

looked at the Chicago Tribune and you read an article that said your property taxes are going to go up 20 percent. If you turned on the radio, you probably heard folks talking in Chicagoland about unemployment at 10.5 percent in Illinois, a number that we have not seen since the early 1980s. If you have been listening to the debate in Washington, D.C., in the past couple of weeks, you have been hearing about this crushing debt that is coming on you, your children, and your grandchildren.

I went this afternoon to the Bureau of the Public Debt in downtown Washington and watched within a twinkling of an eye \$44 billion that was borrowed on a 2-year note. That type of attitude and the attitude of spending and spending and spending is becoming weary for the folks that I represent in the Sixth District of Illinois.

It's time for this Congress to discipline itself and come up with a health care plan that meets people's needs but doesn't break the bank.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, the people in Texas that I represent oppose the Pelosi-Obama government takeover health care bill by a margin of 77 percent because we understand in Texas that our health care system needs a tune-up, not a trade-in. We need to focus, as the conservative minority has, on reducing the cost of health insurance and making it affordable and portable.

We, in the conservative minority, the temporary minority, have authored legislation that will make insurance portable across State lines, that will bring down the cost of health insurance by enacting tort reforms nationwide to protect doctors from frivolous litigation as we did in Texas. In Texas, we adopted tort reform, and the cost of health insurance dropped for all Texans, and about 400,000 additional Texans got health insurance who could not before.

We need to make sure that the greatest health care system ever created in the history of the world is protected, that we protect the doctor-patient relationship. Let's focus on reducing the cost of health insurance, making it affordable and portable.

Give our health care system a tune-up, not a trade-in.

GOVERNMENTAL TAKEOVER OF HEALTH CARE AND THE DETRIMENTAL EFFECT IT WILL HAVE ON OUR SENIORS

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

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the

Democrats' plan to pay for their government takeover of health care by cutting nearly \$162 billion of Medicare at the expense of our seniors.

Across the Nation, nearly 11 million seniors chose Medicare Advantage plans as their preferred coverage. Of those 11 million, over 11,000 seniors in the First District of South Carolina, an area with many retirees, may have their coverage dropped or benefits cut if the Democrats have it their way.

Despite the President's promise that if you like your current plan you can keep it, it is clear that some seniors will eventually be forced into a government-run plan. Additionally, the CBO has said that the Democrats' plan will increase seniors' Medicare prescription drug costs by 20 percent over the next decade.

As Medicare dangerously approaches bankruptcy, Democrats must open the process up to Republicans to work to repair this rapidly failing program and protect our seniors from rising drug costs, limited coverage, and reduced quality of care. Republicans vow to honor our seniors by blocking Washington's bureaucrats from overregulating their health care and by providing options and the best quality coverage for all Americans.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues in the majority have repeatedly promised that under their public option plan, individuals can keep the coverage they currently have and nothing will change except they will have more choices at a lower cost.

As I speak with employers and small businesses in my district, the truth is vastly different. Several employers in the district I represent have candidly stated that dropping private insurance for employees, instead of paying a mandatory 8 percent surtax, makes the most economic sense for their business. Employees will no longer have the choice to keep the coverage they currently have under this scenario.

Raising taxes, eliminating choices for Americans, and placing the government in charge of health care, that hardly strikes me as a choice. The hardworking Americans in the 22nd District of Texas and cities and towns across America were promised a choice.

I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, where is the choice in this government-mandated care?

HEALTH CARE

(Mrs. LUMMIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express what is my greatest

hope and my greatest concern in 1 minute.

My greatest concern is that, by using Medicare as a means to fund this new program, you will be taking more money away from rural areas that are already inadequately reimbursed by Medicare for their costs. For example, in Casper, Wyoming, the hospital is only reimbursed at 32 cents on the dollar for Medicare actual costs.

We are underreimbursing now and having to subsidize Medicare. The government is not meeting its obligation to Medicare. My greatest hope is that Democrats will read the 40-plus Republican bills to reform health care and choose the best among them and bring those to the floor so we can discuss them and debate them.

We have over 40 bills that you can use for great ideas to reform health care in a way that will make it available to all Americans.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, there are 20 million uninsured Americans who just can't afford insurance, others who have lost insurance when they lost their jobs. Still others have a preexisting insurance condition and have been frozen out of the insurance market. Then there are frivolous lawsuits which drain very limited health care dollars. Of course, we find that our best insurance providers can't sell their insurance across the country. They are frozen out. There is no competition.

These are problems that Republicans are anxious to work with Democrats on. I plead with my Democratic colleagues, don't hold health care reform hostage, dependent on the enactment of some socialistic experiment with government-run health care.

What's going to happen? What's being demanded here is a transformation of our system rather than a reform of our system. That transformation of our system will hurt seniors. It will take people who now have insurance in small business and put them out of a job as well as with no insurance. Of course, it will not improve the situation but will be very costly for the American people.

SENIOR CITIZENS' MEDICARE COVERAGE

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

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, it is so ironic that this Congress is debating the means of covering the uninsured while Democrats are planning to cut the existing coverage of those who need it most—our senior citizens.

Nearly 70,000 of those senior citizens will be affected and live in my district,