

of December and told my wife that I was actually embarrassed to be in this House because of the deals that were cut. And who ultimately paid for them are the patients and taxpayers. And that's wrong. It really embarrassed me when you saw this deal in Louisiana and the different deal in Florida.

Mr. AKIN. We've just got about a minute or two. We're going to be followed up by another good friend of mine. We may stay on this topic a little bit. I thought it might be appropriate tonight in the last minute or two to make a tribute to Massachusetts. Now who would have thought Congressman AKIN would be making a tribute to Massachusetts? But if you recall our history, Massachusetts used to be the cradle of freedom and innovation in terms of government. It was Massachusetts in 1620 that saw the Pilgrims come. They put together the idea of the first concept of a Republic. A group of free people, under God, selecting their own leadership to preserve their God-given rights. That's a powerful idea that came from Massachusetts. A hundred-fifty years later you had the Massachusetts provincial Congress saying, Resistance to tyranny is your Christian duty.

For the last 50 or 100 years it seems like Massachusetts has been sending us the King's people, always wanting more taxes, more government, more government spending, bigger government, and yesterday the people of Massachusetts reverted back to that great heritage of patriotism and freedom and said, We're finally tired of Big Government. It's time we start to look at solving our problems without thinking every solution means more taxes and more Washington, D.C., control.

I thank you, gentlemen, that your States have stood for freedom and your constituents have elected you to join us here to stand up for just plain, old basic American principles. I think we're going to get the job done. I think that what happened yesterday was about, from a political point of view, quite a stroke of lightning. I think it should get people's attention. I think the public has spoken. And it's time for us to move on with the ideas that you, Doctor ROE, have been making very clear here. It's not like these things are too complicated. And G.T., same thing. You're from Pennsylvania, representing the people with common sense. These things are not complicated. Define the problem, craft a limited solution that fixes it instead of trying to scrap everything and go to the Big-Government-fixes-all kind of model. I think it's really something that the people of Massachusetts kind of came back to their heritage and to their roots in standing up for the country, as they did so many years ago.

□ 1800

When I was a little kid, I lived in Concord and Lexington—actually in Concord, and I saw the place where the Minutemen had stood against the big-

gest military power in the world. There is a statue that says: "By the rude bridge that arched the flood, their flag to April's breeze unfurled, here once the embattled farmers stood, and fired the shot heard round the world." They stood for freedom, and they stood for the basic principles that America has always stood on. And I am sure glad they joined us yesterday in making a statement and a statement that's going to affect this chart right here. Hopefully this chart goes in the dust bin before it ever becomes law. Last word, GT?

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Well, I just couldn't agree more. I think yesterday was a statement that the American people—what they want and what they expect from our leadership is that we do our best to provide safety, prosperity and liberty, the freedoms within this country. And that's the type of public policy that they've been getting since last January. That has worked against all three of those.

Mr. AKIN. Dr. ROE.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Health care should not be a partisan issue. In 30-plus years, I never saw a Republican or Democrat heart attack. I never operated on a Republican or Democrat cancer, just a people problem. We need to get together in this body and not have a partisan solution. There needs to be a bipartisan solution that is simple and addresses problems that we have laid out here today so that patients, their families and doctors can make health care decisions.

Mr. AKIN. And that's certainly what you've been talking about tonight, both of you gentlemen. I understand that my good friend Congressman KING is going to be here in just a jiff. He is going to be continuing along the same lines, talking about freedom, talking about the principles that made this country and how those principles can be applied to solving these very practical problems with health care.

I will check to see how we are doing on time. Oh, we actually have 2 minutes. So I don't want to cheat anybody. Are there any last comments? Anything that we haven't covered that you want to catch, Dr. ROE or GT?

Here is one. We didn't talk about all of the cool features of this policy; but this wheelchair tax, it was kind of stuck in my craw. The idea that you are going to tax a wheelchair, the mental picture of that just doesn't seem to be what we want to do. So we're looking for places to dig for money to pay for this Big Government system. So what are we going to do? We're going to pose a 2.5 percent excise tax on medical devices, which includes wheelchairs, to try to raise some money.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. If the gentleman will yield, my background is rehabilitation services. I have seen where these types of medical devices—and it is not just wheelchairs. That is an understatement. It is insulin. It is crutches. It is canes. It is prosthetic limbs. I mean, there are just

so many different things that this applies to. And this 2.5 percent excise tax, that is going to get passed right along to the consumers.

Most of the consumers who utilize these types of medical devices are older adults. They're individuals on very fixed incomes. Those who are surviving on maybe \$800 to \$1,200 a month of Social Security, and the very things that maximizes their independence, maximizes their quality of life, we're going to tax that? That's a quality-of-life tax, actually, because the people who use those medical devices, they are medically necessary. They're not luxuries. Those are devices that make their lives possible, that allow them to be able to live in the communities, to be able to live in their own homes, to not live in an institution. That's a quality-of-life tax.

Mr. AKIN. So if it moves, tax it. If it doesn't move, tax it anyway. It might be dead.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, gentlemen, for joining me.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

#### IMPACT OF MASSACHUSETTS ELECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate being recognized to address you here on the floor of the House of Representatives. I have been listening to the dialogue that has been poured before us from the three gentlemen here, my colleagues, speaking mostly about health care, the National Health Care Act, and what this could mean.

I would like to pick this up from the place where TODD AKIN left off, and that would be the importance of the State of Massachusetts. I do not believe that it can be overstated, the impact of the election returns last night. I listened to Carl Cameron on FOX News who is, I believe, a very well-informed and probably a deeply researched individual. He said that this was the most important congressional race in 50 years. Well, I can remember that far back, and I would completely agree with him. And I would suspect it may be the most important congressional race in the history of our country, Mr. Speaker.

The situation in Massachusetts where TODD AKIN laid out the poem that said, "and fired the shot heard around the world," well, this in Massachusetts last night was a shot heard around the world. It was the SCOTT heard around the world. He will be here tomorrow, straight down that hallway,