

provide continued entitlement to status under that subsection in the case of any alien petitioner who is subsequently naturalized as a United States citizen, if a visa is not immediately available to the beneficiary under subsection (a)(1)."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) takes effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and applies to petitions filed before, on, or after such date, without regard to when an alien petitioner was naturalized as a citizen of the United States.

#### REPUBLICANS IN CHARGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFFER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, returning today after a week-long Fourth of July district work period, I had an opportunity over that break to meet with so many Coloradans who celebrated the 223rd anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the launching of our great Nation. Many of those individuals look forward to the future of our country with great hope and optimism for some who are disturbed somewhat by the tenor of the political process here in Washington, D.C., and that was emphasized perhaps most dramatically just this morning before I hopped on the plane to come back to Washington.

I held a town meeting, as I do every Monday morning half the distance between Fort COLLINS and Loveland in my district. It allows constituents an opportunity to meet and discuss over breakfast the many issues facing us, but there was a woman who stood up and commented on a remark that she had seen, and I had seen it as well in the media, about a colleague of ours here in the House from the Democrat side of the aisle, said that there was a Member of the minority party, saw no reason for the Democrats to cooperate or to compromise or to work with the majority party in Congress; that it would be to their political advantage to see a Congress that did nothing.

Well, it is the kind of disturbing comment that I think strikes most Americans as unfortunate certainly, and they are hoping that there are those who are willing to stand up in spite of those kinds of sentiments and lead the country regardless.

The rantings of Democrats might lead one to believe Congress is doing nothing important, but important things are being accomplished despite Democrat opposition and liberal stonewalling.

As my colleagues know, 7 months having passed since the bizarre series of events and criminal denials leading to the second impeachment of a sitting President, America is still reeling from its bewildering constitutional exercise. Self-serving claims of our liberal counterparts to the contrary, Mr. Speaker, America does not suffer a do-nothing Congress.

Still, the several important Republican accomplishments seem to have

been lost on the morass of most pathetic adventures at the White House. Much of the distraction can clearly be blamed on the unfortunate slide further into the gutter of a darkening American political culture. Months of intense persistence and live impeachment news coverage coupled with round-the-clock, Hollywood-style political analysis by neophyte pundits has cast a warped and unhealthy light on this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, our democratic republic needs and craves active participation by citizens who earnestly care about our future, and now more than ever this pursuit must emanate from a genuine desire to secure a better America to ensure a stronger republic and honor those brave men and women who lived and died defending our great country.

What we saw in 1998, however, was a sort of Jerry Springer show meets C-Span where the American people were given front row seats and encouraged to cheer whenever one politician threw furniture at another. To be sure, certain politicians supplied ample fodder for these exhibitions, and many I confess contributed directly to the further denigration of American politics. But there were many more in Congress who dutifully fulfilled their constitutional responsibility and took very seriously their oaths to preserve and protect our republic. These are the same Members who, despite the frenzied pressure and ridicule of the Oval Office and the media, advanced the vitally important process of governing.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans can be proud. Our proposals to deliver a balanced budget are on schedule, including a much-needed replenishment of our national defense and programs. Republicans are also spearheading education initiatives to return autonomy to parents and States in managing their schools; and biggest of all, we have passed the balanced budget blueprint saving Social Security and Medicare while still providing much-needed tax relief for American families and their businesses.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the balanced budget amendment resolution, H.J. Res. 1, which I introduced on the first day of the 106th Congress, will constitutionally bind the government to spending no more than it collects in Federal revenues. Republicans will keep spending in line to allow us to begin paying down the massive debt accrued over 40 years of Democrat taxing and spending policies.

But despite the surreal Clintonesque atmosphere which perverted the current political order in Washington, Mr. Speaker, there remain committed Republicans, loyal hard-working Americans who are legitimately concerned for our country and who wish to see it move forward for the good of our children. Our challenge now is to lead the rest of America to abandon Jerry Springer politics in favor of the same common sense and divine providence upon which our Founders relied when

they launched the greatest republic in the history of human civilization.

#### PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to express my support for a Patients' Bill of Rights act in the strongest and most personal terms. I have been in office less than 200 days, and I have grown tired of explaining to my constituents why this Congress does not want to extend basic rights and protections to patients in this country.

One of my constituents who suffers from ovarian cancer was refused surgery by her HMO on the grounds that the surgery was experimental, although this particular procedure had a greater success rate than other procedures approved by the HMO.

And on a more personal basis, my wife about 4 years ago was told by her physician she needed surgery. We scheduled an appointment with her physician, and he happened to be a high school classmate of mine and treated my wife for about 14 years. During the conference with her physician, I asked the doctor what needed to be done to accomplish the surgery, and he told me that it would be simple.

Number one, we just needed to schedule surgery, and number two, he would write a letter to her insurance company in California and get authorization for this surgery. Well, he wrote the letter, and 6 days later he got back a letter from the insurance company saying:

Dear Dr. Sullivan, before we approve this surgery and authorize payment for this surgery, we want you to do this test and this test and this test.

Dr. Sullivan was furious about this letter back from the insurance company because essentially it was his attitude that she was, my wife was his patient. Everything this insurance company knew about my wife's case was from medical records provided by Dr. Sullivan to this insurance company in California, and yet they were trying to tell him how to practice medicine in Kansas.

After about 5 months of wrangling back and forth, finally there was approval and authorization for this surgery, and it worked out fine. But the point is every time I tell this story back in my district, I see heads nod in the crowd because people have had a similar experience with an insurance company; and I think it is time in this country that we extend basic protections and rights to patients who need them to assure a balance between insurance companies and patients to make sure that we are talking about patients here and not just about profits.

Mr. Speaker, the Senate is debating managed care reform this week. Let us give this issue a fair hearing in the