Byron Burris of WFFA in Dallas reports that the San Antonio Aerospace facility in Texas has hired 767 foreign airplane mechanics over the past 2 years without a real background check. These mechanics come from 45 countries, including Vietnam, Ethiopia, Egypt, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, Jordan, China and Sudan. These people work on American airplanes.

The State Department says it does a ''criminal'' background check, but reports indicate those checks are of poor quality and sometimes are left up to a third party.

We are ignoring the obvious when it comes to airline safety. Foreign workers with shady or unknown backgrounds should not have access to American aircraft.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1515

## SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

## HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, just a moment ago I heard the minority whip profess interest in working with the Democrats to reform the health care system. Yet, I'm sad to say that the minority whip, the minority leader have been part of an effort to deal with fear and misrepresentation, attacking bipartisan legislation that would have done precisely that, reform the health care system.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, there are some here who simply are not expressing the sense of urgency that most of us feel from the American people, a sense of urgency about fixing a broken health care system that costs too much, that produces wildly uneven results, and leaves too many outside the system of coverage, and others, with health insurance, at risk. We cannot continue along this path. Americans are not getting the help they need, even if they have insurance coverage. I was, I must say, disappointed, to say the very least, to see the attack on bipartisan legislation that we have worked on to help reform the health care system.

In a statement from the minority leader, and with the whip, and Mr. MCCOTTER, there is an allegation that somehow there is legislation in the health care draft that may place senior citizens in situations where they feel pressured to sign end-of-life directives that they would not otherwise sign that may start us down a ''treacherous path towards government-encouraged euthanasia if enacted into law.''

Well, Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Had the minority leader, and his whip, and the conference Chair bothered to check how that legislation came to be enacted into our health care legislation, they would have found out that it was work of a bipartisan group of Ways and Means Committee members. There were Republicans cosponsoring it along with Democrats. We had spirited discussion dealing with the fact that too often senior citizens and their families are not given the information they need to be able to cope with the most serious situation any of us will ever face as we have a loved one move into the end of his or her life.

We discussed how Medicare would pay for tests to hook people up, to poke them, to run them through machines, to have them on ventilators, to do all sorts of things; but it will not pay a health care professional to sit down with that patient, with that family, and let them know what they expect, answer their questions, help them know what their choices are. We had examples of committee members talk about their loved ones, and I would say, Republican committee members talk about how their loved ones didn't get that type of help at the end of life and actually were subjected to things that they thought were not in the best interests of their loved one. If they had a choice, they wouldn't have done it over again, and it didn't prolong their life, it actually made them less comfortable.

We're seeking to change that, to be able to adjust Medicare so that it speaks to the needs of American seniors and their families, that they're given the attention they need to prepare for this difficult period of time. There's nothing in this legislation that would force people to have consultations. There's nothing that would force them to sign advance directives. It's not going to choose a health care professional by the government and force it on them.

It's the type of sad, inflammatory rhetoric that suggests that people aren't serious about health care reform, not serious about meeting the needs of American families, but, rather, they're playing political games. Mr. Speaker, I can't tell you how disappointed I was to see this type of reaction to a carefully crafted piece of legislation that we've been working on for more than 6 months that is bipartisan and that speaks to the needs of American families.

The American public, especially our senior citizens, deserve our best efforts to meet their needs, not treat them like political footballs. I hope the Republican leadership will reconsider, and that we'll be able to enact provisions like this to help our senior citizens.

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

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

## THE BEST PRODUCT FOR AMERICA

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, back in November, Hank Paulson, the Secretary of the Treasury, and President Bush came to Congress in a rush that the financial sky was going to fall out if we did not pass the TARP bill, the financial bailout for Wall Street. Now, we were told that if we didn't do it, that stock portfolios and savings of Americans all over the country would decrease, maybe as much as 30 or 40 percent. Well, in that spirit of panic that frequently happens in this town, we did pass TARP. And what happened to your IRA back home? What happened to your savings account? What happened to your stock portfolio? Unless you're extremely lucky and unusual, your assets dropped by 30 or 40 percent. So much for the $700 billion bailout.

And then in January, President Obama, using the same panic tactic, came to us and said, we have got to pass a second stimulus program. Keep in mind we had already passed one under President Bush in May of 2008. But we had to pass, in a hurry, something big, something dramatic, $790 billion for a stimulus program. Why? Because the unemployment rate was 8 percent. But this would give us immediate results, President Obama promised. And so that was passed by Congress.

And yet, now, unemployment is approaching 10 percent, and in States like Michigan, as high as 15 percent; 2½ million Americans have become unemployed since the passage of the stimulus program. And now we have the same Washington-knows-best experts telling us that we have to pass major health care reform by next week, August 1.

Now, I want you to think about this. This is 17 percent of the economy, and we would put it in the hands of the Federal Government. It would set up a scheme where there would be a health care czar that would run and stipulate insurance policies all over the country; and in order to sell insurance in the United States of America, you would have to go through this bureaucracy and enter into an exchange. And there, inside this closed circle defined by the Federal Government, you would compete against a government option

which would have the rules rigged in its favor. And if you, as an individual, did not do that, you'd have to pay a 2½ percent surcharge. And if you, in a small business, did not offer insurance to your employees you'd have to pay 8 percent.

Is that the best way to get things done? A huge, $1.2 trillion expense on top of the TARP bill, on top of the stimulus bill, on top of the war in Iraq, on top of all the other problems that we have, we're now going to go out and spend $1.2 trillion and tax virtually everybody in America to do it. We can also look at the Canadian or the German or the British system and see the rationing that it leads to. And we know, if you live around a border State near Canada, that when they need to see a doctor, they come to the United States of America.

And we have also seen in States like Massachusetts, where they have a government option, that it takes twice as long to see a doctor as it does in Los Angeles. We also know that this plan will do away with Medicare Advantage. I don't know if the AARP realized that when they endorsed the bill, but this not only does away with Medicare Advantage, but it cuts Medicare itself. And then, between you and the doctor comes the bureaucrat, because you don't get a second opinion under the government-run health care system. What the doctor tells you, that sticks. You can't go to three or four doctors because the bureaucrats in Washington who make the rules don't allow it.

These are things that concern me. They concern Democrats and Republicans alike, seniors and young people entering into the workforce. That's why I think we should slow this system down. And when you hear somebody say this does not require a senior citizen to have a consultant with their doctor and the government bureaucrat every 5 years, on their end-of-life plan, they're wrong because that is in the bill. Every 5 years senior citizens are supposed to report to some bureaucrat and say, here's my 5-year end-of-life plan, and as President Obama said himself, and we are going to strongly encourage hospice.

Well, you know, I'd rather have my mom make that decision as my dad, who is now dead. I'd like to have her make that decision just as he did, with his doctor, not bringing in a government bureaucrat, and not having to have some sign-off by some government bureaucrat. That should scare anybody who's parents are alive or any senior citizens.

Indeed, there are better ways to do this thing: association health plans that would allow small businesses to band together and get the economies of scale that the big purchasers of insurance can get; medical savings accounts, which would allow you to have deductibles; many other options. We can look at them. We need the time. Let's make the time count. Let's pull Democrats and Republicans together for the best product for America.

□ 1530

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

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

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

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

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## SENIORS MUST CONTROL THEIR OWN HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, this body passed a cap-and-trade bill, and we had people coming down, friends across the other side of the aisle, saying this isn't going to cost jobs, that it's going to create jobs. Well, they telegraphed, every time that was said, that they'd not read the bill. They assured America that this was going to create green jobs and that it wasn't going to cost jobs.

If they'd bothered to read the bill, they would have seen that, before the 300 pages were added and, unaffected by the 300 pages, there was a fund created to pay an allowance to people who'd lost their jobs because of the bill. It also created a fund that could help them with relocation after they lost their jobs because of the bill. They just hadn't read the bill, so they were able to come down and, with righteous indignation, say it wasn't going to cost jobs. I knew they were being honest. They were just ignorant about what the bill said, but it will cost jobs, and now we're told that some of us don't care about seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I'm here because I care about seniors, and I know what that health care bill is going to do to them. It is going to put seniors on lists to get treatment. The lists will be for those who are not considered too old to be put on lists.

If you'd followed the President's own presentation in that townhall, Ms. Pam Stern pointed out her mother was nearly 100, and she needed a pacemaker. Her doctor said, because of the joy and quality of her life, she should have one, but the arrhythmia specialist said, no, not somebody her age until he met her. Then he said, Well, of course, she needs to have one. So they did and she's now 105.

So Ms. Stern asked the President, Is there any consideration to be given for a certain spirit, joy of living, quality of life, or is it just a medical cutoff?

He went into a long explanation, and ended by saying, You know what? We at least can let your mom know that, you know what, maybe this isn't going to help, maybe you're better off not having the surgery but taking a painkiller. Taking a painkiller, when we've already seen that she had another 5 years, and the President wants to say, Well, maybe we'll just give you a painkiller and let you die?

This is going to allow seniors to die who could have a much more ongoing, productive life. There is no reason to do this.

Now, when I and my staff looked at this, the latest numbers we were able to get were from 2007 of, roughly, 112 million households in America. If you divide that into the amount of money paid into Medicare and Medicaid, it's $9,200 per household for every household in America.

Well, once I saw that, I realized, boy, there is a way for the first time in 40-something years to give seniors control over their own health care and over their own lives. You give them $3,500 in their own health savings accounts that they control. You give them a debit card. They have exclusive control. No insurance company can tell them what to do with it. Then you buy them private insurance, and they won't have to do like my mother-in-law did and buy supplemental insurance on top of that. You buy them good insurance. They don't need to do that. On top of that, you save the country hundreds of billions of dollars a year. Now, that puts control in seniors' hands, and it saves the country money.

This isn't about that. It is about control. This health care bill is about control. It's about taking charge of people's lives.

We had the EPA already say, since carbon dioxide is a pollutant, this body has the right to control any entity that puts out carbon dioxide. Well, maybe there are people here in the majority who can pick out individuals and say, You know what? I'm tired of them putting out carbon dioxide. It's time for them to stop. I mean that's how ludicrous it gets, except that, once you can control whether people put out carbon dioxide, you can control whether they live or not. Once you can control their health care, you can have the right to say, You know what? I noticed on your credit card purchase you bought some Twinkies last month, and therefore, we're not going to provide health care unless you quit buying those. I mean this is going to get so intrusive.

The one thing that's clear is that Orwell was 25 years early, because this is going to be so Orwellian with Big Brother looking into everyone's lives and having the right to do so once they pay for your health care. This will allow seniors to die, waiting in line for lists. Do you think that's over the top? I had a Canadian man tell me that just a few weeks ago.

His dad got put on a list for bypass surgery, and he had to wait 2 years. I said, Why did it take so long? He said, Well, the bureaucrats kept moving him back.