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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, March 22, 2010, at 2 p.m.

House of Representatives

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2010

The House met at 1 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: “This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad.” In many ways, every day is fresh and a new beginning. The past is more easily forgotten. The future is less certain. But today is especially new for us, Lord. So we praise You and we thank You. The cold winter and blankets of snow are set aside and the sunlight brings forth new life. The long waiting is over. Hope and promise are in the air.

For us, Lord, it is spring. The equinox has silently occurred, but we may not have been aware because our Earth was spinning so fast, and we did not notice our tilt to Your sun.

Help us, Lord, to understand our ever-changing world better. Never let us lose perspective. Although it is spring for us, for another half of the world, it is the beginning of fall. Help us to hold on to You, Lord, now and forever.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore, Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

IT IS TIME TO VOTE “YES” ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Ms. SCHWARTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, today we will act on a uniquely American solution to health care reform. Our action will bring down health care costs for middle-income families, will help small businesses afford coverage for their employees, will improve coverage for our seniors, will rein in wasteful spending, and will provide access to 32 million uninsured Americans.

For those with insurance, starting right away, insurance companies will be prohibited from discriminating based on preexisting conditions, from placing annual or lifetime caps on coverage, and from dropping people for coverage when they get sick.

It is time to put American families back in control of their health care. It’s time to hold insurance companies accountable to keep premiums down and to stop their denial of care and coverage. And it is time to ensure that 95 percent of Americans have access to affordable, meaningful health care choices.

It’s time to finally fix the Medicare prescription drug gap, known as the doughnut hole, and to provide seniors with preventative and primary care. And it is time to rein in the Federal deficit by reducing it by $1.2 trillion.

It’s time to vote “yes” on health care reform.
FREEDOM DIES A LITTLE BIT TODAY

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues are celebrating the birth of a great new entitlement program today: only the see dependency on the Federal Government and the death of freedom as a cause for celebration.

My colleagues celebrate this day as being like the days when Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid were passed. They are the days those programs are insolvent and will likely crush our children under their debt.

My colleagues are overjoyed that soon their goal of having Americans dependent on the Federal Government for mortgages, student loans, retirement, and health care will be realized. That is a chilling goal.

My colleagues cheer that this bill is paid for. They ignore the fact that it is our children who will pay for their greed.

My colleagues shame us for scaring the American people about the contents of this bill. We know the consequences of this bill will be frightening and horrible.

Freedom dies a little bit today. Unfortunately, some are celebrating.

FORMING A MORE PERFECT UNION

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union"—that is what got America started. And when we form a more perfect union, it is always a continuous and controversial process. Social Security, Medicare, civil rights, at those times it was always controversial.

But Americans are going to grow confident in this for two reasons. Number 1, we know that all Americans should have a choice in health care. It shouldn’t be the government’s choice. It shouldn’t be the insurance company’s choice. It should be individual Americans’ choice, and that is what they will get today.

Number 2, we know that a nation is truly healthy only when all of its citizens have health care.

Today, we will have choice. Today, we will have health care. Today, we are forming a more perfect union in the tradition of this great country.

WISE COUNSEL FROM THE NFIB

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON. South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as we vote on health care takeover, I urge Members of both parties to pay attention to the counsel of the National Federation of Independent Business, NFIB, the Nation’s leading small business association.

"Small business has been struggling with health care costs for decades, and our members need help now." These bills “are not the answer—they compound current problems and make health care even more expensive for small businesses. Costing nearly $1 trillion, these bills will send health insurance costs soaring, increase the cost of doing business and set our economic recovery back with destructive policies,” including a tax on small business health plans, targeting small construction firms with destructive new mandates, an unprecedented increase in the Medicare payroll tax.

In July, NFIB warned a similar bill would kill 1.6 million jobs.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

As we vote today, I share the concern of former DSS Director Bill Walker that the bill will be a free ticket, no show.

COURAGE WILL BE THE CALL OF THE DAY

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, over the last 2 days, human beings who happened to be Members of Congress have been called the N word, have been spat on. Just recently, someone asked me why my braids were so tight.

But I know there is a better way. And I know that because members of the Congressional Black Caucus worshipped this morning at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, and Pastor Smith said to us to call upon healing the land. We’ll be able to heal the land by voting this evening on a health care bill that will help those who cannot help themselves, those single mothers, those people with preexisting disease. I have the dishonor of being a Member of Congress representing the State of Texas that has the highest number of uninsured. And so today, there will be no shame in my vote, because I will vote for those Texans who are not here and cannot speak for themselves and are suffering with no health care. And seniors will have a stronger Medicare, and 95 percent of Americans will be able to be insured.

This is a day that courage will be the call of the day.

WE MUST END THIS DEBATE WITH UNDERSTANDING

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, over the past 14 months, I have held 235 meetings and town hall meetings, received and sent hundreds of thousands of emails and mail, and heard from my constituents loud and clear. There is much we can agree on with each side of the aisle, but we still did not fix the underlying problem of health care.

We still will have $700 billion in waste. We still will have $50 billion wasted each year in hospital infections alone. We’ll have a Medicare program that’s going bankrupt, and, instead, we take another $500 billion from Medicare. We take $52 billion from Social Security.

We cannot confuse anger with action, passion with policy, or rancor with results. We have to understand that we will not give up on real health care reform that really cuts costs and saves lives to make it acceptable to all. We will never, never, never give up.

But above all, we have to make sure that this is not a moment that divides America. And to use the words of Abraham Lincoln, we must end this debate with understanding that we must have malice towards none, with charity for all, and to bind up the Nation’s wounds. And that will include working together in the future to make sure we have real health care reform and help take care of those in need.

YOU CAN’T SAY YOU WEREN’T WarnED

(Mr. GOHMERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOHMERT. I would ask my colleagues across the aisle—sometimes I raise my voice. I’m not going to do that today, so I need you to listen. I’m very sincere.

I know that there are some wonderful-hearted people that have been