

healthcare plan would cover more people. This is a tax plan to take the benefits that working families were receiving on healthcare coverage across the country and convert it into tax benefits for the wealthiest, \$600 billion in tax benefits.

People around the country are calling in to say if you care about the American people and if you care about providing health care for all of us, this is a bad plan, you should not vote for it. And Republicans are hopefully listening to constituents across the country, to their Governors in Republican States, Republican Governors who have said how much Medicaid expansion has helped their States. They have asked and pleaded for people to keep what we have; to make it better, yes, but not to strip \$880 billion away.

Just recently, PAUL RYAN, the Speaker of our House, was quoted as saying that he has been dreaming about yanking health care away from the people who need it the most since he was "drinking at a keg."

This is what he said: "So Medicaid, sending it back to the states, capping its growth rate, we've been dreaming of this since I have been around—since you and I were drinking at the keg."

Well, I don't know what he was thinking about when he was drinking at the keg, but I can tell you that what we have been dreaming about as Democrats, as people who care about the health care of people across this country is that we cover people, that we don't put anyone in a position where they are one healthcare crisis away from bankruptcy, that we make sure that kids can get asthma inhalers, that we make sure that grandma and grandpa can go into the nursing home and get the care that they need. If we pass this bill tomorrow, those grandparents are not going to have the care that they need. Nursing homes are going to shut down. We are going to take away jobs from rural areas, rural hospitals across this country.

Mr. Speaker, today, as we close this Progressive Caucus Special Order hour, I say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that I believe we all have the interests of the American people at heart, and if we do, then I hope we will stop this TrumpCare bill from moving forward tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

CONGRESSIONAL TERM LIMITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARSHALL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GALLAGHER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I was back in Green Bay, Wisconsin, the past week. Someone asked me: What is the biggest surprise you have encountered since being in Congress?

I said: I will give you a negative surprise and a positive surprise. The negative surprise was how much of our time is spent here in Congress doing things that really, in my opinion, have nothing to do with the hard task of legislating, running around to an endless series of meetings that distract us from the hard work of the floor of coming together and fixing problems.

I said: But on the positive side, I have been blown away by the quality of talent, the commitment to service, and just the incredible collection of experiences we have in the freshman class of the 115th Congress—on both sides of the aisle, by the way.

I think we have a unique opportunity to seize this moment and send a message to our citizens back home that we are ready to change politics as usual and we are ready to work together to get things done. So today we would like to speak about that in general and in particular about term limits, an idea whose time has come.

In my 10 years in the Marine Corps and during two deployments to Iraq, I saw brave young men and women from across this country working together, doing whatever it took to accomplish the very difficult mission.

□ 1715

I would submit that our constituents from across the country sent us here to accomplish a very difficult mission. They sent us here not to treat our time here as a career, but rather like a deployment, an act with a sense of urgency to get things done. And, my gosh, do we have a list of problems that we need to fix.

Our healthcare system in this country has failed the American people, the Federal debt and deficit continue to balloon, taxes are driving out businesses and jobs, and our foreign policy is in shambles right now. These issues aren't new, yet they never seem to get fixed. Why is that? Well, I would argue because Washington isn't working for the American people. The people's House has become distracted and distorted from its original intention. It is up to us—the new Members of Congress—to fix that and restore the balance that the Founders and the Framers had in mind—the concept of the citizen legislator—people from all walks of life who would put aside their primary responsibility and come and embark on a season of service and then return home when that season was done.

Today, I am proud to be joined by my fellow freshmen Members of Congress who are going to speak about term limits. It is my honor to welcome a man who served his country for a career in

uniform in the Air Force. He could have enjoyed a nice retirement and had some relaxing time, but he chose to step up and serve yet again in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON), my distinguished colleague, the pride of Omaha, Nebraska, a general, now Congressman.

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Wisconsin for organizing this. He is a wonderful freshman Member of the class.

I rise today in support of congressional term limits.

In 1846, when then-Congressman Abraham Lincoln was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, he was part of a freshman class that made up one half of the 35th Congress. In other words, half of the Congress were new Members when he got elected. Today, in the 115th Congress, our freshmen class of 55 Members make up less than 20 percent of this body. But here is a more stark number.

In the last election, 97 percent of House incumbents won reelection—97 percent. Only 3 percent of the challengers defeated an incumbent. I was fortunate to be one of the exceptions to these overwhelming odds.

Since Abraham Lincoln, our country has grown, this institution has grown, and so has the length of time Members stay here. As a person who is new to Congress and is new to politics, I can tell you the reason why congressional favorability ratings are now at 8 percent. Our constituents feel that we have lost touch. The longer we stay here in Congress and don't cycle back to our home districts, the more out of touch we are perceived.

To restore America's trust in Congress, we must institute term limits. Our Forefathers intended the House of Representatives to be an arm of government closest to the people, and to be the purest embodiment of a representative democracy. Members of the people's House were to come from different walks of life and careers to better shape the direction of our great country. Members of Congress were to feel obligated to serve by a sense of civic duty rather than a desire to pursue a career in public office. We have lost sight of this intent.

The American people deserve new ideas from new faces here in Washington. This is the principal reason why I am here today with this great honor bestowed on me from the people of Nebraska's Second District. Congressional term limits would ensure that we send more successful farmers, successful teachers, business leaders, doctors, nurses, and veterans to Washington so that we can address problems with a firsthand perspective. We need more people in Congress who were successful prior to becoming a politician. We need to restore this House as the people's House.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, listening to my colleague's remarks, I was reminded of what another general,

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, said: "You know, farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you're a thousand miles from the cornfield."

I think that sentiment was echoed by DON BACON, which is to say people who have actual experience dealing with hard problems are the best type of people to legislate on those problems from Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to welcome another distinguished colleague from Louisiana. We in Wisconsin are all honored to welcome a bunch of LSU fans to Lambeau Field. I won't rehash how that went, but it was a great coming together of two great sports fans. It was really a privilege for everyone there.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON), my colleague.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague, particularly for not recounting the events of that game. But we are here, Mr. Speaker, to talk about a very important issue to our country and to all of us.

Prior to my election to Congress last December, for nearly 20 years, I practiced primarily in the arena of constitutional law. I had the great privilege of litigating often high-profile cases around the country, defending religious liberty, the sanctity of human life, and traditional American values.

I deeply revere our matchless Constitution, and I fought to defend its application according to its plain language and its original intent. I believe our Founding Fathers were divinely inspired to draft our extraordinary founding documents just as they did and to establish for us the framework of a free Republic. It has been the model for, and the envy of, the other nations of the world since its creation.

America is different. America is exceptional. And we are, as the Gipper used to say, "the shining city upon a hill," citing scripture, and "the last, best hope of man on the Earth."

For all their merits, however, even the original provisions of the Constitution are sometimes appropriate for modification by the people. The Founders understood this. They recognized that, in spite of their great wisdom, they could not foresee every future contingency and change in our society and our government. So they provided us an orderly process to amend our great Constitution.

I am one who believes the time has come to end a term limits provision, precisely because the form and function of so many aspects of our Federal Government have evolved today into something the Founders could never have imagined two centuries ago.

First, I believe the Founders assumed, I think they assumed that there would be a regular turnover of Federal officeholders. Why do we say that? Well, one of our seminal and foundational principles is the limitation and the separation of powers. It is

one of the things that makes us unique in the way that we have set up our government.

The Founders incorporated terms of service and staggered service in the U.S. Senate. Of course, they could have instituted term limits back then, but I think they believed that it was unnecessary.

Look at the statistics of the Founders' era. The rate of reelection and return to Congress back then was roughly 50 percent. You just heard my learned colleague from Nebraska report to you here that the last election cycle, it is much, much higher. Now, in America, the rate of reelection and return to Congress is 97 percent. That is not something I think that the Founders would have ever imagined.

Today, we also have fewer and fewer marginal districts. Incumbents often win by landslides because they have such huge advantages in terms of growing financial support, modern media exposure, and constituent service operations.

Another modern phenomena is that studies show Members tend to support more and more government spending the longer they serve in Congress, and this is true across the political spectrum. That has created a real problem, because the Federal Government has grown so very large now as a result of all that spending. Its scope and power is just simply exponentially greater now than it was in the Founders' era.

At the same time, accountability has gradually decreased over the years as the growing bureaucracy has developed into a sort of fourth branch of government. Over the past several decades, a growing class of nameless, faceless bureaucrats have been allowed to absorb and handle more and more of the authority and to handle more and more of the contentious and most consequential issues that face our Nation.

The problem is the bureaucrats never have to face or answer to the voters. Many who have served in Congress for many decades have become part of what we now refer to as America's professional political class. Those Members have gradually become more detached, and some have fully lost touch with the real concerns of the citizens they represent.

Due to the busy schedule here, Members of Congress now spend far more time in the beltway than they did in the founding era for certain. And one has to strive much harder now to be at home as often as necessary to keep in touch with the folks that all of us represent.

For many, when they are here a long time, their ideals tend to grow old with time, their energy often wanes, and ideas naturally get stale. There is much to be said for fresh faces.

In my home State of Louisiana, we instituted term limits in our State legislature several years ago. I had the honor of serving there for a short time before I came to Congress. And I can testify today, from my own experience,

that the turnover process in the Louisiana legislature has been a very healthy thing for our State. There are new faces, new ideas, and new approaches to problems that have beset our State for generations.

As in a State legislature, a term limited Member of Congress would be more willing to do a number of things, including act quickly to fix problems, rather than merely manage them or delegate broad powers to the executive branch and the bureaucracy. They would be more willing to question bureaucracies and the old-established programs. And I think they would naturally enjoy greater independence. Logic simply tells us that term limits would also allow for a greater diversity of people, ideas, and backgrounds in Congress, naturally evolving this legislative body into one that more closely reflects the people and the actual demographics of our Nation, as I think the Congress did in the Founders' era.

Today, there is a real bipartisan disappointment about Congress and its dysfunction. Thankfully, our new President has taken determined steps toward addressing this issue. Some of these actions have already greatly upset Washington and the politically established. But these changes are important because the transparent and accessible government is the very basis of a democracy.

This is why I have made this one of my top priorities while in Congress. I congratulate all of my colleagues who joined me in that resolve. I truly believe the future of our government and how it is run depends upon how we handle important issues like this.

We need to look no further than our last Presidential election to see how out of touch the people believe that Washington can be. Polls say that between 75 and 80 percent of the American people right now support term limits for Congress, and I also believe that it is the right move for our Nation. Desperate times call for desperate measures, and I think we have reached that point.

Let's give the people a chance to decide this important matter. Let's go through the constitutional amendment process. Let's put it to a vote of the elected representatives of the people. And let us return to the ideals of accountability, selfless public service, and the model of the citizen legislator.

I will continue to push for reforms in our government and combat corruption and D.C. cronyism as long as I am here. Our Founders intended our government was to be one of the people, by the people, and for the people, as Lincoln famously said. Imposing congressional term limits will help restore that foundational principle, and it will send a strong message to our children and future generations that America is still a country that puts national interests above personal agenda.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for bringing this to the floor tonight.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. JOHNSON. And I just want to

say that he and all the great citizens of the great State of Louisiana are welcome back any time to Lambeau Field. It was an honor to have him there.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to introduce a colleague from Pennsylvania's Eighth District, who served his country in the FBI. I am now honored to serve with him on the Homeland Security Committee, to which he brings an incredible wealth of experience. I think he is living proof of the necessity of embarking on term limits and implementing them now.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GALLAGHER), my colleague, for his leadership on this issue, and to all the Members of our class who have joined together in the shared belief that this institution is one of, by, and for the people, not one belonging to a class of professional politicians or partisan elites. Since being sworn in earlier this year to serve the people of Bucks and Montgomery County, I have made it my mission to advance commonsense bipartisan government reform agenda that includes, perhaps, the single most important thing that I believe we need to do in this Nation, and that is institute term limits.

For 14 years, serving as an FBI agent, most of that time being in the political corruption units throughout the country, there was one commonality that I saw very frequently—there was an unmistakable correlation between the length of time in office and the instances of corruption, and that the lines that were very bright for elected officials coming into the system on day one weren't so bright in year 7, 8, or 9, and certainly not in year 15 or 20.

Even the most well-intended backbone individuals oftentimes can be corrupted by a system that has the power to change some people. Those lines become blurred over time. And it is with this background and these real-world experiences that myself and my colleagues are pushing this issue, in this House of Representatives, in this Chamber, for the 115th Congress.

I, myself, introduced House Resolution 7 on my first day, among other reform-minded measures, on my first day in Congress. This was a constitutional amendment that would, once and for all, set term limits for Members of the House and the Senate.

As tonight shows, there is a wide range of support for this need of reform. And, in a time of deep political division and distrust between citizens and their government at an all-time high, term limits can be the first step towards restoring the essential bond between the American people and Congress.

So I urge my colleagues to join us in transitioning power away from the political class here in Washington, D.C., and sending it back to its rightful place—in the hands of the American people.

□ 1730

I thank my colleague, Mr. FITZPATRICK, not only for his leadership on this issue, but on a host of issues related to congressional reform, whether it is no budget, no pay, or a series of other bills that he has introduced; and I look forward to working with him.

Mr. Speaker, just to show that this is an issue that transcends parties, that transcends ideological divide, I am honored to yield to my colleague from the great State of California (Mr. KHANNA).

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman GALLAGHER for his bipartisan leadership on the term limits initiative, and my friend General BERGMAN for his leadership on this issue.

I don't think term limits are a partisan issue. The Economist had an article that the turnover rate in the people's House is less than European monarchies. European nobility turnover is at a faster rate. Incumbency reelection is 96 percent. When folks say, "Why can't you just vote people out of office," it is not looking at the actual statistics. Ninety-six percent of folks here are reelected, and that is not what our Founders intended.

James Madison and Alexander Hamilton agreed: "The security intended to the general liberty consists in the frequent election and in the rotation of the Members of Congress."

They envisioned a place where people would come, serve, and go back home to their communities.

Thomas Jefferson said that people ought to live, lawmakers ought to live under the laws that they pass. The only way we get back to our founding ideals is if we pass some version of term limits so that people do their public service, and then return to the communities where they reside.

This bill on term limits is really a move against political dynasty, and that is one thing that this election showed us people really were not for. They don't like the idea of a few families, or people connected, holding the reins of power.

Let me end with someone who I think summed this up so eloquently, which is Barbara Bush, our former First Lady. She said: "If we can't find more than two or three families to run for high office, that's silly, because there are great governors and great eligible people to run. And I think that the Kennedys, Clintons, Bushes, there are just more families than that."

This is from Barbara Bush, who understood the essence of democracy is to have new voices, new families, new ideas. That is why I hope that people across the aisle will support the initiative for term limits.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman KHANNA for his comments. He gets at a really important point, which opponents of term limits will say: Well, we have term limits that occur naturally every 2 years.

But as he pointed out, with a 94 percent incumbent reelection rate, and a turnover rate that is less than European monarchy, it isn't working that way, owing to the advantages of incumbency. So we need to take action right now. I thank him for his commitment to this. This really is a bipartisan issue.

I am now honored to yield time to my fellow Marine, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN), a man who also served his country in uniform, and like General BACON before, could have easily decided to enjoy retirement, but felt the call to step up and serve his country again. He brings a wealth of experience, and it is my honor to serve with General—now Congressman—JACK BERGMAN. We are neighbors. We have territory that borders each other, and so far, we have avoided any land disputes.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman GALLAGHER for his leadership on this issue, and the leadership across the board here as a Member of what we—I think most of us smile when we say the freshman class, because when I look across the experience level of all of the freshman Congressmen, no matter Democrat or Republican, what this country is blessed to have today, as Members of this 115th Congress, are people who come here with the sense of mission, a sense of purpose, a sense that we know what we have here in this country.

We may have disagreements as to how we are going to get to where we need to go, but we all agree that we need to go there. The question is: How do we do it?

One of the ways you create an environment where you have fresh ideas and fresh ways of looking at it is to change the people who are presenting and acting those ideas.

I find myself asking many times as we stand on the floor here: What would the Founders say if they were here today with us? How would they look at how we are enacting their vision of what it means to be a constitutionally-based Republic that is "We the People"? How would they react?

I think there are probably a few things that they could not have imagined. Twitter or Snapchat might be one of them—pick your way of communicating across the spectrum that we now have today as our reality. I am not saying those things are bad. They are just the new reality that we have.

So how do we take what was given to us as a framework and move it forward?

Well, again, my colleagues have all eloquently very well stated that they believe that we need to have a higher turnover in Congress. Term limits is going to be a very good first step in ensuring that we maintain the freshness of ideas.

When you look at the challenges that face our country, we know that there are people out there who have chosen not to run, for whatever reason, because of the fact that they view they

can make more of a difference outside of Congress. That is too bad, because we need good people. We need them. We need them to be here, to be part of us.

One of the brutal realities as—author Jim Collins of “Good to Great,” you know, he talks about facing the brutal realities. One of the brutal realities that I believe we have to face is the professional politician. That wasn’t written about anywhere 240 years ago. It just occurred over time.

It is our responsibility—especially as a freshman class, you can feel the passion that we believe is the right passion to be put behind term limits to begin to make the change necessary. So we are all in this together. In fact, I am proud to be a member of the freshman class, and I am proud of the fact that we signed a commitment to civility a couple of months ago that put us in a position where we are finding our voice. And what you are hearing today from our colleagues is part of that voice says: We need to do some things a little differently.

So let’s move forward; let’s expand the debate; and let’s make sure that we are inclusive in everyone who wants to get their opinion heard on this issue; and make sure that those who have questions about what we mean, we articulate it because in so many areas we have got big decisions to make. This is going to be a big one.

In the Marines, we accept the mission that is assigned; we plan and train for it, and then we execute it, and we get it right. And that doesn’t mean we don’t make a few tweaks in the process, but the bottom line is that we accomplish the mission.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all of my colleagues to seriously consider getting behind support for term limits in the United States Congress.

Mr. GALLAGHER. I thank Congressman BERGMAN not only for his leadership in the freshman class, but a lifetime of leadership and a lifetime spent leading marines.

I ask my team here in Congress, whenever we are considering a difficult issue, to apply what I call the lance corporal test. In other words, how are the policies that we are debating today and how is the legislation that we are considering going to affect that lance corporal, that 19-year-old man or woman at the tip of the spear?

I think General BERGMAN has seen in his career how messy things can get at the tip of the spear when you are far removed from air-conditioned offices in Washington, D.C.

I believe having more people not only with military experience, but with experience from a wide range of occupations will allow us to more thoughtfully consider how our policies here, designed in Washington, D.C., have real impacts on the American people and, indeed, across the world.

I now yield to the gentleman (Mr. ARRINGTON) from Lubbock, Texas, to talk more about this issue. It has been great to work with the pride of Texas Tech, the pride of Lubbock, Texas.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague for his leadership on this very important issue.

I have made the statement often when I ran for this office that I ran to change not only the course for this country, but the culture of Washington. It is my strong belief that we cannot change the course in any meaningful way without changing the culture.

So I want to, again, thank my colleague, MIKE GALLAGHER, for his leadership in rallying the freshman class, both Republicans and Democrats, on an issue that I think, because of this unique time in the history of our country, a time that I think calls for bold action, he is seizing the opportunity and heeding that call on behalf of our freshman class. And so I am deeply grateful for his courageous leadership.

Our country, the greatest experiment in liberty and democracy, was conceived by men of great principle; men who were committed to leading, to governing; and, yes—and I know this isn’t popular—to compromising; making difficult decisions and putting the Nation’s interest above their own personal interest. They were also men who never envisioned a lifelong career in politics.

In 1819, only 1 percent of Representatives had served over 16 years. Now, 20 percent of Representatives have served over 16 years. The current scenario where Members of Congress serve for 15, 20, even 30 years, is inconsistent with the Founders’ view of citizen statesmen. We need an environment that encourages politicians to do what is right not by their party or some special interest, and certainly not to secure their long-term career goals, but to do what is right for their fellow countrymen. Period.

I think passing legislation to implement term limits across the board is a good step in the right direction. I am grateful to be a part of this body and a part of this freshman class. It is such a unique time in our Nation’s history.

We need to go big; we need to go bold; or we need to go home.

So thank you for the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and my distinguished colleague.

Mr. GALLAGHER. I thank Congressman ARRINGTON for his comments. As he rightfully points out, the time is now for big and bold action. We have a unique window of opportunity here that we must seize. The American people gave us an opportunity to turn this country around, to really, in my opinion, save the country. But that is all it is: a fleeting opportunity. And what we do over the coming days and weeks will determine whether we get more of that opportunity.

I thank Congressman ARRINGTON for reminding us that this is just the first step; that the hard work is yet to come. We have to fight for this idea to implement it, and there is a lot of hard work ahead. I look forward to working with him on that.

I know there is a division of opinions on this issue, and there are some principled arguments against term limits.

I just remember talking with the man who held this seat before I did, Congressman Reid Ribble. He had spent his entire life in roofing, which was a nonstandard preparation for serving in Congress, but he decided to give up his successful private sector career to come here for a season of service and to work on behalf of the people of north-east Wisconsin.

□ 1745

He term-limited himself. I would debate this issue with him, and we went back and forth. Ultimately, he said something that stuck with me, and I think it is the most powerful argument for implementing term limits.

He said: Every day, I woke up, and I knew that I had one less day to make a difference in the people’s House. One less day. And so every day, I woke up with a sense of urgency, wanting to fix problems and get things done on behalf of my constituents.

I just think about that whenever I consider this debate. I just think about, if all 535 Members of the House and the Senate woke up with that same sense of urgency, if we all woke up every day knowing we had one less day to make a difference, imagine what we could accomplish working together.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues who have spoken so eloquently on behalf of term limits, and I look forward to working with them.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

U.S. POLICY TOWARDS KOSOVO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) for 30 minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, an Olympic Gold Medal; groundbreaking international conferences on religious cooperation intolerance; membership in the World Bank, the IMF, and other international bodies; and recognition by more than 110 countries—these are only some of the accomplishments of the young nation of Kosovo.

The United States was among the first to recognize Kosovo, and today we are its strongest backer, and rightfully so. First recognized by President Bush, relations only deepened under President Obama. For that, Kosovo proudly has become the strongest supporter of the United States and Europe, sitting at an 85 percent approval rating.

This is not to say that Kosovo is a perfect country. We are not a perfect country. Corruption needs to be attacked in Kosovo. Judicial reform is progressing far too slowly. And official unemployment hovers at just above 30 percent. So there is hard work to be done. There is obviously a lot of work to do. But I have visited this country again and again and again and again;