

figure out what we're doing, and then we're going to make you vote. I think the American people and the jury of the American public want this thing out in the sunlight. Open the doors. Share the information. Let us know what's going on, Mr. Speaker. That's what the American people need to know. Their health care is at stake.

#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, the Republicans are invoking Freddy Krueger and saying that he wrote the Democrats' health plan, and it's going to be dangerous for Americans. Really scary.

I'll tell you what's scary. Scary is losing your job and being confronted with a bill for continued health insurance that eats up two-thirds of your benefits. Even more scary—and this has happened to people in my district—is having your company go bankrupt and being told that your health insurance will cost more than your unemployment benefits. That is, if you can get it; if you've never been sick, if your kids have never been sick. You can go into the private market and buy a policy that exceeds your unemployment insurance. Of course if you have ever been sick, a preexisting condition, forget about it.

The Republicans promised 132 days ago that they would have their own health care plan. Where is it? Now 132 days later, you know why we don't have it, why there is a resounding silence on that side? Because if you are going to take care of people with health care, you have to take on their two biggest benefactors, the pharmaceutical industry and the insurance industry. And that's the last thing the Republicans want to do, take on their biggest campaign benefactors. We have to take on pharmaceuticals, take on the insurance industry and have meaningful reform for all Americans.

#### DEMOCRAT HEALTH PLAN HURTS AMERICAN SENIORS

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, the Democrats, contrary to what we have been hearing, are behind closed doors, writing a sweeping change to our health care system. Unfortunately, a government takeover of health care, as we know, would raise taxes, eliminate choices, fine small businesses, and cut Medicare by more than \$500 billion. According to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, the proposed cuts would result in millions of seniors losing their current plan, including 100,000 in my State of Washington. I have spoken with many hospitals in my district who say that Medicare cuts would have serious consequences on them.

We need reform, Mr. Speaker, but Americans deserve better than secret deals. I support proposals to make purchasing insurance more affordable, expand health savings accounts, help small businesses afford their benefits and end lawsuit abuse. It's time to begin open, transparent, bipartisan work on legislation that actually increases choices and lowers cost.

#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. WEINER. Ladies and gentlemen, I have a viewer's guide for what's going to be going on on this side of the aisle this morning and this afternoon. What essentially it comes down to is my Republican friends don't want you, the American people, to have what they have.

They say they don't want any government-run health care, but 55 of them have Medicare. You don't see them sending that back. They say that they don't want the plan that we have, which would create more choices for the American people. Well, they don't want you to have what they have. Go to the Web site for the Federal Employees Health Benefit plan and see what a great plan they have, but they don't want you to have more choice.

Frankly, I don't know what it is they do want. They said 131 days ago they were going to have a plan. You hear that sound? That's the sound of their plan. They don't seem to have one. I have heard us talk about all this stuff going on behind closed doors. My friends, there are five committees, five bills. You can read them. I know it's a lot of words, but you can see exactly what the plan is. Listen to the American people. Give them what you in Congress have, a public option, like Medicare; and choices, like the insurance plan you have.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded that the rules of the House require that remarks be addressed to the Chair.

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#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, today, millions of Americans cannot afford or do not have access to health insurance.

Since 1999, health care insurance premiums have more than doubled for most Americans. Virginians are not immune to the Nationwide trend in health care. For the last several years, health care premiums in Virginia have

increased at approximately 10 percent a year, and today, more than 1.1 million Virginians are uninsured.

From the hourly worker in Newport News, Virginia, who must somehow find room in his or her budget to pay for health insurance, to the small business owner in Fredericksburg, Virginia, who voluntarily chooses to provide health insurance as a benefit to his or her employees but, with the slowing economy, is finding it incredibly difficult to absorb increased health insurance costs, Virginians are struggling to find affordable health care.

I've been traveling around my district, and have held dozens of meetings with constituents and with my 150-plus-member health advisory council, and thousands of e-mails are pouring into my office each week. In addition, I have also hosted multiple town hall meetings and tele-town hall meetings.

What I am hearing from my constituents is that they do not want to be forced into a new government-run health care plan that will limit their choices of doctors and of medical treatment options. Equally as important is to protect our small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy, from being penalized.

I hope that we will take this opportunity to craft legislation across the aisle that will make health care more affordable, that will enhance access for all Americans, that will ensure patients are getting their health care, and that will guarantee that doctors and patients, not insurance companies, are making important health care decisions.

#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SARBANES. Hang on, America. Help is on the way.

Mr. Speaker, a bill that will create insurance coverage for millions of people who have no insurance coverage now is on the way. A bill that will provide better coverage for those who are underinsured and that will deal with preexisting condition exclusions from coverage provisions is on the way. A bill that will strengthen Medicare is on the way. A bill that will improve our delivery system is on the way. A bill that will strengthen the health care workforce is on the way.

That is what is coming. The simple proposition we need to test here and what Americans want to know is, when it comes to the insurance industry, are we going to go on living in their world and playing by their rules or are they going to start living in our world and playing by our rules? That's the question here.

The bill we're putting forward is finally going to make the insurance industry adhere to good practices. That's why we're going to pass this bill. We're going to do it for the citizens of this country.