

avoided through early intervention at a school-based health clinic.

School-based health centers (SBHCs) are considered one of the most effective strategies for delivering high quality, comprehensive, and culturally-competent primary and preventive health care to adolescents—a population that can be difficult to reach. They remove the barriers that most commonly keep young people away from health services. They are located where students spend most of their waking hours—at school—making them much more accessible than doctor's offices or a clinic. They provide services regardless of a child's ability to pay, eliminating discrimination caused by wealth or the lack thereof. SBHCs reduce absenteeism, tardiness, dropouts, and discipline referrals by helping youth remain in school and engaged in learning.

SBHCs are also vital mental health providers for children and adolescents. Today, May 3rd, is National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day. I cannot think of a more destructive way to mark this day than by passing a bill that eliminates access to mental health services that children desperately need. Bullying, violence, depression and stress are rampant in our school classrooms and playgrounds. SBHC staff are on the scene with the time and resources to address these challenges. More importantly, evidence shows that young people are willing to go to a SBHC for counseling, while the stigma of mental health issues is often enough to keep them from seeking help from other providers. Research shows that students who report depression and past suicide attempts demonstrate greater willingness to seek counseling in a SBHC. Students with perceived weight problems report more willingness to use a school clinic for nutrition information. Sexually active students are more willing to seek information on pregnancy prevention and to have general disease screenings at a SBHC.

More than 350 applications to build school-based health centers have already been received by the Department of Health and Human Services, from 46 states and the District of Columbia, in response to this new funding opportunity enacted as part of health reform. All of these projects are ready to go—which means immediate jobs for construction workers and others involved in building the centers. Defunding this provision is another example of the Republican disconnect from the real issues people care about—creating jobs and protecting children.

Healthy students are better students. Why the Republicans want to eliminate a program that helps kids stay in school and provides opportunities for future success—and creates jobs in the present—is simply beyond my imagination. I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill and give our young people the chance they deserve to succeed.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong opposition to this legislation.

This bill is a retreat from a core value: to care for our children. Instead of cutting construction for these school-based health centers, we should be building more clinics to help those in need.

These centers work. They keep our children healthy. I see it at the two school-based clinics in my district in the Hazel Park and the Fitzgerald Public School systems.

For instance, Melissa, the nurse practitioner at the Fitzgerald Clinic, helps those who can't

get care in any other place because their families can't afford insurance or can't afford doctor's fees.

Just this past Friday, she saw a 16-year-old boy who didn't have any insurance because his parents' employer doesn't offer a plan, they can't afford private premiums but earn too much for CHIP or Medicaid. He was desperately ill, with a high fever and nausea. Melissa was able to diagnose and treat his strep throat on the spot. He asked her, "How much do I owe you?" Melissa responded "Nothing." The young man burst into tears because he had been so worried that his family wouldn't be able to pay her.

Another boy couldn't afford to go to an emergency room, but Melissa was able to treat a foot infection that could have resulted in an amputation.

I could give you example after example because the team at the Fitzgerald school does it all. She makes sure that students have the vaccinations they need to stay healthy—300 visits this year—and provides the physicals 200 children will need to play sports. They provide counseling for teens coping with their parents' unemployment and groups for those dealing with alcoholism and family violence.

The bottom line is that these clinics work and we need more of them.

I urge Members to vote no on these irresponsible cuts.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to this legislation that would eliminate funding for school-based health centers.

School-based health centers provide much-needed health care services to vulnerable children and adolescents, including primary care, mental health, dental, vision, and nutrition services. They not only help improve children's health, but also help improve the academic performance of students. School-based health centers are a win-win for the student, but also for parents and the community.

By repealing funding for school-based health centers, we will be taking away a health care option—and perhaps the only health care option—for low income children and their families. Without these centers, we will not be building a foundation to promote and advance preventive and wellness-based care that will help save health care costs over time.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to oppose this misguided bill.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to H.R. 1214, which repeals a provision in the Affordable Care Act that provides funding for the construction of school health centers. It also rescinds any unobligated funds that have already been appropriated to this program.

The Majority has said their top priority is job creation and getting our economy back on track. This legislation is yet another example of the Republicans' misplaced priorities.

If the Republicans cared about job creation, they would support school based health centers.

School-based health centers started in the 1970s with the first centers opening in Dallas, Texas, and St. Paul, Minnesota. Today, there are approximately 1,700 centers across the country located in 45 states plus the District of Columbia.

In Texas, there are approximately 85 school-based health centers. Most of these centers are located in a permanent facility on a school campus. The centers provide primary care, mental health care, and dental care.

The reason these school-based health centers are so important to working families is because they support families. They allow parents to stay at work while attending to their child's routine health care needs and they save money for our economy as a whole by keeping children out of hospitals and emergency rooms.

Once again, the Republicans are claiming they support helping our working families and yet again we are cutting another service that helps keep parents at work and children healthy.

I strongly oppose this legislation.

Mr. BURGESS. I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CHAFFETZ) having assumed the chair, Mr. YODER, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1214) to repeal mandatory funding for school-based health center construction, had come to no resolution thereon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1214 and to insert extraneous material into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

REPEALING MANDATORY FUNDING FOR STATE HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 236 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 1213.

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IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1213) to repeal mandatory funding provided to States in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to establish American Health Benefit Exchanges, with Mr. YODER (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, amendment No. 5 printed in House Report 112-70 offered by the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) had been disposed of.

Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those