

build on the very real successes of ACA and fix the actual problems with the law. But this legislation as proposed does none of that and, in fact, takes us in the opposite direction.

Under the proposed legislation, 10 million Americans would lose their health insurance, according to an analysis from Standard and Poor's. Seniors would be charged much more than what others pay for health care, and the 3.2 million Illinoisans who depend on Medicaid will face cuts to their coverage.

Mr. Speaker, this House is recklessly and unnecessarily rushing to a vote before we have basic answers. Most importantly, we need to know from the Congressional Budget Office how many people this bill will and will not cover and how much it will cost.

We need to set aside the politics and work in a bipartisan way to give all Americans quality, affordable health care.

I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose the bill.

HONORING CHRISTOPHER "NOTORIOUS B.I.G." WALLACE

(Ms. PLASKETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, this is a very special day to many of us Caribbean Americans as we pay tribute to the life of Christopher Wallace, otherwise known as Biggie Smalls.

Livin' life without fear,
Putting five karats in my baby girl's ear,
Lunches, brunches, interviews by the pool,
Considered a fool 'cause I dropped out of high school,
Stereotypes of a black male,
Misunderstood,
And it's still all good,
And if you don't know, now you know.

HONORING CHRISTOPHER "NOTORIOUS B.I.G." WALLACE

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

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Brooklyn's own Notorious B.I.G., Jamaican-American Christopher Wallace.

In celebration of his life and living legacy, I share these words:

Thinkin' back on my one-room shack,
Now my mom pimps an Ac with minks on her back.
And she loves to show me off of course,
Smiles every time my face is up in The Source.
We used to fuss when the landlord dissed us,
No heat, wonder why Christmas missed us.
Birthdays was the worst days,
Now we sip champagne when we thirsty,
Uh, right, I like the life I live,
'Cause I went from negative to positive.
And it's all good.
And if you don't know, now you know.

GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of an important bipartisan-supported vital Environmental Protection Agency program, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, spanning the largest body of freshwater on the face of the Earth. Many media outlets have suggested that the President intends to cut this program by 90 percent—90 percent.

I would like to clarify that this proposal is not yet official, but it is more than a rumor. So I would like to believe that this President who achieved the White House by carrying the Great Lake States of Michigan, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and my own Ohio, would not take this awful step backward.

Candidate Trump traveled to Flint, Michigan, and promised that the water situation would never happen if he were President. Is he going to reverse his firm promise of clean water?

The blue economy of the Great Lakes depends on clean water: a \$7 billion maritime industry in Lake Erie alone; jobs related to the automotive and industrial sector of our country; recreational opportunities; and, most importantly, preserves clean drinking water for the millions and millions of people who depend on that today and in the future.

Supporting the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is not partisan; it is common sense.

HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have this time on behalf of the minority and the Progressive Caucus. We have a number of very distinguished Representatives who want to talk about what is going on with people's health care in America and the attacks leveled against it this week in Congress.

Before we begin, I yield to my distinguished colleague from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES).

HONORING CHRISTOPHER "NOTORIOUS B.I.G." WALLACE

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Maryland for yielding.

It was all a dream,
I used to read Word Up! magazine,
Salt-n-Pepa and Heavy D up in the limousine,
Hangin' pictures on my wall,
Every Saturday Rap Attack,
Mr. Magic, Marley Marl.

Those were the words of the late great Notorious B.I.G., Biggie Smalls, Frank White, the King of New York. He

died 20 years ago today in a tragedy that occurred in Los Angeles, but his words live on forever.

I have got the privilege of representing the district where Biggie Smalls was raised. We know he went from negative to positive and emerged as one of the world's most important hip-hop stars. His rags-to-riches life story is the classic embodiment of the American Dream.

Biggie Smalls is gone, but he will never be forgotten. Rest in peace, Notorious B.I.G.

Where Brooklyn at?

□ 1945

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much to the distinguished gentleman from New York. We are going to go from the Notorious B.I.G.'s music to the notorious GOP healthcare proposal being considered in Congress this week.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials in the RECORD on the subject of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I am going to yield to my colleague from Minnesota, Mr. ELLISON. It was 7 years ago in March 2010 that President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law extending access to affordable health insurance coverage to more than 20 million previously uninsured Americans.

Insurance companies under the new law could no longer deny you insurance because you had a preexisting condition, and, surely, that makes sense. The fact that you have a preexisting medical condition should be the reason that you get health insurance, not the reason you get denied health insurance.

Also, under the new ACA, young people up to age 26 could stay on their family plans, which helps families like mine because I have got a 22-year-old, a 20-year-old, and a 25-year-old. And believe me, they would not have health insurance if not for the Affordable Care Act, and I think my situation is that of millions of people across the country.

But today, the ACA is in mortal danger. The House GOP finally unveiled their plan for repealing and replacing the ACA with something else, which I call the unaffordable care act, that will cost millions of people their health insurance, increase everybody's premiums, reduce everybody's coverage, and bring incoherence and chaos into the system.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to yield to Mr. ELLISON in just a moment to talk about what is going on with this legislation. But I do want to say something about the process by which we arrived here, because back when the Affordable Care Act was being debated—and I

wasn't in Congress then, so I approach this just as a historian—there were multiple complaints from the GOP Members about how fast things were going, how the legislation was being rammed through.

For example, our now-Speaker PAUL RYAN said about the ACA: "Congress is moving fast to rush through a healthcare overhaul that lacks a key ingredient," he said, "the full participation of you, the American people."

GREG WALDEN, the Energy and Commerce chairman from Oregon, said: On a bill of this significance, you would think we would at least allow people to come in who are affected by the extraordinary changes in this bill, and have a chance to let us know how it affects them.

And the Ways and Means Committee chairman today, KEVIN BRADY, said: The Democratic Congress and White House simply aren't listening. The Democrats are ramming it through over the public's objections.

Well, let's go back and look at how long it took the Democrats to get the Affordable Care Act passed and how much public participation and debate there really was.

Here in Congress, there were 79 hearings—I repeat, 79 hearings—on the Affordable Care Act.

There were 181 witnesses, both expert witnesses and members of the public, citizens coming to testify about the need for expanded health insurance coverage for the American people because of the high expenses of health insurance and the rip-offs of various insurance companies.

There were multiple scores that were received from the Congressional Budget Office during that time, as there was constant attention to the budgetary and fiscal implications of the Affordable Care Act.

Now, fast-forward to today. We took a year-and-a-half to get to the Affordable Care Act. How about them? Well, let's see.

The Republicans introduced their bill on Monday. They passed their bill in the dead of night, at 4:30 in the morning, 3 days later. There have been no hearings on the bill. There have been no witnesses to testify on the bill. There have been no expert witnesses. There have been no witnesses from the public.

There is no analysis from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office on how much the bill will cost American taxpayers, American citizens, on their plans or how many Americans will lose their health care at all.

In other words, the party that complained about how fast the Affordable Care Act came into being, which was over the course of a year and a half with dozens of hearings, and dozens and dozens—more than 100 witnesses and lots of public debate where we went back to our districts and had townhall meetings, where there was orchestrated opposition against the plan, but we still stood there and we engaged in

the dialogue, and we stood up for the Affordable Care Act. The people who said that that was too fast are now ramming through, at unprecedented, breakneck, lightning speed, a bill that will wreak devastation on the healthcare rights of the American people.

That is what is taking place. If you have got a contaminated, clandestine, secret, closed process, it will produce a terrible, undemocratic, and unhealthy result. That is what we are going to describe to you tonight.

I am delighted to yield to my colleague from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON.)

Mr. ELLISON. Congressman, thank you for that introduction, and thank you for your service to the Congress and the great people of Maryland.

I think it is really important tonight to focus on a few key things about what is happening in Congress. One is that 20 million people stand to lose their healthcare coverage. Many have never had it, and the Republican majority is set to snatch it from their hands. That is really sad.

One of the people who come to mind is actually a young woman who works on my staff. Her name is Abby, and she is a young woman who has her whole life to look forward to, but as a young person, when she was born, she had a disease called toxoplasmosis. She doesn't mind me talking about it because what Abby would tell you if she were here is that it was tough growing up.

She had a lot of medical attention growing up. She was a good student, and she really braved all of the medical care she needed with tremendous courage, and her family was there with her the whole time. But she had numerous surgeries growing up, and she also came close to death's door on more than one occasion.

One thing that she says—and says to anybody who is willing to listen—is that the Affordable Care Act helped save her life. Why? Because Abby has a preexisting condition, a pretty serious illness. And she had insurance companies that have lifetime limits and annual limits on coverage and care.

Without the Affordable Care Act and with the provisions that preceded the Affordable Care Act in the insurance industry, she simply was uninsurable, therefore, not in a position to get the care she needed. By some miracle, she made it to adulthood with the status quo before the Affordable Care Act, but the Affordable Care Act made the difference between her being with us and not.

I was talking to a physician who operates an institution in my district called the Hennepin County Medical Center, HCMC, who said: Look, if you were to stack up all of the diseases in our country that end in fatality, you would have to put up there car accidents, you would have to put up there heart disease, you would have to put up there pulmonary illnesses and cancers, of course. But, he said, if you stacked

those illnesses up on a list, the most fatal in a given year, he said, the third one would be uninsured, people dying because they don't have insurance.

And our Republican majority is here to tell us they are okay with that. It is hard for me to believe, but it is true.

Right in front of us, we know that this repeal will relieve wealthy individuals of paying taxes. If they are able to repeal the Affordable Care Act, people with a lot of money are going to have more of it, and people who needed health care will have less of it.

People who need help dealing with the doughnut hole and need to be filled in with the moneys that come from the Affordable Care Act won't have that anymore. Now they will go back to the status quo of Medicare part D, which is where they get help up to a certain amount, then there is no help, then they have got to spend up to start getting help again. The Affordable Care Act filled in the doughnut hole, and seniors who can barely afford their prescription drugs now will have even more trouble.

Seniors who need Daraprim, which was a medication that cost about 13 bucks until this guy Shkreli bought the patent for it and jacked it up to about 700 bucks, people who need even things like insulin, people who need all kinds of medications now are going to be staring at that doughnut hole all over again.

I mean, we can get up here and talk about the toll, the human tragedy, the pain and suffering that people are looking at, but none of it seems to penetrate the minds of our colleagues. They seem to be deaf to the pleas of people like Abby and so many other people like that.

I was here when my colleagues on the other side brought forth I think as many as 60 attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act. We would come forth and we would say: People are getting lifesaving treatments that they never could afford before; people are getting treatments that are literally keeping their families intact, keeping their lives intact; people are getting coverage they never had; people have something more than the emergency room to turn to. Our colleagues would just say: Well, we are just going to get rid of it anyway.

In fact, I remember, Mr. Speaker, when the Republicans shut down the government for 16 days because we refused to cooperate with their effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act. TED CRUZ occupied time and demanded that we repeal it. We said we would not turn people like Abby and others back to the tender mercies of the insurance industry. They said: Well, we will shut down the entire government unless you do it. We said no, and, well, here we are.

It is true that we never thought we were going to lose this election. We never thought we would be this deep in the minority, but we now have gotten in a position where the Democrats

don't hold the Presidency. We have a President who ran on the promise of repealing the Affordable Care Act, and we have two Houses of Congress that are committed to doing it.

The last line of defense really is the American people, Mr. Speaker. The last line of defense is the American people standing on the most fundamental of rights, the First Amendment, which guarantees them the right to redress grievances, guarantees them the right to petition their government, guarantees them the right to freedom of assembly, guarantees them the right to freedom of faith, guarantees them the right to receive information from a free press.

We are relying on that amendment, Mr. Speaker, to stop these Republican efforts to snatch healthcare access out of the way, out of the hands of Americans. We are relying on Americans to stand up and say: We will not tolerate this—going to community meetings, going out on the street, using their rights as Americans to express their right to have health care. This is what the moment calls for.

Governors, even some Republican Governors, are saying: Wait a minute. This Medicaid expansion, you know, we used it. It is not so bad. It is helping us.

Their pleas are being ignored as well. We are at a critical moment: Will the American people continue to make the same advances that people all over the developed world have made with regard to health care?

You know, Europeans look at us and think there is something wrong with us. Even our northern neighbors look at us and say: Wait a minute. Health care is not a right down there?

No. You get it if you can pay; and if you can't pay and answer somebody's bottom line, you are just out.

We pay the most for health care in the whole wide world, Mr. Speaker. We pay the most—the most—and yet we don't have the best outcomes. We don't have the best indicators of health. Yet our colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to return us to a day when the number one reason that people would declare bankruptcy was medical debt. That is the world we are looking at, and it is really, really something.

Now, many people have said—you know, Democrats say to me all the time, and I am sure they say it to Mr. RASKIN of Maryland: Hey, look, you know, there are things we would change in the Affordable Care Act.

We are not saying that it fell down from tablets in the sky. Of course, there are reasonable amendments that might be made. But I am here to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Republican caucus has never said: We will talk about how we are going to make reasonable amendments to make it better. They have only said to repeal, repeal, repeal.

They have also said replace, but everyone knows you cannot repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act be-

cause, if you repeal it, you are repealing all of the taxes that go along with paying for it. And if you repeal the taxes, you are going to tell me that a Republican caucus is going to levy a tax? They think tax is a four-letter word if somebody with a lot of money has to pay it.

□ 2000

Now, they are okay with fees and pushing down regressive taxes. They do that every day and all the time. If somebody with real means has to pony up, even though they are already wealthy, you could never see a Republican do that. It is just not something they are going to do.

The ACA has provided coverage to more than 20 million people. That is 20 million more people who have better patient care, access to doctors and medicines, and are no longer turned away because of preexisting conditions.

The Republican proposal puts the brakes on the progress we have made. People will lose access to insurance coverage. The Republicans gut the preventative health fund, which literally funds programs to invest in keeping people healthy.

Who do Republicans help?

Insurance and pharmaceutical corporations. They get huge tax breaks at the expense of the help and the future of the American people.

The Republican bill doesn't stop there. It is an outright attack on Medicaid. Seniors out there should know that the Republicans are attacking Medicaid. They are attacking Medicaid.

Medicaid is one of our most effective antipoverty programs and provides life-saving care to millions of elderly, children, pregnant women, and people with disabilities. Republicans want to dismantle the program as we know it and kick people off and leave States to pay for the bill.

This bill takes away health care from women and shifts costs to the older, sicker people. It compromises the Medicare trust fund. It destroys Medicaid and gives tax breaks to corporations and millionaires. It is wrong, and the American people need to oppose it. And I oppose what they are trying to do.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I hope the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) will stick around. I want to salute him and congratulate him on his new position, not only as a leading Member of the United States House of Representatives, but now as vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

All of your colleagues are beaming with pride about your accomplishments and about your national political leadership, and we are delighted that the rest of the country is going to get to share in your leadership now in your new aggressive role out organizing opposition to what is taking place in Washington today.

I want to take a little break from railing about this unaffordable care act

that is going to drive everybody's rates up and throw millions of people off their health insurance.

I want to say a couple of good things that President Trump said as a candidate because he attacked ObamaCare, but he said he wanted a system that covered everybody. He's been quoted many times speaking in favor of a single-payer plan that would cover every citizen. Now, that talk has completely dried up. It has vanished and disappeared.

I urge President Trump to go back to his original instinct, which is that, if you are going to repeal and replace ObamaCare—the Affordable Care Act, as he keeps saying—let's replace it with the kind of system they have in Canada, they have in Europe, and just cover everybody. That would be the direction to go in. But to go backwards to throw millions of people off their health care is precisely what the American people don't want.

Now, here is another proposal that President Trump mentioned in passing when he stood in this Chamber the other night. He said: Let's repeal the special interest lobbyist provision that was snuck into Medicare part D, saying that the government could not negotiate for lower drug prices with the pharmaceutical companies.

Again, that was a very popular talking point for Donald Trump when he was running for President. He campaigned like Williams Jennings Bryan, but he is governing like William McKinley; that is, a cabinet filled with CEOs and billionaires. He did mention that. That was one tiny crumb, a remnant of the populist campaign he ran.

I urge my Republican colleagues to throw this terrible bill that they are going to waste everybody's time on, that cannot pass, which their Freedom Caucus is totally opposed to; and, instead, focus, at least, on something we can agree on, which is that the 25 or \$30 billion that that special interest provision is costing us should be saved. We should allow the government to negotiate for lower drug prices in the Medicare program the way we are allowed to negotiate for lower drug prices in the Medicaid program and in the VA program.

So we can work together in a bipartisan basis. However, we are not going to allow anybody to throw millions of Americans off of their health insurance plan while driving up everybody else's rates and bringing the whole healthcare system to the brink of ruin.

When I got elected to Congress, I went down to the basement of the Longworth House Office Building after I was sworn in to sign up for my health care because we get health care as part of our jobs as Members of Congress. We pay for it through the local ACA healthcare exchange in the District of Columbia, but we are guaranteed the right to get that because of the Affordable Care Act.

When I went down that morning, I was signing up and I was looking

through the memo about what we would be doing during my first week in Congress here. Sure enough, I saw that the GOP leadership had put on there a procedural proposal to set the stage for the dismantling of the Affordable Care Act.

I looked up to see a line of my new colleagues waiting to come and sign up for their health care. Some of them I recognized as my Democratic colleagues, and some of them I recognized as my new distinguished Republican colleagues. And I said to myself: Wait a second. Please tell me that we are not going to have new Members of Congress come in here and sign up for their own health care that they get as part of their job as Representatives in the United States House of Representatives and then go upstairs to this floor to vote to strip millions of people of their health care.

Surely that is not what democratic representation means in the 21st century; that we get to have health care through our jobs, but we are going to take away the health care that other people have. But, my friends, I am sorry to say that is the reality that we are in this week.

Congressman ELLISON is right, we are not taking the position that the Affordable Care Act is perfect. Far from it. I wasn't in Congress then. I don't know if the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) was. I wasn't in Congress then. But had I been in Congress, I would have been fighting for a single-payer plan.

I am on legislation this session to support a single-payer plan. In other words, the Affordable Care Act, for me, doesn't go far enough in guaranteeing that everybody has health care and in dramatically reducing the role of the insurance companies so we can spend more money on health care and less money on red tape and bureaucracy.

So the Affordable Care Act, which I support with all of my heart right now against all the attacks to dismantle it, was a compromise. It was a very carefully crafted compromise. Remember, we had more than 100 witnesses come and testify about it. They had zero on their crash-and-burn legislation this week. We had dozens and dozens of hearings where we had witnesses come and testify about it. They have had zero on their crash-and-cash legislation—crash the system and give cash to the insurance companies and the wealthiest people in the country. So we had an open process, and it was a compromise.

I remember very clearly as a State senator in Maryland watching President Obama on TV saying, if we are starting from scratch, he would be in favor of a single-payer plan. He said that would be the logical way to go. It is what they have in Europe. It is what they have in Canada and Mexico.

He said we are path dependent. We are on a particular path. We understand the role that the big insurance companies play, and they have got a

lot of political power, and we have got everybody on the GOP side screaming and shouting for the insurance companies. So he said let's figure out a plan where we keep the insurance companies involved.

Guess what? That plan was hatched at The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank in Washington, much beloved and revered by the GOP Members of this body. It was the exact same plan that Governor Mitt Romney, their standard bearer running for President a couple of elections ago, put into place in Massachusetts.

The Affordable Care Act was the compromise. Now everybody is on their case because they are hiding under their desks, they are running away from their constituents, and they are canceling their townhalls. Nobody could get a plan out of them.

Suddenly they pull a plan out of their sleeve in the middle of the night. They rush it through this body. They voted on it at, I think, 4:30 in the morning after a 27-hour hearing. Everything is meant to be under the cloak of darkness, and people are making fun of them about how silly it is.

I sympathize with them because there is nothing they can do because the Affordable Care Act was the compromise. Now, they wanted to name it ObamaCare, of course, because they couldn't stand the idea that President Obama would get the political credit for bringing tens of millions of Americans health insurance. So they had to name it on him and then make up all of these stories about how terrible it was.

Guess what? They wake up today. Nobody is calling it ObamaCare anymore. President Obama is doing his own thing. They are calling it the Affordable Care Act, and people are defending it all over the country in 50 States in every congressional district.

You have got indivisible groups that have grown up all over the place, and my dear colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle are afraid to face their own constituents. They are canceling their townhalls, they are hiding under their beds and behind their office sofas, which, in many cases, are the exact same pieces of furniture because they sleep in their offices here. They don't want to face the people and the fact that we do not want to turn the clock back and go backwards and wreck this system. It is a lot easier to destroy things than to build things.

So we urge the GOP: If you want to meet to make real substantial improvements, expansion of the Affordable Care Act to include more people, to reduce the cost of the bureaucracy, let's do it. But your plan is a terrible plan. Your plan is one that is going to throw millions of people off of their health insurance. Your plan is one that is built around a huge tax break and transfer of wealth upwards in the country—one of the biggest transfers of wealth in the country ever to go in the northward direction.

It is an amazing thing that that is how they have designed their plan.

So it is a huge tax break to the insurance companies and to the wealthiest people, and millions of others are thrown off of their insurance plans. Everybody else's premiums are going to be soaring, and the whole system is likely to come crashing down.

If a foreign government like Russia, for example, were trying to do this to us, we would consider it an act of aggression, an act of war against the American people in our health care. But this is, instead, coming from what used to be one of our great political parties, the party of that President who talked about government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

We have, instead, a wrecking ball targeted right at you, the American people, coming after your health insurance, your health care, your ability to participate as a citizen in our healthcare system. That is a remarkable thing to be taking place in 2017.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the thoughtful gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) for being so clear on the issues in front of the American people. It is so important that we have these Special Order hours so that we can really help the American people understand what is at stake; and what is at stake literally is the health and security of our Nation.

When we talk about security, usually people think about law enforcement and military. There is also the security that families can expect, the security of your health. In this situation, the Nation's security of health and family security is absolutely on the chopping block.

Let me give you an example of what I mean. In the district I represent in Minnesota—which I am so proud to represent the people of the Fifth Congressional District of Minnesota—we used to have an uninsured rate which we thought was low. It was 10.9 percent. If you remember, in the pre-Affordable Care Act days, 10.9 percent was pretty low. Well, now it is 6.6 percent. That means literally thousands of Minnesotans can now go and get regular doctor care rather than just show up at the ER.

Part of the way that we used the Affordable Care Act in Minnesota in the Fifth Congressional District is that the folks at HCMC set up something called Hennepin Health. What Hennepin Health does is it says: We are going to take some of these Medicaid dollars and we are going to help people who are chronic users of the ER system. We are going to work with other agencies and other providers in the community to help house them stably and then do regular medical surveillance with them.

Do you know what has happened with this program?

The costs at the ER have dropped through the floor. The money has been

saved because of the Affordable Care Act. Not only is it about the money—because if you talk to our Republican friends, all they want to talk about is money—something even more important has happened.

□ 2015

When you talk to the people who would go to the ER all the time, they are saying: I have somewhere to live. I have somebody who helps me stay on my medication. I am beginning to rebuild relationships with my family again. Schizophrenia can be very devastating to your mental health; and I was all out of control when I was off my meds, and I used to end up in the ER within an inch of my life. But now, because of the Affordable Care Act, I can get the care that I need, I can be stably housed, I can be productive in my community, I can be a participating family member again.

It has improved their lives.

I don't understand what the Republicans don't understand. It is a good thing to have people to have an option other than the ER.

I heard one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle say, well, in America, if you show up at a hospital, there is a Federal law that says they have got to take you.

It is true that if you show up at an ER, somebody is going to have to let you in there. They may move you from one hospital to another, but, eventually, the law does say you will end up with somebody seeing you.

Guess what the medical professionals say about it? It doesn't work. It is the most expensive care. It is usually left to people who have allowed an illness to fester and to go on and to advance, which makes it more difficult to treat, more expensive to treat. It is the wrong way to run a healthcare system.

Yet, people have a straight face and say things like, well, you know, you can go to the doctor if you need to. It is called the ER.

This is absolutely not the right thing. And so here we are again, right at this hour where, really, things look kind of grave, and we need the American people to stand up and object. I tell you, we need people to say that they insist upon a humane society where a person suffering from schizophrenia, who is so afflicted by their illness that the only thing they can do is make it through the day and then, if they get sick, maybe somebody will take them to the ER.

We should have a society where that person can get the care they need, can get housing that they need, can be cared for, and can be a participating member in our society with just a little bit more help.

I think that is what makes us Democrats. That is the difference between us and them. We care about people. We believe people are inherently valuable and all have dignity, and we don't believe that you are only as worthy as what is in your pocket or your bank

account. We reject that idea out of hand and believe that people must be—if you are too poor to work, too sick to work, too old to work, we believe our society should care for you; and I don't make any apologies to anybody for believing that.

I believe the government should do everything it can to make sure there are enough good-paying jobs for everybody. Lord knows we have got enough work to do around here, potholes here and there, school kids need help. We have got plenty of work to do. That is not the problem.

We have also got plenty of wealth. We have got plenty of wealth in our society. And I believe that if you live in this greatest of all countries in the world—and I believe that, I am so proud to be an American—and you are allowed to make a profit, which I believe in that, I am a former businessperson myself—I don't think it is asking you too much to put a little bit in the pot so some people who can't afford it can go to the doctor.

I don't think it is asking you too much to put a little bit in a pot so a kid can go to school, or so that a senior can get medication, or so that we can have clean water. I don't think it is too much.

But some people think it is too much to say that, even though I have been blessed by being an American and being able to pursue my economic dream, I don't want to give them anything. This is all for me.

I just don't—we are just not on the same page with that. We think that it is all right to make sure that we fund the basic necessities that people need to have a thriving, humane society, and that includes health care.

So tonight, I just want to say to people that it reminds me of a question that a lady asked Benjamin Franklin when Benjamin Franklin walked out of the Constitutional Congress in Philadelphia, way back so many years ago. The lady said to Benjamin Franklin: What do we have, Mr. Franklin? He said: A democracy if we can keep it.

Part of being a democratic society in this country right now means that we should have health care for people because this society can afford it. Part of what it means to have a civilized democracy in this moment means that people can rise up and lift their voices up to defend their right to have decent health care for all in this society; and we urge people to do that because it is the right thing to do, and this is the right time to do it.

So I want to just yield back to my friend from Maryland. I will be taking my leave at this point, but I want to thank the gentleman for holding down this very important Special Order because the Affordable Care Act is worth fighting for.

As you said, Mr. RASKIN, the Affordable Care Act is not perfect. What piece of legislation ever was?

We have amended the 1964 Civil Rights Act. We have amended the 1965

Voting Rights Act. We amend laws all the time because, as society changes and times change, the needs come up. But to just repeal and then not come anywhere close to replacing, it is wrong, and we must oppose it.

Mr. RASKIN. I thank the gentleman so much and, again, I salute him for his incredible work for the people of Minnesota and the people of America.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FASO). The gentleman from Maryland has 20 minutes remaining.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I just want to tie up some loose ends by exploring a few of the points that Mr. ELLISON raised. But one of the very messy features of this legislation that is barreling through Congress this week is that the GOP leadership understood how popular the ban on denial of coverage for preexisting conditions is. That is going to be a mainstay of American life.

People should not be denied health care because they have a preexisting condition. That is the reason they should get health care, because they have a preexisting condition and they need it.

So they don't want to get rid of that. They understand that that is politically toxic. But they don't want to have the mandate for individuals to have to purchase insurance under the Affordable Care Act. That has been the major problem they have with the ACA. That is their major anathema. They can't stand that.

But guess what? You can't have one without the other. And if they believe in economics and they are being honest, they will have to concede that. Why?

Well, if I am a healthy young person, as I used to be, I will say to myself: Wow, an insurance company has got to cover me, even if I have got a preexisting condition, and I am perfectly healthy now, and I don't have to buy the insurance. So I am just going to go on my merry way, la-di-da, until maybe 1 day I have got a problem, I am in an accident, or I get some kind of diagnosis. At that point, I go to an insurance company, and they are going to cover me.

So they have kept the preexisting condition provision of ObamaCare, which is wildly popular in the country now. They are terrified to touch it now, although they were opposed to it before. But their proposal gets rid of the individual mandate, and it doesn't work. It will bankrupt the entire system. It is not going to work.

Now, another thing is that they are ignoring the extraordinary success of the Affordable Care Act. With whatever flaws it has got, it has been extraordinarily successful. It has dramatically reduced the number of uninsured people. It has insured more than 20 million people who did not have insurance before, and, therefore, it has dramatically reduced the number of people

showing up at the hospital in the emergency room with no insurance, and the hospitals have been obligated to see them.

And who pays for that? Guess who pays for it? You do, I do, the American public does when people show up without insurance. But the Affordable Care Act reduced, in a very significant way, the number of people showing up like that.

Now, in my home State of Maryland, we have seen extraordinary reductions in the numbers of people showing up in the emergency room without insurance because of the ACA. We have cut the uninsured rate by more than one-third in Maryland. We had a rate of 10.6 percent. Now it is down to 7 percent since the ACA was implemented.

All of the people who run the hospitals and our healthcare system are terrified that, if the GOP bull in the china shop wrecks the Affordable Care Act, what is going to happen is we are going to have hundreds of thousands of more visits every year in emergency rooms by people who are not covered by insurance, which means that the taxpayers get stuck with the bill again.

Now, let me tell you about my congressional district, the beautiful Eighth Congressional District, of which I am very proud. Everybody loves their district, but I do have the most beautiful, the most extraordinary district in the country. In Montgomery County, Maryland, in Frederick County, Maryland, and in Carroll County, it is gorgeous. Please come out and visit us in Bethesda, in Rockville, throughout Carroll County, throughout Frederick County. Come to Middletown, go to Thurmont, check it all out. It is beautiful. Come and visit us.

Look what has happened in the Eighth Congressional District. Well, as I said, we have reduced the uninsured rate by a third. We have 444,600 people in the district who have health insurance that covers preventive services today, like cancer screenings and flu shots, without any copays, without any coinsurance or deductibles, and they now stand to lose this access if the majority succeeds in eliminating the ACA provisions requiring health insurers to cover preventive services without cost-sharing.

We have got more than a half a million people in my district with employer-sponsored health insurance who are at risk of losing important consumer protections like the prohibition on annual and lifetime limits, protection against unfair policy rescissions, and coverage of preexisting health conditions if the ACA is entirely or partially repealed.

We have 21,400 people in the district who have purchased high-quality marketplace coverage, who now stand to lose their coverage if the marketplaces are dismantled.

We have 16,000 people in the district who got financial assistance to purchase marketplace coverage in 2016, who are now at risk of coverage becoming

unaffordable, if they have their way and they eliminate the premium tax credits, and so and so forth.

Everything is dismantling the protections you have, making your premiums go up, throwing millions of people out of health insurance, and transferring lots of wealth upwards through the tax breaks that they want to give to wealthy people and insurance companies.

By the way, as I understand it, there is a provision that they want to repeal which capped the tax deductibility of insurance company executive salaries beyond a half a million dollars. They want to repeal that, so that would continue to be tax deductible. You could pay them millions of dollars, and they get the tax break because, of course, that is going to be their first priority, making the wealthiest executives in the health insurance companies whole.

Who cares what happens to everybody else, whether they lose their insurance, their premiums go sky-high? They know exactly where their bread is buttered. And that is just the icing on the cake.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think that their legislation can pass because the American people are too smart for it and will not stand for it. I don't think it will pass.

The President is already distancing himself from it. We all started calling it TrumpCare. The word went out that he didn't want it called TrumpCare. We think he knows that it is not going to pass, or, if it does pass, it is going to be a debacle of historic significance and moment.

None of them want it to be named after them. We have offered RyanCare, we have offered TrumpCare. None of them want to be associated with it.

I don't think it is going through. I understand that the Freedom Caucus, which thinks that there should just be a total free market, is going to vote against their plan, which they say is worse than ObamaCare, which they hated from the beginning. Although they are ideologically opposed to it, they know that ObamaCare is working, and they know that lots of people are being covered on it. And now they are going to be throwing millions of people off of ObamaCare, but they don't get what they want, which is a total free market.

Of course, a free market in health care doesn't work because health care is not a social domain where the market operates.

□ 2030

If you get sick or if you get injured, then you are just taken to the hospital. You don't have a lot of time to shop around for the best hospital or the best doctor. You just need to go in, which is why the civilized countries of the world that can afford it have gotten to the point of a single-payer plan. But they want to take us from the Affordable Care Act backwards. They want it to be a dog-eat-dog medical care system.

The American people are not going to accept that. They don't have a majority in Congress to do it, and it is the job of the minority in Congress which represents a majority of the people. Remember that the Democratic candidate for President received 1.9 million votes more than the Republican candidate for President. So it is the job of the minority which represents the majority of the American people, and it is the job of the people of the United States to say that we reject this sloppy, terrible plan that they are trying to rush through Congress. If they want to have discussions about actually improving things, we are very happy to do it. Otherwise, this cannot be accepted, and the American people need to pay very close attention to what is taking place in Congress this week.

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

OBAMACARE

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

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to spend time here with my colleagues. We just heard a diatribe from our colleagues. It is interesting to me to note how they say the American people don't want us to change this, but I have to remind my colleagues that I think the American people spoke very loudly on November 8. We have run multiple times to repeal this bill. I heard one of my other colleagues say that we voted over 60 times, and we are going to vote one more time to get rid of the Affordable Care Act because the American people have delivered that message to us, and we have a President that says that we will do this.

I think, as we go through this, we are going to have some interesting conversations. Considering all the bickering and posturing you see in the media by partisans on the left and the right, it is time for Members of this body to step back for a moment and take stock of where we are in the healthcare debate.

I was not a Member of Congress when the Affordable Care Act was passed. I was a practicing large animal veterinarian in private practice plying my trade and not a political animal, if you will. However, I was concerned to see the way the law was passed. My colleagues on the other side were talking about how this was rammed through Congress and how it was passed in the shadows—or how we are doing that now. But I have to remind them that in 2009 it was passed in the dark of night—no Republican input, no debate, and no discussion. It was just passed and rammed down the American people's throat.

I want to go on here, and I want to yield to a couple of my colleagues before I do.