

land. And who's complicit in this is our friends on the other side and the President of the United States.

Now, how does that affect the rest of the Nation and the Senators involved and Members involved? Well, we compare the current site of Yucca Mountain to where nuclear waste is located around this country. Yucca Mountain currently has no nuclear waste on-site. We've already spent \$15 million over 20 years trying to finish this project. It would be stored a thousand feet underground, it would be a thousand feet above the water table, and it would be a hundred miles from the Colorado River.

Well, let's look at where we have nuclear waste, and nuclear waste is defined by a lot of different titles. Some is just spent fuels from nuclear utilities. A lot of our nuclear waste is defense waste: reprocessed, weaponized uranium or the chemicals needed to effect that.

So we have a Department of Energy location at Idaho National Labs. How much waste is in Idaho right now? We've got 5,090 canisters on-site. Waste is stored above the ground and in pools. Waste is 500 feet above the water table and waste is 50 miles from Yellowstone National Park, a major tourist destination for many of our citizens throughout this country.

This is a Senate issue, really, and not a House issue anymore since the House is on record, especially with this vote this year of 326 of our colleagues in support. Where are the Senators? The last time I came down to the floor, I talked about the State of Missouri and Senator MCCASKILL, who is undecided after being a U.S. Senator for 5½ years. Well, now I turn to Montana, who's a neighbor to Idaho, and another undecided Senator, Senator JON TESTER. Can you imagine being a U.S. Senator for 5½ years, having nuclear waste in the State next to you and never having a position on what do we do with the final position on nuclear waste, whether it's nuclear waste in spent fuel or whether it's nuclear waste in our defense industry?

A place like Hanford, Washington, where we have millions of gallons of toxic nuclear waste that's designed to go to Yucca Mountain, couldn't a U.S. Senator in 5½ years say, I think yes, or I think no? Why is that important? You look at the total tally of what we've done over the past year and a half trying to identify where Senators stand. We have 55 Senators who support moving forward on Yucca Mountain. We have 22 question marks, one of them being Senator TESTER from Montana. And then we have 23 identified "no" votes. Really, to close debate, based upon the Senate rules, you need 60. If we can move Senator MCCASKILL and Senator TESTER, that brings us to 57 Senators and really a game-changing position to resolve this issue of high-level nuclear waste, which is pretty much throughout the country.

In my own State, my colleagues here on the floor in the State of Illinois, we

are the largest nuclear-generating State in the country. We have six locations, 11 reactors. Some are right on Lake Michigan, Wisconsin; nuclear power plants right on Lake Michigan, Michigan; nuclear power plants right on Lake Michigan. Would you rather have high-level nuclear waste in the desert underneath a mountain or would you rather have it next to Lake Michigan or 50 miles from Yellowstone National Park? I think the answer is simple.

This has become politicized because of the Majority Leader of the Senate and his partner in crime, the President of the United States. It's time for us to move on good public policy: identify, centrally locate, and store high-level nuclear waste underneath a mountain in a desert.

□ 1030

THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, roughly 17 million American children with pre-existing medical conditions can no longer be discriminated against and be denied health insurance by insurance companies. And yet, rather than focus on the key tasks of creating jobs and strengthening the middle class in America, my Republican colleagues want to tear up the health care law. They want to rip up the independent decision by our Supreme Court, by Justices appointed by Presidents of both parties, finding the Affordable Care Act is on firm constitutional footing, and they want to start all over again, putting the coverage of those millions of children I just spoke about at risk.

This vote is personal. Health care is personal. When I was 9, I had a serious childhood illness. I spent 3 months in the hospital. My grandparents, who were raising me, found out that their family insurance didn't cover me. They made great sacrifices to help pay for my care. But if that weren't enough, when my grandparents then looked for insurance that would cover me, they couldn't find coverage at any price. I was considered one of those kids with a preexisting medical condition, never mind that I had fully recovered from my illness. No child should ever be denied coverage for that reason.

I grew up believing that no family should have to go through what ours did. Parents or grandparents shouldn't have to worry, shouldn't have to lay awake at night worrying about whether they can provide for a sick child or whether an illness might bankrupt their family.

Families now know that insurance companies can't discriminate against their children based on a preexisting condition. Turning back the clock so insurance companies can, once again, deny children access to care is simply wrong.

It is time that we all move forward. It is time that we work together. It is time to make this Affordable Care Act work for the American people.

GOVERNMENT BY CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, despite talk of political gridlock in D.C., Republicans and Democrats can agree on at least one thing—the economy is in rough shape. For the past 41 months, the unemployment rate has not gone below 8 percent, causing worry, uncertainty, and frustration for many families living in Michigan and across the U.S. But unfortunately, things can still get worse.

It's time for President Obama and the Senate to stop pushing their failed agendas and start applying common-sense policies that work. My Republican colleagues and I in the House have been listening to the American people and remain committed to policies that spur job creation, reduce costs, and restore power back to the people.

Last month's employment report showed that millions of Americans still are without a job and the unemployment rate is stuck at 8.2 percent. Meanwhile, the anemic job growth is even worse in my district where some areas show an unemployment rate of over 9 percent. Nationwide, the rate of "real unemployment," which includes the unemployed, the underemployed, and those that want to work but have given up looking, now totals 14.9 percent. Making matters worse, the number of weeks it takes a worker to find a job has more than doubled since President Obama took office. Is this hope and change?

But it's not just the unemployment numbers which paint a grim picture of our economy. Government spending is out of control. With 84 days left in the fiscal year, the government has already spent its way into another \$1 trillion deficit. Despite this out-of-control spending, the Senate hasn't bothered to pass a budget in more than 3 years. Since that time, the Federal Government has added more than \$4 trillion to our national debt.

Families and businesses in my district and across the country know that they can't spend more than they make, which is why they create budgets and why they sometimes have to make tough choices to prevent them from drowning in debt. They get it, but sadly, their President and Senate still refuse to look at the facts.

But they also refuse to listen to the American people. According to the polls, Americans, and especially those in my district, are angry about having a government takeover of health care and the largest tax increase in history. Health care coverage is already too expensive for many families in my district, and this health care takeover