

Unfortunately, President Trump has decided that he doesn't value those CSRs and has pulled those subsidies. But last year, before his harmful decision was implemented, my hairdresser fell victim to another form of health care sabotage—our Republican Governor's failure to expand Medicaid.

Since 2014, my hairdresser had comprehensive coverage through Blue Cross, subsidized by cost sharing reductions from the ACA. She had access to primary care appointments and everything she needed to lead a healthy life. Unfortunately, hairdressing is one of the many careers in the service economy in which income fluctuates from year to year. And in 2017, her income fell below the poverty line.

If she lived in an expansion state, she would have had the option to be covered by Medicaid while she continued to work. But instead, she lives in Alabama. She was left without coverage because she made too much to qualify for Medicaid.

She was forced into the commercial market with no premium assistance whatsoever. Premiums are higher in states that didn't expand Medicaid. Therefore, premiums in Alabama are much higher than what she could afford. President Trump's elimination of the cost-sharing reductions has been cited by insurers as a driving force behind premium hikes in 2018.

My hairdresser was anxious about having an emergency in which she would be left with large medical bills she couldn't pay. I was heartbroken seeing her pain. Fortunately, we were able to connect her with patient navigators at a large hospital in Birmingham. The Trump Administration has ended contracts with navigators under the ACA, but since the hospital has sufficient resources, they have taken the cost of continuing the program on themselves.

I was happy we could help her, but there are millions of working Americans like her who don't have that kind of access to their Member of Congress. For these Americans, even a year without basic health care coverage can be catastrophic.

When I think about the health disparities currently plaguing Republican states, I think about all of the constituents I've met while in Congress. We cannot allow our working constituents to continue being victims of political malpractice. We can no longer ignore the vulnerable residents of non-expansion states and their needs.

Make no mistake, the ACA strengthened access to primary health care services across the country, even in non-expansion states. In Alabama alone, the law gave 897,000 mental health and substance use disorder benefits, treated more than two million children and adults for pre-existing conditions, and gave more than 650,000 Medicare enrollees free preventives services. However, approximately 235,000 Alabamians would have gained health insurance coverage if the state expanded Medicaid.

It is my sincere hope that Congress will work together to alleviate the economic constraints of health care access for hardworking individuals across America. We need to restore what was best about the ACA and improve access for all.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2018

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, June 27, 2018, I was recorded as a NO on Roll Call No. 302. I had intended to vote YES on Roll Call No. 302.

CRISIS IN THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2018

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we held a hearing on human rights abuses and targeted killings in the Anglophone region of the Republic of Cameroon. We explored the roots of this emerging crisis, and U.S. policy options for addressing human rights violations and instability in the Anglophone region, which affects not only stability in Cameroon, but also in the region.

The increased tempo of government repression is fueling secessionist sentiment, leading to instability in the country in advance of presidential elections scheduled for October. Cameroon's political stability is of great importance to the U.S. because the country plays a critical role in American counterterrorism efforts against Boko Haram in the west and central Africa.

We also have ongoing concerns about 85-year-old strongman Paul Biya, who has either served as Prime Minister or as President since 1975 and who seems disconnected if not at odds with many of the people he is supposed to serve—particularly the English-speaking minority.

As the U.S. is involved in training and equipping Cameroonian security forces to strengthen regional capacity to combat terrorism, it is necessary to re-evaluate further counterterrorism cooperation with Cameroon to ensure the protection of Cameroonian civilians and respect for civil and political rights—including the most fundamental of rights, the right to life.

Understanding the history of Cameroon—or, rather, “the Cameroons,” as the choice between the singular and plural form is fraught with significance—is necessary for understanding the present crisis.

While it is a country of great African ethnic diversity, the main dividing line is linguistic, reflecting a colonial past which saw the French-speaking region gain independence from France in 1960 and union with the southern portion of the former mandate territory of British Cameroon the following year.

The country that was formed was the Federal Republic of the Cameroon, and the national flag that was adopted had two stars, signaling to the world the union of two coequal states under one constitution. English speakers were always a minority, however, and the political and constitutional basis under which they entered into a union eroded over time.

In 1972, then-President Ahmadou Ahidjo abolished the federal system of government and created a unitary “United Republic of

Cameroon.” The flag was not changed until 1975 to reflect this new imposition of monist rule, when the two stars gave way to one. In 1984, President Biya again revised the Constitution, which changed the country's name to the present “Republic of Cameroon.” The current Constitutional iteration dates back to 1996, and on paper, at least, restores a certain degree of federalist autonomy in response to Anglophone demands.

The reality is, however, different.

In 2016, the central government triggered a crisis by appointing French-speaking teachers and judges in the Anglophone areas.

To English-speakers, it felt like an occupation. Certain Anglophone activists declared independence of a “Federal Republic of Ambazonia” in 2017, which had led to a heavy-handed response by the military. Security forces have reportedly burned down villages, arrested and killed protesters in Anglophone areas, though it also must be noted that French-speaking teachers have been targeted by English-speaking separatists.

As Congress, we need to address whether we can continue to cooperate with Cameroon's security forces, given the reported abuses, and if so, how.

As the International Crisis Group—which is supplied one of our witnesses—has emphasized, the Cameroonian government's use of the military against its English-speaking citizens has exacerbated the situation. Indeed, our U.S. Ambassador to Cameroon Peter Barlerin has criticized Cameroon's actions and has expressed his concerns about the government's use of disproportionate force.

The Anglophone crisis casts a shadow upon the upcoming presidential elections. The credibility of the election, slated for October, is already under question as the government has yet to make serious preparations. It is assumed that strongman Paul Biya will run for re-election, but given his age and frequent absences abroad it is uncertain who will succeed him eventually.

There are also growing humanitarian concerns attributable to the Anglophone crisis. An estimated 160,000 people have been displaced within Cameroon, and over 21,000 Cameroonians have fled to neighboring Nigeria as refugees.

The continued malign presence of Boko Haram in northeastern Cameroon, attacking people in both Cameroon and in Nigeria, is a further complication which has led to an estimated 96,000 Nigerians fleeing the other way to Cameroon. Congress must then also weigh the need to assist Cameroon in its fight against Boko Haram.

Given all these spillover factors, we can see that a failure to solve the Anglophone crisis is not purely a domestic affair, but a regional one which implicates U.S. security interests.

HONORING ROSA BILSTON

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2018

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Rosa Bilston, my constituent from New Haven, for her commitment to the nation and to public service. Despite recent shootings at schools across the country, Congress has