

at the Centers for Disease Control, they named an entire campus for him, if that gives Members any idea of the respect and the gratitude that they felt for Ed Roybal.

Fiercely proud of his Hispanic roots and deeply patriotic, the two went hand in hand. Ed Roybal loved America. He helped found the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Caucus's Institute and embarked on a mission to provide scholarships to needy Latino children and expand opportunities for all Americans.

Through his work as founder emeritus of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, he contributed to the advancement of Latino political power first in Southern California and then in the Nation. Hundreds of Latino elected officials have since followed in his footsteps, all knowing that they stand on his shoulders. By his courage and his determination to open the doors to minorities, Latinos have become much more active in politics and all facets of American society. Indeed, in our State of California, we are now a minority majority State, so we see regularly and firsthand the magnificent contribution of the Latino community to our great country, and Ed Roybal was very much a part of facilitating all of that.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, Eddie Roybal loved his country and he loved his family, speaking with pride of them every day that he served here. Tonight we bring the deepest sympathy of this Congress in which he led and served and indeed the sympathy of our entire country to the family he loved, he adored. I hope it is a comfort to Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD's beautiful mother, Lucille, her name is Lucille as well, and his three children, our colleague Lucille, her sister Lillian and Ed, Jr., that so many people mourn their loss and are praying for them at this sad time.

With the life and leadership of Ed Roybal, God truly blessed America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STEARNS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT IS A FAILURE

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, today marks the first day seniors can enroll in the new Medicare prescription drug benefit.

When the Medicare drug bill passed this House more than 2 years ago, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle touted it as the greatest health care achievement since Medicare's inception. Today, we have a different reality.

The Medicare drug benefit is an absolute failure. The way this thing is designed, one would think that Brownie from FEMA had something to do with it. It is a failure because of its complexity and inability to provide seniors with access to affordable drugs.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have said this benefit would help 42 million Americans who are served by Medicare. But the only people who are really benefiting from this benefit are the pharmaceutical companies who gave \$132 million over 10 years and have walked away with \$139 billion in additional profits from this bill. Insurers who gave well over \$100 million to the Republican Party are awarded with over \$130 billion in additional profits, all paid for by the taxpayers.

This bill was never designed with the customer in mind. This legislation was designed with the pharmaceutical companies and the HMOs and the insurance companies in mind. They could never have designed something this complex if they were thinking of people who were 65 years and older whose 60 cents out of every dollar for their health care goes to prescription drugs. They could never have thought of that when they designed this legislation and this bill.

Aside from the horrible corporate welfare, the complexity is a real shame here. But what is ironic is on this floor where we debated this, all the Republicans talked to us about how this choice was going to be a real win for the seniors. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH) said, "We are simply saying let us offer choices to seniors." The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) said, "To qualify for Medicare, you qualify for this program, and you are going to have choice." The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) said, "This Medicare bill offers a prescription drug benefit through competing private health insurance plans, marking the first time the private sector plans and consumer choice would be the principal vehicle for delivering Medicare benefits."

But it is all this choice that is causing the problem. Sometimes simplicity is better than choice, like Part A and Part B in the Medicare plan. Through all this choice, the only thing they have done is confuse seniors and driven up the profits for the pharmaceutical companies and the HMOs. There is no choice here. Mass confusion is what is going on.

The benefit is so complicated and confusing that even beneficiaries who are PhDs say they cannot figure it out. A recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll found that more than six in ten seniors either barely understand the benefit or do not understand it at all.

But just as important are the choices that the Republican Congress did not make. What did they not do? They did not do anything about the price of these drugs. They could have done something with direct negotiations just like Wal-Mart, just like Target, just like private sector companies, just like VA, the Veterans Administration does: negotiate, pool the resources, purchase bulk, just like every company in the private sector does. They refused to allow Medicare to do that. So we in America now are paying top premium dollar for drug and pharmaceutical prices and products that we could negotiate and get better pricing for. Why do we do that? Because of the pharmaceutical companies. And who is left holding the bag? The taxpayers and seniors.

What else does this legislation refuse to do? It does not allow us to actually access products in Canada and Europe and allow competition to bring prices down. For a party dedicated to the principles of a free market, it is not understandable why they decided to choose a closed market, forcing America to pay the highest prices of any country in the world. Again, negotiation or allowing people access to the prices of drugs in Canada and Europe, we could have brought prices down; and, third, they could have allowed generics to get to the market faster. Three market ways: competition, open markets, negotiations. They could have brought the prices down and had a simpler plan, but there is nobody paying the piper for those ideas, and that is why the pharmaceutical companies are walking off with corporate welfare to the tune of \$139 billion in additional profits, all paid for by the taxpayers, all brought to us by a Republican Congress.

The final bill that created the drug benefit left seniors with a limited benefit that failed to reduce the cost of prescription drugs, gave them serious choices that have led to complexity.

Now it is possible that seniors would understand the drug benefit a little better if this administration had distributed information to beneficiaries that was actually correct. But they botched that, too. The administration's own "Medicare & You" handbook included inaccurate information. Once the errors were discovered, CMS directed seniors to Medicare's Web site, even though over 75 percent of seniors have never used the Internet.

Mr. Speaker, the Medicare prescription drug benefit is an absolute failure. It is a failure because it was never designed with the customer in mind.