THE GOVERNMENT IS AN UNFAIR COMPETITOR TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR

(Mr. INGLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. INGLIS. Mr. Speaker, there is much to agree on in health care reform. There is also something that we very much disagree on. The disagreement has to do with the public option, and it has to do with the question about whether private insurance companies need the discipline of the competition from a public sector plan or a publicly provided plan. If you've ever been in business and you've watched the government come into competition with you, you know that it is an unfair competitor because the government has the ability to subsidize its operations. The result is that when government enters an area that the private sector is working in, the government ends up becoming the provider there.

That's what we fear would happen in the midst of a public option: the private insurance companies would be forced out; the public option would become really the only game in town. And the result would become pretty quickly a government system of providing insurance and health care. But there's much else that we can agree on.

So the question is, Can the folks who control this House leave aside just one thing and then we cooperate?

UNEMPLOYMENT WOULD BE HIGHER IF IT WAS NOT FOR THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY BILL

(Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I know that there is a debate about when the world began; and there are some who think it began 4,000 years ago and some who think that it began earlier. We have a rare specimen today of people who think it began on January 20, 2009, who do not think anything happened before that, who do not remember the years of Republican rule where many things went wrong.

Now they're talking about the economic recovery bill. Ben Bernanke, who was the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, appointed by George Bush—that happened before January 20, so you may not have remembered it, I would say to my friends on the other side—but he told the House Financial Services Committee that unemployment would be higher if it was not for the economic recovery bill. That was Ben Bernanke. In his report, he twice cited examples of it.

And as to this argument that the bill was of no use, I debated this bill in February with Republican Members of Congress when they scoffed at the notion that there was something in it for police and fire. I was very pleased today to be notified that 23 police officers will be added to two of the communities in my district, Fall River and New Bedford, directly as a result of the economic recovery plan. Magnify that nationally, it's 10,000.

MEMBERS NEED TO READ THE HEALTH CARE BILL BEFORE VOTING ON IT

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, what was one of the major concerns with the nonstimulus spending bill and the national energy tax that have flown through the House? Well, you know what it was, Mr. Speaker. Nobody read the bill. So what should we do with this health care bill? Well, I would suggest that we read the bill; and as somebody has said already, There is just a draft form.

But what's in that draft? It would raise taxes on individuals, small businesses, and employers by $818 billion and spend $1.6 trillion to create a system that even the Congressional Budget Office admits would raise, not lower, health costs. The bill would ban the purchase of private individual health coverage as part of a government takeover of health care that independent entities confirm would result in over 100 million Americans losing their private, personal coverage.

The House Republicans are for health reform that works. We have a plan for reform that expands access to affordable health care and gives families the freedom to choose health care that fits their needs, not government needs. House Republicans support patients. We will oppose any plan that puts Washington bureaucrats between patients and the care they need. Fewer choices, higher costs, I don't think so.

THE ACTIONS OF THIS CONGRESS ARE DESTROYING THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY

(Mr. LATHAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LATHAM. Sometimes I wonder if anybody on the other side of the aisle ever goes home because I tell you, doing town meetings, we have three or four times more people than normal show up. And I will tell you what, they are scared to death of what they see happening in this country.

When they look at the $787 billion stimulus package that has no benefit to anyone today, when they look at people voting for cap-and-trade without even having read the bill, only to find out that in Iowa that would cost 17,000 jobs for each of the next 20 years and 2.5 million jobs nationwide for the next 20 years, they go, What's going on? When are we going to get our government back? When are people going to listen to us and be responsive?

What this debate is all about is our children and our grandchildren and what we're going to leave them for the future; what it's going to do for someone who wants an opportunity to start a small business, to grow and prosper and be part of this economy. We are destroying the future of this country with what this Congress is doing.

EVERY DAY MUCH IS LOST FOR PEOPLE WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

(Mr. HARE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I was watching from my office and felt the need to come down. I don't have a fancy chart, as we've been seeing periodically. But let me give you some facts. We're going to be adjourning for 37 days at the end of this week. For 12 years, Mr. Speaker, our friends on the other side of the aisle had this Chamber; and the only thing we got out of it was the most miserable prescription drug program and nothing more than a boondoggle for seniors.

But while we're home and having our town hall meetings, here are the real facts that I hope not just my friends will listen to because they're important. Every day for the next 37 days, 400 people per day will die because they don't have health care—14,800 Americans, 34 people every day on an average every congressional district. Put that on a chart. For the next 37 days, 14,000 people every day will lose their health care, 518,000 Americans will lose their health care, 1,190 per day. We need to have more than town hall meetings.

□ 1500

PUBLIC OPTION WILL ERADICATE PRIVATE SECTOR

(Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I am sad that the Democratic majority is trying to rush this bill through before we've had a chance to go home to our districts to listen to our constituents, to share ideas with them, to get their views on this, one of the most important issues we will ever decide here in Congress.

One of the things that is being said really puzzles me. The President is saying, for the public plan, you have to have it to keep the private sector honest, to bring more competition. If that's the case, Mr. Speaker, then why don't we have government grocery stores to keep grocers honest? Why don't we have government contractors for car mechanics to keep car mechanics honest? Why don't we have government steel companies to keep steel companies honest? Why don't we have government car companies—oh, excuse me, that's the wrong example.

The point is, Mr. Speaker, the public option is not here to keep the private sector honest. The public option is here