

the end of the day, 14,000 more Americans will lose their coverage. Over the past decade, health care costs have risen on average four times faster than workers' earnings. We cannot wait. We must act now with reform that guarantees that everyone has access to high quality care, regardless of income, employment or preexisting conditions. We also must bring down the cost of care to make health insurance affordable for everyone.

That's why we must pass a bill with a robust public plan, a plan without a trigger. A robust public plan will increase competition. It will bring down costs. The public plan must be tied to the current Medicare provider network infrastructure and rates so that it will be able to start immediately. This connection will also increase the savings provided by a public plan. We must pass a health bill with a robust public plan, and we must pass it now. The American people cannot go any longer without high quality, affordable coverage.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Ms. FALLIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FALLIN. Mr. Speaker, this debate on health care reform is probably one of the most important debates this U.S. Congress has had, because this debate on health care could move us towards socializing our health care system and turning over our personal health to the Federal Government to make decisions about our health, and also turning over a large portion of our national economy to the Federal Government.

This debate on health care reform should only be about doing what is right for America. And limiting choices on the kind of health care plan a citizen of this Nation can have is not right for America. Putting a Federal bureaucrat between the patient and the doctor is not right for America. Moving 114 million Americans off private insurance on to a government socialized plan is not right for America. Exploding our deficit with huge, massive new tax increases for a government-run health care plan is not right for America.

We should not be taking away the freedom to control something as important as our own personal health care and our outcomes of our health care, to the Federal Government. We should not be taking that away. Health care reform is about doing the right thing, and it is going to be right for Democrats and Republicans to come together to reform health care.

THE NEED FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Ms. SCHWARTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Almost 50 million Americans are without health coverage. Many millions more worry about the stability of their coverage, that they will lose coverage or that at a time of accident or illness their insurance will not cover critical needs. In my home State of Pennsylvania, families have seen a 100 percent increase in their health premiums since 2000. Nearly one in five Pennsylvania families pay more than 10 percent of their income on health care, and American businesses are struggling with increasing premiums, forcing them to pass on more of the cost to employees or to drop coverage all together.

The Federal Government is the largest payer of American health care costs and currently paying nearly half of the \$2.5 trillion health bill. And while costs keep rising at a rate faster than inflation, health outcomes for Americans are not improving.

The status quo is simply unacceptable. Inaction is unacceptable. We must move forward in offering a uniquely American solution to strengthening and reforming our health care system. Health care reform means making difficult decisions. Without congressional action, there will be higher costs and greater uncertainty for all of us. It's time to act.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, in an interview in The New York Times earlier this year, President Obama discussed the difficult decision that he and his family faced to replace his grandmother's hip after she broke it after she was terminally diagnosed with cancer. In that interview, he said, "Whether, in the aggregate society making those decisions to give my grandmother or everyone else's aging parents a hip replacement when they're terminally ill is a sustainable model, is a very difficult decision. There is going to have to be a conversation that is guided by doctors, scientists, ethicists. And then there is going to have to be a very difficult democratic conversation that takes place."

With all due respect, Mr. President, I think that this is a conversation that would be best left between the doctor and the patient. We don't need a government plan. We don't need government bureaucrats standing in the way of this relationship. We don't need them out their rationing out what care is best in this relationship. And so I, for one, reject the idea that government bureaucrats will make better decisions about health care than the doctors and the patient. So any proposal that seeks to ration care in such a way should be opposed, and I will do so every single time.

WHERE IS THE COMMON SENSE?

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

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, first Congress passed a multimillion dollar bailout to reward bad behavior on Wall Street. Next Congress passed a trillion-dollar-plus stimulus plan which Members were not allowed to read. It was sold on the promise that unemployment would not exceed 8 percent, but unemployment is now at 9½ percent and rising.

Next the House passed a national energy tax. They called it cap-and-trade so Members wouldn't have to say they voted for a new tax. Members were not allowed to read that either. It will cost every American family and every American business lots of money and drive a lot more jobs overseas.

Now Congress wants to pass a bureaucratic-managed and rationed health care plan, again costing Americans trillions of dollars and, worse yet, their medical freedoms. No doubt Members will not be allowed to read the final version of that either. Where is the logic? Where is the common sense? When will Congress think about the working folks, the seniors, and the savers who made this country great? Congress needs to look past the special interests and start listening to the people back home.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make clear that there is not anyone in the United States Congress who does not want to make our Nation's health care system better. There is bipartisan agreement that Congress must help the American people by working to lower the high cost of health care and provide access and availability to the American people who are uninsured. This is not the time for Congress to rush to the President's desk in a reckless manner legislation which would amount to nothing short of nationalizing one of the best health care systems in the world.

Make no mistake, there are much-needed reforms that Congress can and Congress should address. We must solve this problem in a focused and in a bipartisan way and not allow some extreme proposal to make its way to the President's desk that will be another massive spending program. With Federal spending at the highest level in American history, the economy in a severe recession and unemployment rising every day, another massive government program with more spending, more borrowing and higher taxes will only hurt this struggling economy and the American people.

TRILLION DOLLAR DEFICITS NOT SUSTAINABLE

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I originally came down here to talk about the fact that when my two grandsons, Nathan and Noah, need to know whether they need their tonsils out, we're going to let the doctor make that decision, not the President of the United States or the Speaker of the House. But then the gentleman from Massachusetts got up and was quoting a comment that Chairman Bernanke made the other day about the stimulus package.

What he didn't talk about was the rest of the comment that Mr. Bernanke made when we said, The fact that we're borrowing 50 cents of every dollar that we spend, do you think that that would change your predictions down the road if we keep spending at this level?

This is to quote the Chairman: "Down the road, it might. As I talked about in my testimony, I do think it's very important that we look at a medium-term fiscal sustainability, that we have a plan for getting back to reasonably low deficits and a sustainable debt-to-GDP ratio. Otherwise, we might see interest rates rise, which would be a negative for the economy."

I said, Do you think we can keep spending and having these trillion dollar deficits and not put our country—is that sustainable? Chairman Bernanke said, "No, sir. It's not."

AMERICANS DESERVE BETTER

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

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, we have before us this week, maybe, H.R. 3200, the health care reform bill. Those of us on this side of the aisle are for health care reform. We believe there are many who need insurance, many who need reduced costs for health insurance. Mr. Speaker, this isn't it. In fact, the President is fond of saying, if you have it and you like it, you can keep it. Not true.

On pages 16 and 17—and I would encourage the President to read pages 16 and 17, in fact, the entire bill—and he will see that we take a hatchet to private insurance, to employer health care, and, in fact, the Congressional Budget Office Director, a Democrat, said that the President not only doesn't bend the curve to reduce health costs, we increase it. And we create a \$200 billion deficit. Americans deserve better, Mr. Speaker. They deserve a better bill than this one.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. HARPER. The health care reform proposal expected to come before the House contains provisions that include a tax increase of more than \$500 billion on American small businesses and working families, as well as a tax on jobs of up to 8 percent of employer's payrolls. Additionally, individuals would be required to buy coverage or pay a 2.5 percent fine on their income.

This government-run plan proposed by the Democrats will force more than 100 million individuals to lose their current insurance. Knocking this many Americans off their current coverage is a clear violation of the President's pledge to allow individuals to keep their current health plan if they like it. We need preventive medicine, not defensive medicine. I want health care decisions to be between you and your doctor, not some Washington government bureaucrat.

If the President and the Democrats are serious about health care reform, then they will work with the Republicans toward a bipartisan plan. The American people do not need health care reform legislation that can only get 218 votes in the House. Let's come up with a plan that will get 435 votes.

CHANGE WE CAN USE

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I just got this e-mail from JoAnne Lewis in Coffee County, Georgia. She's with the Economic Development Authority. She says that Wayne Farms is now closing down, another 165 jobs lost. This brings Coffee County, Georgia's, total job loss to 2,979, or an unemployment rate of 16½ percent. Mr. President, where's the stimulus package? Where are the jobs?

Now, on top of this comes Speaker PELOSI. She's planning to ram through a \$1.2 trillion government takeover of the health care system. This will cause a \$534 billion tax increase and a \$208 billion tax increase on small business and farmers. Therefore, more layoffs, and more unemployed. Mr. Speaker, this is not the change the folks in Coffee County, Georgia, can use. They need jobs.

TRUE BIPARTISANSHIP

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, since January, we've had a lot of talk about bipartisanship, and we've even had some of it. We had a partisan Democratic stimulus bill that created bipartisan debt and unemployment, but no bipartisan jobs. We had a partisan Democratic cap-and-trade bill that will create bipartisan higher energy prices, but no more bipartisan energy. And now we've got a partisan Democratic health care bill that will cost Democrats, Republicans and Independents alike their

jobs and quality health care. Hopefully, Mr. Speaker, the Democratic majority will eventually create a bipartisan opposition that will stop their job-killing health care bill in its tracks.

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THE DEMOCRAT PLAN DOESN'T REFORM HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, we need to reform health care in this country, but the Democratic plan doesn't do that. The Democratic health bill doesn't reduce costs or inefficiency. In fact, it increases taxes by over \$1 trillion, and it cuts provider payments substantially. Indeed, it forces tens of millions of people off of the private plans that they're satisfied with into a government-run plan. In fact, it creates 53 new Federal agencies or boards, tripling the size of the current government health care system. That is not a move in the right direction.

Is this plan good enough for Democratic leadership? Apparently not.

In the Ways and Means Committee, we offered amendments to mandate that all Members of Congress would have to be under the government-run plan. The response from Democratic leadership was that that wouldn't be fair to the families of Congressmen. Well, I've got something to say to this, Mr. Speaker. If it's not fair to the families of Congressmen, it's not fair to Americans who work hard and who actually pay their taxes to be forced into something like this.

What we need is a real plan with real reforms that the American people will accept and that will address their needs.

MOST SMALL BUSINESSES SUBJECT TO DEMOCRATS' 8 PERCENT PAYROLL TAX

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

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, despite unemployment fast approaching 10 percent—over 15 percent in my home State of Michigan—a new analysis shows the Democrats' health care plan could force as many as 61 percent of small businesses which already provide health insurance to pay a new 8 percent payroll tax. The House Democrats' bill mandates employers must pay a minimum of 72.5 percent of the health insurance premiums for individuals and 65 percent for families. If an employer fails to do so, then it will be subject to a job- and wage-crushing 8 percent payroll tax.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, the new mandate will hit small firms and their employees especially hard. The majority of those