

in this country who are eligible for Medicare, as the baby boomers start retiring this year, 2010, those born after World War II start retiring this year, and the number of people who are on Medicare and eligible for Medicare is going to skyrocket.

With all of this going on, the message to this Congress, to the Democratic leadership in this Congress is you need to change course, change direction, and make sure that you are reflecting the will of the American people. But instead, the leadership doesn't get that message. Even today, as Senator-elect BROWN prepares to come down here to be sworn into the United States Senate sometime in the next few days, the White House and Democratic Congressional leaders have once again retreated behind closed doors to make deals and finalize a single version of their government takeover of health care. That is not what the American people want.

Speaker PELOSI said today, in response to the election results, "Clearly the election results last night spell out that we have not been as clear about our deficit reduction measures. And that will change." But the American people want to know what deficit reduction measures is she talking about when she continues, along with the other Democratic leaders here in the House and in the Senate and at the White House, to plot the expenditure of \$2 trillion or more in additional expenditures over the next 10 years for a health care bill that robs Medicare recipients, that increases taxes, and will cost American jobs, that will do a whole host of things to regulate Americans' lives and how they will receive their health insurance, including mandating that they have to purchase health insurance whether or not they feel they want to, and telling them pretty much what that insurance is that they are going to have to purchase because of the fact that this health insurance will be regulated by a Federal Government health insurance commissioner, one of the more than 140 new Federal Government agencies and programs included under consideration in the bill that they are planning to try to move forward.

That is simply not what the American people are looking for. They want responsible leadership. They want a bipartisan effort to deal with this challenge of rising costs of health insurance and health care. And they want bipartisan, responsible leadership in looking to ways to make health insurance and health care available to more people.

The legislation they are considering doesn't do that. Instead, it busts the budget of our country. Yesterday's election results in Massachusetts calls for a new direction in health care and in that debate. Many believe the election of Senator SCOTT BROWN lessens the likelihood of passage of the current proposal that has been crafted by Democratic leadership. If this is indeed

the case, Democrats and Republicans must work together toward health care reform that reduces costs and expands insurance coverage without reducing costs or adding to the national debt, rationing care, or putting the Federal Government between the patient and their doctor.

One such bill to consider is H.R. 3970, the Medical Rights and Reform Act, of which I am a cosponsor. The Medical Rights and Reform Act includes fiscally responsible health care reforms like medical liability reform, small business insurance pooling, and letting families and businesses buy insurance across state lines. These are ideas at that have strong bipartisan support, but have been absent from the bicameral health care negotiations. Most important, the Medical Rights and Reform Act is fiscally responsible. This alternative does not raise taxes, cut Medicare, or add to the deficit. And it lowers health care costs.

This Congress already gave us a \$1.8 trillion debt. America cannot afford to spend another trillion dollars or \$2 trillion as proposed by the majority, and our families cannot afford to put life and death decisions in the hands of bureaucrats.

Mr. Speaker, resetting the health care debate and working together in an open and transparent way would help Washington regain the public's trust.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GRAYSON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEFICIT COMMISSION BY EXECUTIVE ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Today the press, Mr. Speaker, is reporting that a backroom deal has been cut with Democratic leadership to create a deficit cutting commission by executive order. I oppose this effort, and so will the American people.

In light of this news, the remarks that Representative LAMAR SMITH of Texas made on the House floor this morning ring truer and more urgent than ever. Representative SMITH offered a series of lessons to be learned from yesterday's special Senate election in Massachusetts. He said all true reform starts with the voice of the people. The people will not have a choice in a deficit commission established by executive order. He also said common sense trumps partisanship. A commission through executive order negotiated by one party is the height of partisanship. He also said voters can exercise real independence. Where is the voice of the people in a process that will not go beyond the Beltway?

Mr. SMITH correctly noted that one-party control leads to arrogance. We are seeing today an arrogance of power on a party that forecloses the minority from a seat at the table. To be fair, the Republicans in the majority were arrogant at times. And Mr. SMITH concluded that we should be listening to the people, not defying them. The people of Massachusetts spoke yesterday. They proved that when the people get mad enough, anything is possible, even in Massachusetts. Lawmakers in Congress on both sides of the aisle would be wise to hear that message loud and clear, yet the Obama administration doesn't seem to be listening.

There are a number of serious problems being exposed as details of the administration's executive order commission are revealed. Any commission should be authentically bipartisan, passed by the Congress. Press reports indicate that instead of putting every spending program and tax policy on the table, discretionary spending would be exempt. How can we have an honest conversation about the Nation's financial health without looking at discretionary funds that accounted for more than 33 percent of Federal spending in '09?

The \$447 billion omnibus appropriations bill that was considered by Congress and signed into law in December corresponded with the Democrats' budget blueprint that increased non-defense discretionary spending by 12 percent over the previous year. When all appropriations spending is combined, the Democratic majority will have increased nondefense, non-veterans discretionary spending by 85 percent over the last 2 fiscal years. The American household has certainly not seen their income rise by 85 percent in recent years.

Simply put, discretionary spending, with the spending set by annual appropriations levels of Congress, matter. A deficit reduction commission that is barred from looking at one-third of the Federal budget is a fig leaf. The bipartisan commission process I have talked about for nearly 4 years puts everything, entitlements, tax policy, discretionary spending, everything on the table for discussion by the commission members.

Moreover, the American people will be cut out of the process under the President's plan. The SAFE Commission plan I have advocated for includes legitimate public engagement, mandating public town hall-style meetings. But under President Obama's plan the public voice will be nonexistent. There will be no input from the hardworking taxpayers in our communities. This is not the right way to form public policy.

Perhaps the most glaring sleight of hand, one I believe the American people will recognize and refute, is that the Democratic leadership intends to bring the commission recommendations up for a vote in Congress, but only after the mid-term elections and