

The world and the American people, though, responded to the earthquake with generosity. To date, the United States has contributed billions to recovery efforts, along with donors from around the world.

The Assessing Progress in Haiti Act, which was a bipartisan effort with Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN and was signed into law 3 years ago, provides us critical oversight to ensure that aid continues in the most effective way possible.

Unfortunately, more work needs to be done. Haiti continues to be struck by natural disasters, including severe drought and devastating effects of Hurricane Matthew in 2016.

WE ARE MAKING A MISTAKE IF
WE REPEAL OBAMACARE

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, the Affordable Care Act has improved the health care and financial security of every American, regardless of where he or she gets health insurance.

Healthcare costs have been growing at the slowest rate in more than 50 years. Seniors in the so-called Medicare doughnut hole have saved more than \$23 billion on their prescription drugs. Every American woman can rest easier knowing that women are no longer charged more than men for the same coverage. And 137 million Americans with private insurance now receive free preventive services.

Despite this remarkable progress, the majority has made it their mission to destroy the Affordable Care Act, no matter the cost, and those costs would extend far beyond the healthcare system.

A recent report found that repeal would cause just New York to lose more than 130,000 jobs in 2019 alone.

The Affordable Care Act has reduced the burden of healthcare costs for hard-working families not only in New York, but across the Nation; and it is those Americans for whom repeal would be so devastating.

We are making a mistake if we repeal ObamaCare.

□ 1600

SUPPORT OF THE AFFORDABLE
CARE ACT

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

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I stood in the well of this House some days ago, when I was sworn in, and basically said that I am not naive.

Today, I rise in support of the Affordable Care Act and oppose any effort to repeal it, which just took place. Since the ACA was enacted in 2010, the uninsured rate in Pennsylvania has fallen by 37 percent. Additionally, millions

more Pennsylvanians, who would otherwise be uninsured, have coverage with an employer, Medicaid, individual market, or Medicare coverage as a result of the new protections provided by the law.

No matter what lens you look through, Pennsylvanians and individuals throughout our Nation have better health coverage and care today as a result of the ACA. Let us keep moving forward and help our communities have healthcare access, quality, and affordability.

Recently, our Pennsylvania Governor, Tom Wolf, sent a letter to Majority Leader KEVIN McCARTHY to underscore the importance of furthering access to care, keeping prices affordable and spending in check, and improving health care for those in our home State of Pennsylvania.

Just in Pennsylvania alone, we have had over 670,000 individuals who have enrolled in HealthChoices, Pennsylvania's mandatory managed care Medicaid program. That is 670,000 individuals who previously did not have access to quality of care.

We do not need the rhetoric of repeal and replace.

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR,
Harrisburg, PA, December 20, 2016.

Hon. KEVIN McCARTHY,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN McCARTHY: Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on the critically important conversation about the future of health care in our country. As Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I am immensely proud of the work we have done to further access to care, keep prices affordable and spending in check, and improve health outcomes since my administration began tackling health care as a top priority.

One of my first decisions as Governor was to expand Medicaid to individuals up to 138 percent of Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Since that decision was made in February 2015, more than 670,000 individuals have enrolled in HealthChoices, Pennsylvania's mandatory managed care Medicaid program. That's 670,000 Pennsylvanians that previously did not have access to quality care, if they had access to care at all. Total program enrollment now tops 2.8 million Pennsylvanians. U.S. Census data shows that the commonwealth's uninsured rate has dropped from 10.2 percent in 2010 to 6.4 percent in 2015, and state General Fund costs have been reduced by more than \$500 million as a result of Medicaid expansion.

Even before the passage of the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid was the largest single payer in the United States for behavioral health services, including mental health and substance use services. In the midst of an exploding heroin use and opioid abuse epidemic that is gripping Pennsylvania and the nation, the role that Medicaid plays in addressing this epidemic cannot be understated. More than 3,500 Pennsylvanians died from heroin and opioid-related overdoses last year and that number is expected to rise again in 2016. However, in the first year of Pennsylvania's Medicaid expansion, almost 63,000 newly eligible Medicaid enrollees accessed drug and alcohol treatment. Demands on the treatment system are growing by the day but Medicaid expansion has opened the door to treatment that otherwise would not be available, much less affordable, to those without insurance.

Of course, the benefits of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) are not limited to those with Medicaid. The ACA has had far-reaching positive impacts on every community in Pennsylvania. In 2016, more than 439,000 people had selected health coverage through the Marketplace.

Seventy six percent of those Pennsylvanians received subsidies to make those plans more affordable. In 2016, 60 percent of those enrollees could obtain coverage for \$100 or less after tax credits. For a family, that may be the difference between choosing to pay for food for dinner or having stable health insurance. In addition, several pieces of the ACA, including the provision that allows children to remain on their parents' insurance until age 26 and the provision that requires coverage of pre-existing conditions, have made the benefits of health insurance coverage more enticing than ever before.

Nonprofits that have historically served as the safety nets of our health care system saw some relief with the passage of the ACA. For many, this meant they could finally bill for some of the services that they've typically provided for free for individuals who are uninsured. To shift the burden back on to these providers to serve an enormous influx of people who would lose access to insurance under an ACA repeal is doing a disservice to our nonprofit partners and our communities. The upheaval would be instant and real and would devastate families that have finally been able to set aside health coverage from their list of daily worries.

I respectfully ask that you carefully consider the needs of the people as you move forward with discussions about the future of the ACA. All too often we get swept up in the politics and financial impacts to large businesses and big political donors and forget that these are real people, who suffer from real diseases and every day maladies. Americans need real, meaningful health care coverage. They need options that are affordable, easy to understand, responsive to their needs, and available immediately—with no lapse in coverage. They need leadership and compassion and solutions—and together, we can provide them with all of those things.

I look forward to future conversations. Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to this incredibly important dialogue.

Sincerely,

TOM WOLF,
Governor.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO
THE PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GARRETT). The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to clause 11 of rule X, clause 11 of rule I, and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, of the following Members of the House to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Mr. CRAWFORD, Arkansas
Mr. GOWDY, South Carolina
Ms. STEFANIK, New York

OATH OF OFFICE

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

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, given that last week I took the oath of

office as a Member of the new 115th Congress of the United States and given that next week we will watch President-elect Trump also take the oath of office, I want to share a few thoughts on the deep importance of this constitutional duty that we share.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, last week on Capitol Hill was marked by a day of celebration. It was a day of renewal of friendships, even between people who have deep, deep disagreements in this body. Families and guests all gathered to share in the moment's excitement and meaning, and Members of Congress congratulated one another on their recent victories. We all took a reprieve from the intensity of the policy debate for just a moment. But amidst all of that swirl of activity, the day was set apart by the oath of office.

Mr. Speaker, the oath lays down a clear marker of the serious obligations ahead for all of us. In our day and time, we no longer are deeply connected to this concept of oath. We see it in the courtroom when somebody is required to tell the truth. We will see it again next week when President-elect Trump is sworn in. But we rarely take the time to reflect on its deeper meaning.

We see it more like an old tradition, a nostalgic option that we exercise out of deference to our history. However, the oath is much, much more. It is a solemn declaration. It is a pause, the start of sacred duty.

By taking an oath, you effectively hold your very self at ransom. You commit, at the deepest levels, that you will perform the tasks ahead of you to the best of your ability.

The oath is the ultimate test and measure of integrity. If you violate it, you tear at the center of your being, to the detriment of not only yourself but to the community, to those you are sworn to serve. This is a very high bar, indeed, Mr. Speaker.

I am reminded of the words of Sir Thomas More, who was the Lord High Chancellor of England during the 16th century. He strove to live a life worthy of excellence in public service. But in the end, he was put to death by the very state that he sought to so nobly serve.

In an earlier reflection on the idea of oath, Sir Thomas More had this to say:

"When a man takes an oath, he's holding his own self in his own hands like water, and if he opens his fingers then, he needn't hope to find himself again."

Mr. Speaker, throughout that wonderful day last week of our swearing in here in the body, I was reflecting personally on a singular word. That word is replenishment.

Our American system of governance has an extraordinary capacity to replenish itself with new ideas, new people, and refreshed perspectives. Our political system starts with the belief that political power is derived from each person's dignity.

By voting, citizens invest that very power in the Representatives that are

sent here to make judgments on their behalf. But, of course, to earn that right in the first place, the Representative must make his case to the people. In spite of the drama, in spite of the raucous nature of elections—and we have just come through one—the fact that America goes through this cycle of constant replenishment is truly an extraordinary gift.

Mr. Speaker, as I stood in the center aisle right here last week, I raised my right hand. I raised it right along with everyone else who is a Member of this new 115th Congress, and I took that oath of office.

Mr. Speaker, I just think it is worthwhile to read these powerful words:

"I do solemnly swear, or affirm, that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter, so help me God."

Mr. Speaker, indeed, this is a very high bar. This is a sacred duty. This is a solemn task. It sets this body and our system of governance apart by forcing each of us who have been given this extraordinary privilege of taking on the heavy mantel and weighty responsibility of making decisions on behalf of this great country, and to do so to the best of our ability, having put our very self, the integrity of what it means to be a person, on the line to uphold that commitment.

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

115TH CONGRESS STAFF DEPOSITION AUTHORITY PROCEDURES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON RULES,
WASHINGTON, DC, JANUARY 13, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 3(b)(2) of House Resolution 5, 115th Congress, I hereby submit the following regulations regarding the conduct of depositions by committee and select committee staff for printing in the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

PETE SESSIONS,
Chairman, Committee on Rules.

115TH CONGRESS STAFF DEPOSITION AUTHORITY PROCEDURES

1. Notices for the taking of depositions shall specify the date, time, and place of examination (if other than within the committee offices). Depositions shall be taken under oath administered by a member or a person otherwise authorized to administer oaths.

2. Consultation with the ranking minority member shall include three days notice before any deposition is taken. All members of the committee shall also receive three days notice that a deposition will be taken. For purposes of these procedures, a day shall not include Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays except when the House is in session on such a day.

3. Witnesses may be accompanied at a deposition by personal, nongovernmental coun-

sel to advise them of their rights. Only members, committee staff designated by the chair or ranking minority member, an official reporter, the witness, and the witness's counsel are permitted to attend. The chair of the committee that noticed the deposition may designate that deposition as part of a joint investigation between committees. If such a designation is made, the chair and ranking minority member of the committee that provided notice of such deposition may each also designate up to two committee staff from committees designated as part of the joint investigation to attend the deposition after consultation with the chair or ranking minority member of the designated committees. Observers or counsel for other persons, including counsel for government agencies, may not attend.

4. If member attendance is required, the deposition will stand in recess for any period in which a member is not present.

5. A deposition shall be conducted by any member or staff attorney designated by the chair or ranking minority member. When depositions are conducted by committee staff attorneys, there shall be no more than two committee staff attorneys permitted to question a witness per round. One of the committee staff attorneys shall be designated by the chair and the other by the ranking minority member per round. Other committee staff members designated by the chair or ranking minority member, including designated staff from additional committees in the case of a joint investigation, may attend, but may not question the witness.

6. Deposition questions shall be propounded in rounds. The length of each round shall be determined by the chair after consultation with the ranking minority member, shall not exceed 90 minutes per side, and shall provide equal time to the majority and the minority. In each round, a member or committee staff attorney designated by the chair shall ask questions first, and the member or committee staff attorney designated by the ranking minority member shall ask questions second.

7. Only the witness or the witness's personal counsel may make objections during a deposition. Objections must be stated concisely and in a non-argumentative and non-suggestive manner. A committee may punish counsel who violate these requirements by censure, and by suspension or exclusion, either generally or in a particular investigation, from further representation of clients before the committee. A committee may also cite the counsel to the House for contempt. If the witness raises an objection, the deposition will proceed, and testimony taken is subject to any objection. The witness may refuse to answer a question only to preserve a testimonial privilege. When the witness has objected and refused to answer a question to preserve a testimonial privilege, the chair of the committee may rule on any such objection after the deposition has recessed. If the chair overrules any such objection and thereby orders a witness to answer any question to which a testimonial privilege objection was lodged, such ruling shall be filed with the clerk of the committee and shall be provided to the members and the witness no less than three days before the reconvened deposition. If the witness or a member of the committee chooses to appeal the ruling of the chair, such appeal must be made within three days, in writing, and shall be preserved for committee consideration. A deponent who refuses to answer a question after being directed to answer by the chair in writing may be subject to sanction, except that no sanctions may be imposed if the ruling of the chair is reversed on appeal.