

is what happens under the Republican bill.

“Give people who buy insurance in the private market the same tax breaks as those who get it through employers.” That only makes sense.

And, finally, “Expand the ability of small business, trade associations, and other groups to set up insurance pools to offer coverage at more attractive rates.”

These are the advantages of the Republican plan. And to boot, ours cuts the deficit.

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, the truth has now come out, and the fact is that you can go to jail if you do not buy into the Speaker Pelosi health care bill.

One of the most onerous provisions of the Pelosi health care bill is the so-called “individual mandate.” This is a provision that will force every single American to buy into their health care plans whether they want to or not.

Back when Bill Clinton was President back in 1994, the CBO said, “A mandate requiring all individuals to purchase insurance like this would be an unprecedented form of Federal action.”

And how does the government force this mandate? If you don't buy their insurance plan, they will fine you 2.5 percent of your entire income. And what happens, you may ask, if you don't pay that fine to them? Now we know the answer: You could be sent to jail, literally. Section 201 of the code says that. That's right. The Joint Committee of Taxation has declared that you will be eligible to be fined up to \$250,000 and/or imprisonment of up to 5 years if you do not comply with this new plan.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bad bill. It will hurt consumers. It will hurt families. It will hurt everyone else. And it may send Americans to jail.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, unemployment has reached 10.2 percent in our great country, and what is the response of this Congress and this administration?

Well, a bill that includes \$730 billion in tax increases on small businesses and on the middle class that will cause millions more of Americans to lose their jobs. And adding insult to injury, Mr. Speaker, the Pelosi bill would actually raise the cost of insurance premiums on American families.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are not stupid. They know what's in this bill. They know what effects this bill will have on themselves, on their

families, and on their country. And that's why the American people have rejected it and are saying “no” to this bill.

Congress needs to do the right thing, the responsible thing, and also say “no” and reject this irresponsible piece of legislation.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCMAHON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, after years of aspiration and planning, after too many families bankrupted and too many lives lost, this House stands ready to do something both great and necessary. We will soon join every other civilized nation on this planet in offering each and every citizen decent, affordable health care.

For me, a new Member of this body, it has been an incredible exercise in democracy. I participated in more than 60 town hall meetings, visits with doctors, nurses, patients, and listened to advocates with every conceivable point of view. Almost everyone agrees that we must do something and do something bold.

Too many Americans know the fear that losing a job means losing access to doctors and to lifesaving drugs. Too many Americans have watched as illness or injury has driven their family into bankruptcy. Too many small businesses, nonprofits, and small town mayors have seen their budgets wrecked by exploding costs of health care insurance.

Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago in the city of Bridgeport, I met Marta, who lost her job of 23 years and is currently relying on her COBRA coverage to pay for the management of her diabetes. She is terrified. Her COBRA will end soon, and she has been refused private coverage time and time again.

I've also gotten to know a young man named Eugene who makes his living laying bricks. He can only work during the warm weather construction months when he has good coverage through his union, but in the wintertime when he can't work, he joins Marta in the ranks of the fearful. He prays that nothing happens. He asked me, “Even the phone company has rollover minutes. Why not our insurance plans?”

When this House passes the Affordable Health Care for America Act, no American will ever be denied coverage because they have a preexisting condition. When this bill passes, we will begin to close the Medicare doughnut

hole so that no senior will have to choose between their prescription and buying food. When this bill passes, our small businesses, our nonprofits, and our mayors will no longer watch as exploding health care costs wreck their budgets.

Is the bill perfect? No. But in this of all things, we cannot let the perfect be the enemy of the good. There is too much at stake—the lives of those who die because they can't see a doctor, the peace of mind of millions of Americans who know that bankruptcy is one illness away, the moral standing of this great Nation that has fallen too short for too long in keeping its people healthy.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time. Mr. Speaker, “yes” is the answer. I join my colleagues in urging that tomorrow we make history.

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“NO” TO GOVERNMENT-RUN HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, many years ago during the mid-eighties, I had the opportunity to travel to what is now the former Soviet Union when it was the Soviet Union. I had that experience based upon the fact that I was a judge in Texas and got to go see what it was like to live under that type of regime.

Of course, in those days, everything was controlled. Everything was controlled by the government. The lives of the people were totally controlled by the government because the government, as they say, knew better. It made all decisions for the people. It made the decision what town they lived in, what apartment they lived in, what job they had, where they worked, and gave them permission or not to even travel from town to town. And, of course, government made also the decision and the control over their health care.

I noticed as I went from clinic to clinic that the lines would be down the street. Four in the afternoon, they shut the door. The people disappeared. The next day they would come back and stand in line again, hoping to get some of that government-controlled, rationed health care.

I also noticed something more important than all of that, that the spirit of those Russian people was broken. They had given up. They had given up on themselves and on their government.

Eventually, of course, they were defeated, as we say, when the wall came down. But they were not really defeated by the United States, by the West. They were defeated by their own government because of their oppression and subjugation to the government and government control of their lives. Yes, in those days, the evil empire, as we