

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