

not collapse if we open up insurance so that all Americans have access to insurance and that we have 100 percent coverage.

What I am shocked about, something as vital as health insurance and as close to saving your life as health insurance, people are willing to say it's okay if 47 million Americans are uninsured. They seem to believe that that is a statistical number that we can bear.

I want these individuals who have suffered unfortunately and tragically from our failed health care system—not in terms of quality, not in terms of commitment, not in terms of good hospitals, but in terms of covering all Americans and lowering the costs.

Democrats are standing here advocating for lowering the costs. And this document that was presented to us by, if I might, by Karen Davis, president of the Commonwealth Fund, suggests to us if we had suggested the health care reform of Nixon—who was a Republican—of Carter and of Clinton, we would have had lower health care costs today.

And I can assure you we wouldn't have the premium surge, the upstart, the support of the premiums that are probably impacting the family between mortgage foreclosures that have not been responded to, the \$600-a-month premium that they have to pay in order to provide for their family.

Mr. ELLISON. If the gentlelady will yield, I have one more I want to show to you.

Another gentleman named Patrick who says, We have a 19-month-old daughter with congenital heart problems. We're self-employed. She was denied coverage. We pay \$14,000 a year.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. This is a crime.

Congressman ELLISON, thank you for that real-life exhibit, if you will. And to that family, we don't want to suffer this kind of injustice to you much longer, a 19-month-old who is denied because of preexisting disease.

I know if we start this program, first of all, we're expanding CHIP, Children's Health Insurance Program, we will be expanding Medicaid. We'll have a public option. There will be an opportunity for the private insurers. This is a big country. We're growing exponentially, and the issue is, those are the sad stories.

I wish that gentleman could come here to Washington and tell his story because these are the voices that need to be heard. Even though we heard them in our town hall meetings, they need to be here in the Nation's capital, their home, their capital, to tell this body and the other body what this is in real life and real time.

Mr. ELLISON. If the gentlelady and the gentleman will yield.

We are down to about 1 minute.

So let me just say—because you will have the last word—this is the Progressive Caucus coming to you week after week for a progressive version of Amer-

ica where we're all included, we're all a part, health care for all, peace now, environmental sustainability, and civil rights for everybody, health care performed, patients before profits.

I yield to the gentlelady and the gentleman for their last words.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I am proud to be part of the Progressive Caucus and working closely in negotiating and working with my colleagues on ensuring a vigorous public option to save 18,000 lives every year.

I yield to the distinguished gentleman.

Mr. CONYERS. I just want to close the debate hoping that one of the dozen presidents of the health insurance companies will join us—maybe all of them or as many as schedules will permit. What I want them to know is that they've never said that they didn't care about the 47 million people who aren't insured.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2997) "An Act making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes."

TURNING POINT IN WAR ON TERRORISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. HUNTER. You know, we're at a turning point right now in the war on terrorism. We talked about Afghanistan today, Madam Speaker. But first as we do this, I would like to yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida, an Army veteran and a member of the House Armed Services Committee, TOM ROONEY

Mr. ROONEY. Thank you, Mr. HUNTER.

Just last week, myself, along with Mr. HUNTER from California, sent a letter to the President asking him to take seriously the request of General McChrystal, the commander in Afghanistan; ask McChrystal to come to this body and address the Congress—or at least address the Armed Services Committee, of which I am a member—to let us know what his plan is in a very specific and detailed manner so that we can ask the tough questions, that we can do the people's work and to look out for our men and women serving in uniform.

Along with many members of the freshman class, that letter was sent last week, and along with many other

letters sent to the President, along with letters sent to my office, phone calls asking me to support our troops, support the generals on the ground, support our military chain of command and to do the right thing in Afghanistan. And that's to give us a chance to win where we know that we can win.

The United States versus the Taliban. Think about that for a second. The United States versus the Taliban. And what the questions are and what we have to do. As Sun Tzu said, Don't go to war until you know you can win; and when you go to war, know that you've already won it.

So what General McChrystal is asking the President to do quite simply is three things to win the war in Afghanistan: First, give us a surge in troops more than the troops that we've already approved—at least 43,000 more troops—to be able to secure the towns and villages and cities so that people feel safe, so that people come out of the woodwork and the intimidation of the Taliban and can feel that they can trust the Americans and our allies, that we're not going to leave, that we're going to stand by them and stand by for the people's rights and freedom in Afghanistan.

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This has been an issue of a lot of contention and, quite frankly and unfortunately, politics, not only here in the House but between the two parties and across this great country. The second thing is to integrate with the Afghan people. It's going to be risky. We are going to have to come out from behind the walls, out of the Bradleys, come down from the turrets in the Humvees and really do a much better job of winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people.

It's going to open us up to risk, and it's going to up us up to harm's way, quite frankly. But I think General McChrystal understands that it's going to take some sacrifice; it's going to take making the risks and the hard decisions to be able to accomplish this goal. Because, on the other hand, you have the Taliban, which operates under intimidation, operates under violence and threats that, if you cooperate with the Americans, we won't forget it and you will be punished, and there will be recourse for the things that you have done to cooperate with the enemy, in that case, us, the United States.

The third thing that General McChrystal asks of the Commander in Chief is to help end the corruption in Afghanistan politically. This is the hardest of the three prongs and I think the most important. The local governments, the regional governments and the central national government have a long, long way to go in ending what has been a long string of corruption in Afghanistan. That's going to be the most difficult aspect of General McChrystal's request. But, again, we have the best team in place.