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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

January 13, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL K. SIMPSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Loving and gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We ask today that You bless the Members of this assembly to be the best and most faithful servants of the people they serve. Purify their intentions, that they will say what they believe and act consistent with their words.

Help them to be honest with themselves so that they will be concerned not only with how their words and deeds are weighed by others, but also with how their words and deeds affect the lives of those in need and those who look to them for support, help, strength, and leadership.

May all that is done this day in the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HECK) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HECK led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

OBAMACARE FAILURES

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

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today, we come and find this one

truism: ObamaCare showed that a Federal Government takeover of health care is not in the best interest of addressing our healthcare system.

Today, we are going to be taking a closer look at the top three ObamaCare failures: premiums have gone up, not down; instead of lowered costs, healthcare prices have gone up; and people have less choice than ever before.

Before we examine these, let's remember how we got here. There seems to be some selective amnesia on this floor. It was after months of backroom deals, in the middle of the night, last-minute deals, and without giving the American people enough time to even read the bill. That is not what is going to happen this time. Republicans are going to do what we said we would do: listen to the American people.

We are going to do this right, with input from our neighbors, the folks we go to church with, and our families and our communities. We are not going to pull the rug out from under anyone.

We have listened to our constituents, and what we are hearing over and over again are the same three failures: premiums have gone up, not down; instead of lowered costs, healthcare prices went up; and people have less choice than ever before, which, in many cases, is no choice at all. This is a failure, Mr. Speaker, and it is time to end.

ACA AND AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I absolutely disagree with the previous speaker. He is wrong. He is wrong on the facts. The fact is, the Affordable Care Act was on the table longer than any bill since I have been in Congress—which is 36 years—to read, to review, to analyze, and to make a decision.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Every American will be adversely affected if we repeal the Affordable Care Act. Millions of Americans with disabilities depend on access to quality, affordable health care and deserve to have their voices heard in the debate over our healthcare system.

In fact, only one in five Americans, when polled, think we ought to repeal the Affordable Care Act without having a replacement. There is no replacement. Sixty-four times they voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act. They still do not have a replacement.

According to the CDC, 53 million Americans live with some form of disability. Were the Affordable Care Act to be repealed, insurers would again be permitted to discriminate against them, denying coverage for increasing premiums based on their disabilities. Repeal would also allow insurance companies again to impose annual and lifetime limits on coverage for every American.

Do not repeal the Affordable Care Act. Show us the beef. Show us the alternative.

PREMIUMS HAVE GONE UP, NOT DOWN

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

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, ObamaCare is built on broken promises.

President Obama promised that, through his healthcare law, premiums would go down. Instead, they have gone up. In most States, premiums have increased by double digits. In some States, like Oklahoma, premiums are going up by as much as 76 percent.

I am from Indiana. In Indiana, in 2017, based upon current enrollments, the average rate will increase by 18.7 percent. Overall, the premiums in Indiana have gone up by 70 percent since the Affordable Care Act was first enacted.

Not only are Americans paying more for coverage, the costs have gone up as well: out-of-pocket costs, deductibles. For 2017, four carriers will be selling on the Indiana Marketplace. I have one county in my district, Wayne County, where no carriers provide for the local hospital.

Today, we will start a process of keeping our promises, Mr. Speaker. We promised the American people that we would repeal and replace this failed healthcare law. Only in Washington would keeping your promise somehow be controversial.

KEEP THE ACA

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

Mr. HECK. Mr. Speaker, I have a constituent named Martha. She goes by Marty.

Marty was studying to earn her bachelor's degree in nursing at Pacific Lu-

theran University when she was diagnosed with rectal cancer. Not good.

Without medical insurance, as we all know, that is a certain death sentence. There is no other way about it. But it wasn't for Marty. Frankly, less than a year before she had finally found affordable healthcare insurance for herself through the Washington State Health Benefit Exchange.

Every family, every person in this Chamber, has been affected by it. Cancer has a way of ripping bodies apart, ripping families apart, and ripping communities apart.

It didn't rip Marty apart. Through her strength, courage, and health insurance, she persevered. She has conviction that God used her community of friends and her family and the Affordable Care Act to help her through treatment and into recovery.

Not only could Marty share that story with me back in 2015, but she graduated cum laude from PLU in nursing just this last December. I am sharing her remarkable story with you—it could be replicated millions of times—to urge you to set aside and rise above partisan politics and not repeal the lifesaving Affordable Care Act. I ask you to do this not just for the sake of Marty, but because there, my friends, but for the grace of God, go each and every one of us.

WE ARE HERE TO FIX OBAMACARE

(Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, the ACA, ObamaCare, or whatever you want to characterize it as, is broken, and we are here to fix it. We want to empower patients. We want to bring health care back to the American people.

Let me talk about access to insurance coverage. People have less access today to insurance coverage than at actually any time in the past. Instead of competition to bring down and drive down insurance costs, one-third of the counties in the United States have only one choice of an insurance carrier, which is no choice at all. No competition. Insurance carriers are pulling out of the exchanges en masse, citing unsustainable costs because of ObamaCare.

The American people are demanding change. Enough is enough. They want relief. They want competition. They want lower costs. They want better quality.

We are here to fix ObamaCare and honor the promise to the American people to empower the patients of America to give them the choice, the quality, and the cost control they so desperately need and that ObamaCare robbed them of.

NOT ATTENDING INAUGURATION

(Mr. GRIJALVA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell my constituents that I will not be attending the inauguration of Donald Trump as our next President.

My absence is not motivated by disrespect for the office or motivated by disrespect for the government that we have in this great democracy but as an individual act, yes, of defiance at the disrespect shown to millions and millions of Americans by this incoming administration and by the actions we are taking in this Congress.

The majority of voters rejected Trump. They deserve respect. The 20 million-plus Americans threatened by the repeal of the Affordable Care Act without a replacement deserve respect. The millions who did not vote because they blame both parties deserve respect.

I will be at home in Arizona meeting with seniors, the immigrant community, folks who care about the environment and climate change, healthcare providers, and marching in Tucson with folks who will demand respect. I will be talking about the need to defend and protect the future for all Americans.

Rather than participate in the inauguration, I will be participating in my district and reaffirming and renewing this democracy and the people that are part of it.

SAVE CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, today, I will reintroduce legislation entitled, Save the Christians From Genocide Act. The bill declares Christians and Yazidis in Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Iran, and Libya as targets of genocide, and thus gives them a priority for immigrant and refugee visas.

Importantly, this bill does not circumvent or change current vetting processes, but rather simply ensures that these targets of genocide are placed at the front of the line for immigration and refugee visa processing.

The Save the Christians From Genocide Act was submitted but not brought to the floor for a vote in the last Congress. During that time, thousands of Christians have been killed and often turned into helpless and hopeless refugees on the run from radical Islamic terrorism. The Save the Christians From Genocide Act will give Middle East Christians a safe haven.

Christians are being slaughtered. As we speak today, Christians are being slaughtered in the Middle East. We must save them if we can.

MENTAL HEALTH AND THE ACA

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