

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, one thing Republicans and Democrats can all agree on is the need for serious health care reform. On Monday, President Obama spoke to the American Medical Association to discuss the issue. I applaud the President for his commitment to health care reform and agree with him that we need to make health care more affordable and accessible to all Americans.

While the American people want reform, they want us to fix what is wrong with the system without taking away the freedom, choices, and quality of care they now enjoy. During a speech to the AMA, the President acknowledged these concerns and articulated some principles on health care reform that many Republicans share. But it seems to me that many of my friends on the other side of the aisle should have listened more closely to what the President said to the AMA.

One thing the President said that Republicans agree with is that Americans should not be forced to give up the insurance they currently have and like and be forced into a government plan. The President promised the American people that:

If you like your doctor, you will be able to keep your doctor. If you like your health care plan, you will be able to keep your health care plan. No one will take it away no matter what.

Republicans agree with the President. Yet Democrats in Congress are making last-minute edits to a bill in the HELP Committee that the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office says will cost 10 million people with employer-sponsored insurance to lose the coverage they currently have. And that is the number of people who would lose their current insurance under just one section of the bill. This legislation is still missing significant sections that could force tens of millions of additional Americans to lose their current coverage. Republicans share the President's belief that those who like their health insurance should be able to keep it, but the bill currently being considered by the HELP Committee would force Americans off of the health care plans they now enjoy.

Another issue the President and Republicans agree on is the need to invest more in preventative care and wellness programs, which is an important way to cut costs and improve care. President Obama mentioned the successful wellness and prevention program Safeway created, which has dramatically cut the company's health care costs and employees' health care premiums. He said he would be open to doing more to help businesses across the country adopt and expand programs like the one created by Safeway. Yet the bill the Democrats are now

pushing through the Senate would actually ban this successful program from being copied and implemented by other companies.

Republicans also agree with the President on the need to reform our Nation's medical liability laws. Frivolous malpractice lawsuits are a major cause of our increasing health care costs. These lawsuits cause insurance premiums for doctors to skyrocket, and doctors then pass those higher costs on, of course, to patients.

Doctors also often order expensive and unnecessary tests just to protect themselves against these lawsuits, and some doctors just close their practices or stop offering services as a result of all these pressures.

And patients are the ones who lose out. According to a report by the Kentucky Institute of Medicine, Kentucky is nearly 2,300 doctors short of the national average—a shortage that could be reduced, in part, by reforming medical malpractice laws.

President Obama has not advocated the kind of medical liability reform most Republicans would like to see, but he has at least opened the door to fixing the system. But none of the bills introduced in the Congress even acknowledge the need for malpractice reform or propose any solutions to deal with the problem.

Finally, Republicans share the President's concerns about how much health care reform is going to cost and how we will pay for it. President Obama said that he set down a rule that "health care reform must be, and will be, deficit-neutral in the next decade."

But the preliminary estimates from the bill before the HELP Committee show that just one—just one—section of the bill spends \$1.3 trillion. And even more outrageous is the fact that the bill doesn't even have any proposals to pay for its enormous pricetag—other than to borrow it from the taxpayers. Americans want reform. But they don't want a blind rush to spend trillions of dollars that they and their grandchildren will have to pay for through higher taxes and even more debt.

When it comes to making sure Americans can keep the coverage they have, strengthening wellness and prevention programs, reforming our medical malpractice laws, and paying for health care reform, Republicans share common ground with the President. I just wish that congressional Democrats did too.

AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi turns 64 today. Unfortunately, she will spend her birthday not in the company of family and friends but in Burma's notorious Insein Prison where 31 political prisoners have died since 1988.

Despite her apparently poor health, Suu Kyi is being housed in Insein because she is standing trial for the dubi-

ous charge of permitting a misguided American to enter her home. Sadly, Suu Kyi has already spent 13 of her last 19 birthdays under house arrest, and if convicted of these trumped-up charges by the Burmese regime, she could spend the next 5 birthdays in this foul prison.

The best gift Suu Kyi can receive for her birthday is for the regime to display some uncommon good sense and free her and other Burmese prisoners of conscience. My colleagues and I are committed to standing with her and the people of Burma for as long as it takes for that to occur.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

E-VERIFY

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I wish to share a few thoughts about the E-Verify system. That is the system businesses are voluntarily using today in large numbers provided by the U.S. Government that allows a company to check the Social Security number of an applicant for a job to make sure they are lawfully eligible for employment. This system is growing and working very well. We have had some problems, I think, with Congress, and I attempted to offer an amendment to fix some of those problems on the tourism bill that is before us but was not able to do that. So I wish to share a few thoughts about it. I have been trying to get this situation fixed for some time.

E-Verify is an online system that gives very rapid identification of an individual through the Social Security Administration and Homeland Security to determine whether they are eligible for a job. A business just checks those numbers, and if they come back as clear and they hire the individual, it provides them protection from a charge that they may have knowingly hired someone who was illegally in the country or otherwise not able to be employed.

So it is a good system. As I said, as of June 13, this month, 130,000 employers are enrolled in the program. They have, among them, 501,000 hiring sites. It is free and voluntary, and it is the best means available to determine the eligibility of those who apply.

According to the Department of Homeland Security, 96 percent of the employees are cleared automatically, and growth continues at over 1,000 new users and participants each week as more and more businesses are using it. An employer, as I said, gets protection if they use it.

In 2009, this year, 5.6 million inquiries were run. In 2008, through the whole