care Act.”

We have a moral obligation not to let Mnikesa or others down. We have an obligation to older Americans and to the middle class of this country, to working people. The Affordable Care Act needs to be changed in critical ways. Premiums and deductibles are way too high and are putting too much strain on families who barely make enough to live on. We know that because their wages have not kept pace with rising costs. There is not enough competition in the marketplaces.

But instead of repealing the Affordable Care Act, we should be working our hearts out to make the big fixes that are necessary. But my friends, that starts with defeating this wrong-headed bill.

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LET'S COME TOGETHER TO MAKE MEANINGFUL PROGRESS

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

Mr. LAWSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the Republican plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act is an exercise in smoke and mirrors.

This proposal would give tax breaks to wealthy Americans by burdening hardworking families with higher healthcare costs.

The Republican plan allows for soaring new healthcare costs for our seniors and shortens the life of the Medicare trust fund, endangering seniors and disabled Americans who depend on Medicare coverage.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that if the Republican proposal became the law of the land, some 14 million people will be without healthcare insurance in 2018, and up to 24 million could lose their healthcare coverage by the year 2026. The CBO also found that average premiums for people buying insurance on their own would be 15 to 20 percent higher in 2018 and 2019 than they would under current law.

In my home district, the uninsured rate has gone from 18.7 percent to 14.9 percent since the Affordable Care Act was implemented, and 34,000 people have purchased coverage thanks to the ACA. Those people are now at risk of losing their healthcare coverage if the Republican plan becomes law. This is completely unacceptable to Floridians.

We know that the Affordable Care Act is not a perfect law, and there is a lot of room for improvement. That is what we should focus on in Congress right now: coming together to figure out ways to bring down healthcare costs, stabilize the market, and help ensure that more people can have access to the affordable health care they need and deserve.

We need to put aside the partisan bickering, roll up our sleeves, and get to work. It is a sad day in America when Members of Congress are unable to come together to do what is right for the American people. I will continue to fight to ensure that Floridians with preexisting conditions don't have to worry about losing their healthcare costs, and that young adults can stay on their family's insurance until they reach age 26.

I urge my colleagues to remember that no roads or bridges were ever built by Democrats or Republicans. No war was ever won by Democrats or Republicans. From Social Security to Medicare, to putting a man on the Moon

and tearing down the Berlin wall, none of these milestones in our history was accomplished by one particular political party. They are a result of public servants coming together to solve the great challenges of our time.

This is the challenge that lies before us: we must find a way to come together to make meaningful progress for the American people.

PEOPLE NEED BETTER HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, President Trump and Speaker RYAN have said that the Affordable Care Act that we have now is a disaster, that it is a calamity.

There are problems with it. For some people in some plans, premiums are too high.

So what do the Republicans want to do?

Raise the premiums.

For some people in some plans, deductibles are too high.

So what do the Republicans want to do?

Make the deductibles much higher.

Let's get away from the rhetoric about the Affordable Care Act and look at what the Republicans plan to do with the bill that we are going to be voting on presumably in the next few days: raise the premiums, raise the deductibles.

They say that you will not be disqualified for preexisting conditions and that you will still be able to get insurance, but not if you let your coverage lapse in 6 months. If you are laid off from your job and you lose your insurance and 6 months later you get insurance, no, you are going to have to pay a 30 percent higher premium in order to get coverage. So their guarantee is worth nothing.

What does the bill that we are going to be voting on do?

This bill would throw 24 million people off of coverage. Twenty four million Americans would lose their health care, the security of mind that they have now. This bill would destroy about 2 million jobs. This bill would force families to pay higher costs, higher premiums, higher deductibles.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that a 50- or 60-year-old person making \$26,000 and who, under ObamaCare, is paying, after the subsidies, out of pocket \$1,700 a year for health insurance, will, under this new Republican bill, after the appropriate subsidies that this bill will give, pay not \$1,700, but \$14,000 on a pretax income of \$26,000.

So this bill will increase costs, throw 24 million people off of coverage, and impose an age tax. People above 50 years old will have to pay five times as much as younger people for insurance, a very crushing age tax.

Why? Why do this?

Because they say people need more freedom to choose their health care.

People don't need more freedom to choose their health care. People need better health care. They need coverage. They need security. They need coverage that will take care of their health needs at a low cost. That is what they need.

The ObamaCare, the existing bill that we have, the Affordable Care Act, gives them that, not as well as it should. We should make improvements to it. It is not an improvement to throw 24 million people off of coverage, increase the cost, and institute a crushing age tax.

Why?

It is to give a tax benefit of \$2.8 billion to the richest 400 families in the United States. This bill would be the largest transfer of wealth from low- and mostly middle-income people to the top 1 percent in American history.

Let me just address one last thing. People are being bribed to vote for this bill. People are being bribed legally. Provisions are being put in the bill to say: Hey, if you vote for this bill, you will benefit, your State will benefit.

Okay. There is nothing wrong with that. It has been done before.

Let's take a look at one of those bribes, the so-called New York bribe. New York, along with 15 other States, takes advantage or utilizes a provision in the law that has been in the law since 1965 in Medicaid in which the State share of Medicaid is borne partially by the State and partially by local governments. Sixteen States have elected to do that.

This bill says that New York State only will be prohibited from sharing the burden of Medicaid with local governments. So \$2.3 billion will be shifted from various local governments onto the State's taxpayers, except for New York City. Upstate counties will lose their share. New York City will have to keep it. The State will have to bear the burden. So it is a \$2.3 billion increase for State taxpayers.

Now, eight Republicans, we are told, from upstate New York are going to vote for this bill just because of that. They don't like the bill in other respects, but because of that provision, which will relieve some of the burden from local counties, they are going to vote for the bill; and they say so. Representative COLLINS of New York said so. He would vote for that bill. He got a number of other people to agree. That is why the provision is in the bill.

Okay. But it is not going to happen. It is flatly unconstitutional. They are selling their votes for something that is never going to happen, and that is just wrong. This bill should not be approved. It is a sellout to the people of the entire country.

BUILD ON AFFORDABLE COVERAGE

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am here today on the floor of the House to speak out on behalf of my neighbors back home in the State of Florida. I represent a district in the Tampa Bay area. Let me tell you, they are very concerned about the impact of this Republican healthcare bill.

What we know about the bill so far, based upon the report of the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, is that the Republican bill will rip coverage away from at least 24 million Americans. This is at a time when we have made such progress since the adoption of the Affordable Care Act.

Under the Affordable Care Act, about 20 million Americans have gained coverage, including about 1.7 million of my neighbors in Florida that went shopping on healthcare.gov and found an affordable option.

The Republican bill would take us backwards. It would also impose huge cost increases on everyone. Let me tell you, most people in America have their insurance through their employer. And under the Affordable Care Act—it hasn't been perfect—what we have seen in the State of Florida between the years 2010 and 2015 is the rate of increase for my neighbors who have their insurance through their jobs has been kept in check. The rate of increase has only been 1.3 percent. Before the adoption of the Affordable Care Act, the rate of increase was well over 8 percent.

Why is this happening?

If you have insurance through your job, you want other people to have insurance coverage. That is very important because, if more Americans don't have insurance coverage, they show up in the emergency room and that cost is passed along to those who have coverage or those on Medicare, or the hospital has to take on bad debt, or local governments have to raise taxes to cover that care.

Under this Republican bill, hold on to your wallet because that insurance coverage now will be unaffordable for millions of more Americans. If you have insurance through your job, like most people do, you are now going to end up picking up the cost of people that can no longer afford coverage.

If you are a little bit older, easing into Medicare—maybe you are 50 to 64—hold on to your wallet. There is a huge age tax in this Republican bill.

I will give you an example from a neighbor of mine back home. Her name is Kathy Palmer. She lives in Tampa. She works two part-time jobs. She works for an accountant. It is a small business. They cannot afford to provide insurance through their small business. She is also working to get her degree in accountancy from the University of South Florida. Kathy has two part-time jobs. She is age 60. She is going to school to get a degree. She has a teenager in high school. She couldn't afford insurance coverage before the Affordable Care Act. When the Affordable Care Act was adopted, she could go