

but maybe I will bring them next week—the thousands of people who have said their lives have been saved by the Affordable Care Act; the thousands of parents with a child with a preexisting condition that, if the Republicans had succeeded in their 65 votes to repeal it, would not have been protected; the millions of seniors who are paying less for their prescription drugs because of the Affordable Care Act.

□ 1200

I could read all those letters.

Why do I read the letters of Mr. WALDEN, Mr. BRADY, and Speaker RYAN?

Because they are in charge.

All our constituents, on either side, had no opportunity to testify on this bill. But Speaker RYAN, Mr. WALDEN, and Mr. BRADY could have given them that opportunity, and they chose not to. They rationalize it apparently because, well, we had hearings in the past.

Does this bill have the subject matter of the ACA?

It does. But this bill was offered just some, as I said, 90-or-so hours ago. And the leader says: Well, that is okay. It is based on all those hearings we had.

The fact is this bill has not been brought forward for the last 7 years while there was a repeal for ACA.

Why?

We all know why. Mr. Speaker, it is because the majority could not come to an agreement, and they are not in agreement now. Perhaps, if this bill stands out there a little bit, it is so flawed they won't be able to get the votes on their side of the floor.

I was here—I don't think the majority leader was here—when we adopted the part D prescription drug program. It was called up by the majority, the Republican Party at the evening hour; and we voted from 3 a.m. until 6 a.m. And when I say we voted, that vote was kept open for 3 hours while they opportuned their Members: You have got to vote for this. President Bush wants it. You have got to vote for this.

We voted against it. But the vote was held open 3 hours, I tell my friend. That was not regular order.

Now, our side has held a vote open from time to time—never for 3 hours, but from time to time. That is why it is being rushed. It is not because they had a lot of hearings before, not because witnesses had testified they didn't like the Affordable Care Act. We understand that.

The issue is not whether people like or dislike the Affordable Care Act. It is how are we going to provide what the President has promised: access for everybody to health care at a lower cost and a better price.

I told the majority leader last week—and I repeat my comments, Mr. Speaker, to the majority leader this week—if they bring such a bill to the floor, I will support it. This bill does not do that.

So what President Trump promised during the election and what he prom-

ised from that podium just a few days ago is not what this bill represents. It is not what they promised to the American people.

What I asked the majority leader was—they are apparently going to have some additional bills—whether or not they will be also rushed through without hearings on the premise that there were hearings in the past.

I repeat that there are a lot of new Members in this body that didn't have the opportunity to have those hearings and weren't in this body. I don't know how many there are because I don't know how many Congresses we are talking about if we adopted this bill 7 years ago and then there were hearings subsequent.

So I don't know where we are going, Mr. Speaker, but I think the American people expect an opportunity to be heard. Yes, I may quote some next week.

The people who were elected by the American people to do their job have the power to open up the doors and open up the windows and pull back the curtains so that the American people could come in and testify. There were all those witnesses who testified in the last Congress and the Congress before that, but I am talking about the people who testified during a Congress in which we considered the bill. We haven't had an open rule this year, Mr. Speaker. We have had structured rules. We have had no open rule.

So in terms of the majority leader telling me, Mr. Speaker, that we want everybody to have their opportunity, and he caricatures one amendment that was—I think I would agree with him—more to show that not a single Republican would vote. And Mr. BRADY, as I pointed out, didn't vote for his own amendment that he offered when the Affordable Care Act was marked up to say read the bill.

Time was not given to read the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I understand we are not going to come to any conclusion today; but I am hopeful that the process that was perpetrated on not only the minority but also the majority this week will not be repeated, and that the representations that have been made by the Speaker, by the young guns, and by so many others would be a process that is, in fact, open, thoughtful, and democratic.

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

ADJOURNMENT FROM FRIDAY,
MARCH 10, 2017, TO TUESDAY,
MARCH 14, 2017

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet on Tuesday, March 14, 2017, when it shall convene at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BERGMAN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

SNAP INTEGRITY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to continue the discussion on the Agriculture Committee's findings from hearings conducted to ensure that SNAP—or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—is meeting the needs of those it is intended to serve. After individual resources, family support, and community programs, SNAP is critical to supporting nutritional needs.

The program integrity within SNAP is critical for both the functioning and the long-term sustainability of the program. Jessica Shahin of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service emphasized in testimony:

“As vital as the program is to so many, and as well as it operates, we can all agree that it can do even better. And it is up to all of us—the Federal Government, the States, and the local providers—to work together to improve it by holding ourselves accountable. FNS is committed to continually improving the integrity of SNAP.”

Mr. Speaker, opportunities for SNAP program integrity improvements include defining clear program goals and metrics that generate program improvement and reduce SNAP fraud rates through innovative State and Federal strategies and technologies.

UNIVERSAL COVERAGE NOT UNIVERSAL CHAOS

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

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the American Health Care Act.

Over the past several weeks, I have held six townhalls where I have discussed health care with more than 800 of my constituents. Thousands more have called or contacted my office.

Erica, from my hometown of Arlington, told me that, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, her family can now keep their house and pay their mortgage.

Nancy from Bellingham told me she works with families who rely on Medicaid to avoid bankruptcy due to extra medical costs that come with caring for babies with disabilities.

So many Washingtonians support the Affordable Care Act and benefit from it. And of my constituents who oppose the Affordable Care Act, none of them have asked me to support legislation that would cover fewer people. None of my constituents have asked Congress to make poor people pay more for insurance. And not one of my constituents have asked Congress to give the rich a massive tax break, but that is

what the American Health Care Act will do.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, will hurt people—women, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and middle class families. It will result in universal chaos, not universal coverage.

I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose this measure.

AN EXERCISE IN SMOKE AND MIRRORS

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

Mr. LAWSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the Republican plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act is an exercise in smoke and mirrors.

This proposal would give tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans while burdening the hardworking families with higher healthcare costs. The Republican plan also allows soaring new healthcare costs for our seniors and shortens the life of the Medicare trust fund, endangering seniors and disabled Americans who depend on Medicaid coverage. This is completely unacceptable to Floridians.

We need to hear from the Congressional Budget Office about what this bill would really mean in numbers. The American people deserve to understand what the Republicans are trying to do with their health care.

I will continue to fight to ensure that Floridians with preexisting conditions don't have to worry about losing their healthcare coverage, and that young adults can stay on their parents' insurance until they reach age 26, and that we are going to do all we can to make health care affordable and accessible for all Americans and not just for a select few.

WORST OF TIMES

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, when President Trump was campaigning, he said that these were the worst of times for African Americans, conveniently or ignorantly forgetting slavery and Jim Crow. He said it couldn't get any worse.

Well, it is getting worse with a Justice Department that has already retreated on voting rights and that has empowered private prisons to take advantage of people which are disproportionately to African Americans for prison incarceration; a HUD department where the Secretary has said slavery was akin to immigration and where \$6 billion is to be cut from the budget; an education department that doesn't believe in public education that has given African Americans a chance for the American Dream; and a healthcare bill that takes away health care from the poorest and makes it to where many will not have health care,

and Medicaid will be decimated and possibility eliminated.

These are the worst of times and President Trump, Mr. Speaker, is showing African Americans things can get worse. They are getting worse, and they are on a daily basis.

MORE HEALTH OPTIONS FOR FAMILIES

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, we see more and more that ObamaCare or the Affordable Care Act is, indeed, unsustainable.

Today I rise, once again, to share another story or two about some of the highlights that some of my constituents are feeling back at home.

Last night, I hosted a telephone townhall to have an opportunity to hear from people in my district, once again, about some of the unsustainable, horrible stories that they have to tell about the experiences they have had with the ACA: sky-high premiums; poor access to health care; options that are less and less, especially in rural California and rural America; deductibles that have risen so high that insurance isn't really affordable for them to use at all.

Recently a physician within my district contacted my office and said that, after more than 30 years of a successful practice with happy clients, he is no longer able to provide the type of care his patients need due to the overburdensome paperwork requirements. This is providing less choices for people, especially the middle-income families that have to choose between the things they want to save for for their future and for their dreams and now happen to have much higher premiums, less choices, and a deductible that makes their insurance almost useless to them.

The American Health Care Act will give back more options for families and other Americans that desperately need this help and to meet all the goals that we are setting out to do.

MEND THE LAW, NOT END THE LAW

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

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my opposition to the repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act.

I will be the first to admit that ObamaCare has its flaws, but we should mend the law, not end the law. Because of the ACA, we have seen the uninsured rate in Nevada and in my district reduced by half.

The GOP replacement would not only drop 15 million Americans from their insurance and raise healthcare costs on hardworking Nevada families, but it

would end funding for Planned Parenthood, taking away affordable healthcare services that so many women in my district rely on.

Recently I received a letter from a constituent whose family has a history of breast cancer. She is so concerned that she and her daughter will stop receiving the regular cancer screenings that they need to survive.

Mr. Speaker, it is unconscionable for us to vote on a bill that would create a life-or-death situation for millions of Americans across the country.

□ 1215

MEDICAID EXPANSION

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

Mr. KIHUEN. Mr. Speaker, I have a new name for the process Republicans are using to destroy the Affordable Care Act. Instead of repeal and replace, how about we name it "we cut and gut"? Cut taxes for millionaires and billionaires, and gut coverage for hardworking Americans.

The bill would also undermine the Medicaid expansion in the Affordable Care Act. In Nevada, our own Governor Brian Sandoval, a Republican, made the decision to work with Democrats and expand the Medicaid program. Because we expanded Medicaid, 320,000 Nevadans now have health coverage, and Nevada's uninsured rate has dropped from 23 percent to 12 percent, one of the largest declines in the entire country.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask my Republican colleagues: Do you really want to turn your backs on hardworking families just to give billionaires a tax cut that they don't need or deserve?

Mr. Speaker, the silence is deafening.

THERE ARE RADICAL ISLAMISTS WHO WANT TO DESTROY OUR WAY OF LIFE

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is the end of another week in session.

Mr. Speaker, I want to revisit an important issue. It seems that what some of us were trying to point out for 8 years under the Obama administration fell on deaf ears, that there really are radical Islamists who want to destroy our way of life in the United States, who look at us as infidels, and not just Christians, Jews, secularists, and others, but even Muslims who do not adapt and accept the radical Islamic ways.

That works to the advantage of some because we have seen for 8 years CAIR, Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated groups, groups that were listed as co-conspirators in the Holy Land Foundation trial