

Today we are affirming that essential truth, a truth every generation is called to rediscover for itself, that we are not a nation that scales back its aspirations.

Such grand words for where we are today with ObamaCare. Today the success of the law that now bears his name, ObamaCare, is defined in much more meager terms. Think of all we have been through to this point: the fight over the bill and the extreme legislative means used to pass it through the Congress; the Supreme Court decision that effectively repealed half of the law's coverage. Think of all the changes made to the law through regulation to make sure ObamaCare actually got launched—the postponing of the employer mandate, the postponing of lifetime limits. Think of the impact this law has had on our economy—people losing jobs, people losing the health insurance they currently have because if you like what you have, you may not be able to keep it.

Let's talk about that for a moment. "If you like what you have, you can keep it." This was the promise the President made to the American people on at least 36 separate occasions. It is a great sound bite. It is easy to say. It rolls off the tongue. It is also not true. It was never true. It obviously was not true when the law was written. It was obviously not true when the first proposed regulation came out.

This is what I said on the Senate floor in September of 2010:

Only in the District of Columbia could you get away with telling the people "if you like what you have, you can keep it," and then pass regulations 6 months later that do just the opposite, and figure that people are going to ignore it.

It is not that I have some magic crystal ball. We all knew it. The administration certainly knew the day would come when millions of people would receive cancellation notices. My constituents clearly know that. I heard from many Iowans who found out the hard way that the President made a bunch of pie-in-the-sky promises that he knew he couldn't keep; constituents such as this one from Perry, IA, who wrote to me saying:

My husband and I are farmers. For nine years now we have bought our own policy. To keep the cost affordable our plan is a major medical plan with a very high deductible. We recently received a letter that our plan was going away. Effective January 1, 2014, it will be updated to comply with the mandates of ObamaCare.

To manage the risks of much higher premiums, our insurance company is asking us to cancel our current policy and sign on at a higher rate effective December 31, 2013 or we could go to the government exchange.

We did not get to keep our current policy. We did not get to keep our lower rates. I now have to pay for coverage that I do not want or will never use. We are not low income that might qualify for assistance.

We are the small business owner that is trying to live the American dream. I do not believe in large government that wants to run my life.

From a constituent living in Mason City:

My wife and I are both 60 years old, and have been covered by an excellent Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield policy for several years. It is not through my employer. We selected the plan because it had the features we wanted and needed . . . our choice. And because we are healthy, we have a preferred premium rate.

Yesterday, we got a call from our agent explaining that since our plan is not grandfathered, it will need to be replaced by the end of 2014. The current plan has a \$5,000 deductible and the premium is \$511 a month. The best option going forward for us from Wellmark would cost \$955 per month (a modest 87 percent increase), and have a \$10,000 deductible. And because we have been diligent and responsible in saving for our upcoming retirement, we do not qualify for any taxpayer-funded subsidies.

These are just two of many letters, emails, and phone calls I have received from Iowans.

Now the issue has turned to cost. Millions of people face rising premiums. The impact is real and undeniable.

Here is another from a constituent from Des Moines:

In 2013, I encountered some medical problems which caused me to retire early. My spouse works as an adjunct instructor . . . thus not qualifying for coverage. In 2014, with 4 part-time jobs between us, we made \$44,289 in Adjusted Gross Income.

Our Obamacare insurance cost \$968 per month and after credits, we paid \$478 per month or approximately 13 percent of our Adjusted Gross Income. In 2015, our Adjusted Gross Income will be approximately the same, however our Obamacare insurance jumped to a premium of \$1,028.82 and our cost to \$590.12.

The insurance company touted that premiums went up less than 10 percent, but as you can see, my costs went up 23 percent. The impact to Adjusted Gross Income went to 16 percent, a 23 percent increase. I just received my 2016 premium estimate. Our Adjusted Gross Income is likely to be the same. Our gross premium is scheduled to rise 36 percent to nearly \$1,400; our cost after the credit is jumping 63 percent and the impact to our Adjusted Gross Income is that 25 percent of our income will be spent on health insurance (a 56 percent increase).

Thousands of Iowans have contacted me asking what can be done. Now that we clearly see that what the President sold the American people was a bag of Washington's best gift-wrapped hot air. All the grandiose talk about the importance of this statute, and what we ultimately have is an optional Medicaid expansion with a glorified high-risk pool and a government portal that makes DMV look efficient.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the co-op disaster. The first co-op to fail was Iowa's CoOpportunity. CoOpportunity enrolled the second most beneficiaries of any co-op in America. CoOpportunity knew they were in trouble because they enrolled more than 100,000 people when they were planning for less than 20,000. CoOpportunity was in contact with CMS and so was the State of Iowa. CMS chose not to further fund CoOpportunity and CoOpportunity has since been liquidated. American taxpayers have billions of dollars invested in these co-ops. The taxpayer only gets their

money back when co-ops succeed. CMS's stewardship of this program has proven that CoOpportunity was not an exception but unfortunately the rule as more and more co-ops have failed.

Americans deserve better. They voted for better. It is time to admit that ObamaCare has not achieved the correct or desired result of an attempt. It has not been a success by any measure, unless, of course, you lower your standard to the point that the mere act of keeping the doors open is a success. How sad is that for all we have been through.

Maybe, just maybe, it is time to admit that the massive restructuring has failed. Partisanship has failed. Perhaps it is time to sit down and consider commonsense, bipartisan steps that we could take to lower the cost and improve quality. Perhaps we could enact alternative reforms aimed at solving America's biggest health care problems, reforms like revising the Tax Code to help individuals who buy their own health insurance, allowing people to purchase health coverage across State lines and form risk pools in the individual market, expanding tax-free health savings accounts, making health care price and quality information more transparent, cracking down on frivolous medical malpractice lawsuits, using high-risk pools to insure folks with preexisting conditions, giving States more freedom to improve Medicaid, and using provider competition and consumer choice to bring down costs in Medicare and throughout the health care delivery system.

The American people need to know that this failed program is not the only answer and we are not scaling back our aspirations. With this vote this week, we once again demonstrate to the American people our willingness to not accept failure and to aim for better. That is what America is all about.

I yield the floor.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 7 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

RECONCILIATION LEGISLATION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, with so many issues to wrap up before the end of this year and so many enormous challenges facing our country, my view is the Senate ought to be embracing bipartisanship at every turn. In fact, earlier today the senior Senator from Iowa and I released an 18-month bipartisan inquiry into Solvaldi, which is the blockbuster drug to deal with hepatitis C, and the reason we did is because these specialty drugs are the