

was the purpose of the Census, not only for redistricting, but so that we could see how America is growing, in what ways America is growing.

And, by the way, we are establishing immigration policy here in the United States Congress by an enumerated power in our Constitution, I might add, and we are doing that with people on that side of the aisle saying: We don't want to know any more than how many homo sapiens we can count within the shores of the United States of America. But they want to know a lot of other minutia if it helps them politically.

So I brought this legislation forward, and we know that there was a case before the United States Supreme Court. The Supreme Court looked at that case.

I looked back at the short form Census in 2010 when Barack Obama was President. And here is what it asked. It wants to know: What is your name? What is your phone number?

I mean, how detailed do you have to get?

We are only asking are you a citizen or are you not a citizen is what the Commerce Department has decided to ask. I think there should be more details.

But the Obama Census short form said:

What is your name?

What is your phone number?

What is your birthday?

What sex are you?

I point out they didn't ask your gender. They ask sex because that is actually definitive.

And what is your ethnicity? What is your race?

Do you have an unmarried partner?

And if you have children, they ask this question:

Are they biological or adopted sons or daughters?

So they want to know, are they boys or girls and were they born into the family or were they adopted into the family. By what means are they part of your dependents?

But you can't ask a question: Are you a citizen of the United States?

All of these questions and many more, and we can't ask the question: Are you a citizen of the United States?

The Supreme Court found that the executive branch was granted the authority by the United States Congress—and that is the Commerce Secretary himself—to form the questions on the Census. This is a constitutional authority that was specifically granted to the executive branch of government by the United States Congress. But the Court says: You have the authority to ask the question, but we think you have the wrong reason to ask the question. So now we are remanded back to the lower court to come up with a better reason.

Here is my reason: We want to know how many citizens are in America. That is all you need to ask. It is simple as it can be.

And they are well within the law; they are well within the Constitution. It is just that the Obama-appointed judges don't seem to be reading the Constitution and the law, and they seem to have political motives.

REPEALING THE 40 PERCENT EXCISE TAX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise for the working men and women in our country who have well-deserved, hard-earned quality healthcare benefits to urge House leadership to bring to the floor H.R. 748, the Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act. This bill would finally fully repeal the 40 percent excise tax on certain employer-sponsored healthcare plans. For too long, the tax has been a looming threat.

Make no mistake, this tax falls on everyday working families, including laborers, operating engineers, carpenters, pipefitters, painters, plumbers, ironworkers, transportation workers, firefighters, police, and many others, many who have fought for and won healthcare benefits in collective bargaining agreements.

Among its many unintended effects, this excise tax has helped encourage the recent large increases in insurance plan deductibles, which especially hurt those with chronic illnesses.

This repeal bill has been proposed for years. It is well past time to give it a vote on the House floor.

The 40 percent excise tax on high-quality healthcare plans was enacted in the 2010 Affordable Care Act. The ACA has had many good effects, but it also had many flaws as enacted. We need to make the ACA work better for more Americans. And one provision that needs to be fixed is this tax.

The tax was supposed to begin in 2018, but has been repeatedly delayed, reflecting the awareness of its negative impact. Right now, it is scheduled to take effect in 2022. It is time to just end it.

Regardless of the intent behind the original ACA provisions, the truth is that health insurance premiums have continued to grow faster than inflation, putting even plans with modern benefits at risk of getting taxed.

As Families USA recently pointed out, without a permanent solution, as many as one out of every four workers with job-based health plan coverage could be affected by this tax by 2025. That is just 6 short years from now.

Furthermore, responsible employers plan ahead and are already gearing up to plan their budgets for health insurance in the next few years. This is especially concerning in the case of workers who have successfully used their right to organize to reach collective bargaining agreements with their employers.

Good union jobs provide workers with a better opportunity to negotiate

benefits that fairly reflect the important contributions they make to the American economy. Union jobs and union contracts mean workers are fairly compensated in the private sector without relying on taxpayers and the Federal Government.

But collective bargaining agreements often span years, and the looming threat of the excise tax puts these hard-fought contracts at risk. Temporary delays in the excise tax only create more fear and uncertainty for families as they wonder whether their benefits will be severely cut back due to heavy government taxes.

Delays also crimp employer budgets, as businesses are forced to account for the risk of getting hit with hefty charges. By undermining long-term collective bargaining agreements, these delays also undermine the bedrock of the American economy: fairly negotiated private contracts that all parties know they can rely on.

Mr. Speaker, the American people have shown us that they don't want repeal of the ACA and they don't want important protections to be ripped out from under them. They want the ACA fixed. So let's show them we are listening.

So, let's show them we are listening. Let's show them that workers with good, job-based health coverage will not have to fear it eroding simply due to government taxes. Let's bring the Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act to the floor.

□ 1030

HONORING WILLIAM HENRY WARD AND RICHARD LEON WATSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. ABRAHAM) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the heroism of two Louisianians who served valiantly during World War II: William Henry Ward and Richard Leon Watson.

William, who recently celebrated his 95th birthday, grew up in New Orleans and shipped off to Europe in 1943 to join a heavy bombardment squadron that participated in Operation Market Garden and the Battle of the Bulge.

During the Battle of the Bulge, his B-24 Liberator got shot down, took heavy fire, and he was forced into an emergency landing near Brussels. He hitchhiked back to England and, as soon as possible, rejoined the fight.

On January 10, 1945, he completed his 35th mission over Germany and finally telegraphed his mother, Maude Ward, saying, "Duties completed. Returning home soon."

Sadly, Richard Watson came home to Morehouse Parish in a more tragic way. He died defending our country while aboard the USS *Oklahoma*, which sank from a torpedo strike when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He was one of 429 crewmen killed in that attack.