

then it was announced that the employer was going to switch over and put them into the exchange with the retirees.

This woman spent most of her adult life taking care of a brother and a sister who were less fortunate in life and needed a family member to step up and be there. This woman's retirement plan has been totally crushed by ObamaCare, and she's concerned now. As a smart lady, she went out to get some estimate of what it was going to cost her in her retirement now for health care compared to what it was before. It's completely unaffordable. So does she choose health care, or does she choose to still be there for her brother and her sister who have come to rely on her? I think there's many of those stories.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. I thank the gentleman.

As we finish, I want to go over just a couple of things. One of the things the Secretary stated, Dr. FLEMING and Mr. THOMPSON, is that she needed to use some money, and the prevention fund was one of the things she was going to use to help implement the exchanges. We've now had prevention funds used for massage therapy, kickboxing, kayaking, Zumba and pickleball. I didn't know what pickleball was. But that's tennis, badminton and ping pong. I can go on and on. It's utterly ridiculous. It should have been spent on health care. That's what this bill was supposed to be about.

Let me finish by saying that even with this 1 hour here, we have lots more to talk about. We've barely scratched the surface. It's a complicated issue. Democrats and Republicans should have gotten together in a bipartisan way to work out a health care plan that does the principles that were pointed out here today, which is to increase access and quality, lower costs and to leave health care decisions in the hands of doctors, patients and those patients' families.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

JOB AND HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, once again we're back here on the floor of the House of Representatives to talk about what I believe is the most pressing problem here in the United States, and that's jobs. Americans want to work, Americans are capable of working, and it ought to be our job here on

the floor of the House of Representatives to talk about how we can create jobs.

We've just heard about 1 hour of discussion from our good friends on the Republican side, the Doctors' Caucus, about how to destroy the Affordable Health Care Act. For 36 times, the Republicans have put up legislation that would essentially gut, amend, or destroy the Affordable Health Care Act, which has the promise and the probability of providing health insurance for 50-plus-million Americans that are today uninsured.

Why would you want to deny those people health insurance? I can see no reason for it.

I notice that they also did not spend any time at all talking about their effort to destroy Medicare. Medicare was a promise made to seniors by the American people that when they reach 65 years of age, they would have a guaranteed health insurance program. Yet, for the last 2 years and 4 months, the Republicans have continually put up legislation that would end Medicare as we know it and turn Medicare over to the insurance companies.

One of the last statements made here on the floor by one of our colleagues was decisions on medical services ought to be in the hands of the physician and the patient. I agree. I was also the insurance commissioner in California, a statewide elected position for 8 years; and I can assure you that under the private health insurance programs, it is the insurance companies that are making the decisions about what medical care will be given to individuals. That is wrong. We did our best in California to stop that. But if you turn Medicare over to the private insurance companies, as the Republicans want to do with their voucher plan, then it will be the insurance companies that will decide what medical services will be available, if at all, to seniors.

I'd like to put that aside and go back to the issue that I really wanted to talk about, but there are some things that you just cannot let go, things that are said on the floor that need to be at least discussed in their fullness.

Let's talk about jobs. Let's talk about the fact that over the last 30 years we have seen the middle class in America held down. The middle class in America has made very little economic progress over the last 30 years. We're going to discuss that in some detail and specifically what we can do here with public policy, with proposals that have been put forth by the Democratic Caucus in the House and our colleagues in the Senate, solid proposals to put Americans back to work and to rebuild the American Dream so that every American has the opportunity to put their foot on the rung of the ladder and climb just as high as they can do so.

Before we get to those rungs on the economic ladder, I'd like to have a more full discussion about what has happened to the middle class over the

last 30 years. Joining me in that discussion is the Representative from South Carolina, the Honorable JIM CLYBURN.

JIM, if you'll join us, I know you have some things you'd like to discuss; and I see you have your own chart there.

Mr. CLYBURN. I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague, Congressman GARAMENDI, for his leadership on this very important issue.

Just a few minutes ago, we received some breaking news: the stock market just closed, and for the first time in the history of this great country, the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed over 15,000 at 15,056. Standard & Poor's also closed at a record 1,625. So much for a socialist President.

Now, during my 20 years of service in this body, I have often reflected upon my experiences growing up in a church parsonage in the little town of Sumter, South Carolina. Early on, I internalized an Old Testament scripture, Micah 6:8: To do justly, to love mercy and walk humbly.

Today in this great country, we are experiencing an injustice that continues to get worse, one which I believe demands our attention. Indisputable evidence continues to show that income inequality has worsened over the last 30 years. The Congressional Budget Office released a report back in October 2011 on the distribution of household income between 1979 and 2011.

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On the distribution of household income during that time, you might remember that report came out just a few days before the so-called supercommittee held its first public hearing. I served on that special panel, and I raised concerns with the CBO director about the ever-widening gap between America's rich and poor.

This chart is from that CBO report, and it shows that over the past 30 years, the wealthiest 1 percent have enjoyed income growth of more than 275 percent, while the lowest 20 percent have experienced only 18 percent growth.

Working families across the country have seen their wages stagnate and decline as earnings for the wealthiest few continue to soar. In fact, earnings for the top 1 percent during the current economic recovery have risen 11.2 percent, but declined for the other 99 percent by 0.4 percent. I'm going to repeat that.

The 99 percent have seen a decline of 0.4 percent—that is a negative—while the upper 1 percent, a positive growth of 11.2 percent.

Now, my friends across the aisle will talk about the American Dream and the ability of every American to work their way up to the top. But numerous studies have shown that there is less economic mobility in America than most people think. The fact is that if you work hard, play by the rules and