

they cannot because they cannot give up their coverage. They are there because they have to have coverage for some chronic illness. But we are on the brink of things getting exponentially worse and they can. If we have any kind of downturn in the economy we will have a worse situation.

Now, I started in 1972 as a physician advocating for a health care system that was universally available, never could be taken away, and every American would be in it no matter what their circumstances in the society. I introduced bills in the Washington State legislature and started the Washington Basic Health Plan.

When I came to Congress, I introduced the American Health Security Act in 1992. This act is the gold standard that provides universal coverage for all Americans, and it does it through a single-payer mechanism. Now the American Health Security Act offers a fair and fiscally responsible way to deliver high-quality and cost-effective health care to all Americans. It provides for a highly decentralized system that is federally financed from Washington, but state-designed; and it delivers the health care through the private health care system. It guarantees universal coverage, comprehensive benefits, costs containment, the freedom to choose your own employers, and accountability. Every citizen should be entitled to that kind of coverage in this society.

The reason I came over to talk about this is that today we are being treated to one of those events that begins the campaign season when people start putting out press releases in the form of resolutions. This one is H. Con. Res. 271, expressing the sense of the Congress that public awareness and education about the importance of health care coverage is of the utmost priority, utmost priority, and that the national importance of Health Care Coverage Month should be established to promote these goals. So we will have a whole month for people to get up here and tell you how everybody ought to have health insurance.

But the question you have to ask yourself is, Where is the proposal that would provide health care coverage for everybody? Where is it? We can put out these press releases.

This thing reminded me of the reason I came over here and I was sitting there reading this and I thought about the joke of the Methodist minister. He had gotten very ill and so the head of the board of deacons called all the deacons together one night and he called a meeting and they all got together to decide what to do about the illness of the minister. They had a long discussion. Many things were argued back and forth. And finally by a vote of six to five with 20 abstentions, they decided to write a letter to the minister urging him to get well.

Now, that is what this is. This is saying to the American people, why do you people not go out and get health

insurance? What is the matter with you? Do you not know how important that is? As though the American people were stupid or that they would not be doing it if they could.

The resolution is an indictment of itself. It says, "Whereas over 17.3 million of the uninsured are employed, but are not offered health coverage through their employers."

Now, if you are an individual in this country and you work full time and you are not offered it through your job, you are supposed to go out by yourself and find a policy. Anybody who knows anything about that kind of experience knows how ridiculous it is to say to people, you should be aware.

When are we going to take up the issue in real substance and get away from these letters to the American people to get well?

MAKE BUSH TAX CUT PERMANENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I come to the well today to draw attention to an issue which affects over 100 million American taxpayers. This past year because of the leadership of President Bush and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) and the House Republican majorities, we were successful in enacting a tax cut which benefits and helps over 100 million taxpayers who now have lower taxes. And what we call the Bush tax cut when it was passed into law does a number of things. It lowered rates for everyone. In fact, 3.9 million families with children no longer pay Federal income tax. We have brought fairness to the Tax Code by phasing out the death tax, by eliminating and wiping out the marriage tax penalty, and also providing opportunities for taxpayers to save for retirement, a tremendous benefit for over 100 million Americans. And unfortunately, because of some of the arcane rules that we have in this Congress, that tax cut was made on a temporary basis.

It is always interesting that in this Congress under the rules that the House and Senate operate under, that spending increases and tax increases are easily made permanent; but when you want to lower taxes, you can only do it on a temporary basis, meaning that down the road that those who benefit from elimination of the marriage tax penalties or elimination of the death tax or seeing their taxes lowered because of rate reductions will have a tax increase.

In fact, when the Bush tax cut expires, it will be the biggest tax increase in our country. I want to draw attention to just one example of what the permanency of the Bush tax cut means. There are 43 million married working couples who benefit from the marriage tax relief. And I am one of those who,

like many in this House, particularly on the Republican side, who feel it is wrong that under our Tax Code that 43 million married couples paid higher taxes just because they were married prior to the Bush tax cuts. We passed legislation several times out of this House of Representatives to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, to eliminate that unfair aspect; and unfortunately, President Clinton at the time vetoed it.

But under President Bush we were successful in eliminating the marriage tax penalty, but unfortunately our efforts to wipe out the marriage tax penalty were temporary and means that if we do not make permanent the Bush tax cut, do not make permanent our efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, 43 million married couples will have to pay higher taxes and will suffer once again the marriage tax penalty.

I believe, like I know many of my colleagues do, that it is just wrong that under our Tax Code that anyone should have to pay higher taxes just because they are married, because I believe, and I know Republicans believe, that we have should not punish society's most basic institution.

The marriage penalty occurred in the past because of the complications of our Tax Code. Married couples filed jointly, they combined their incomes, and it pushed them into a higher tax bracket. And they save about \$1,700 in taxes because of our marriage tax penalty relief. The bottom line is let us prevent a new marriage tax. Let us prevent an increase in taxes on married couples.

The House has passed legislation to make permanent the Bush tax cut, to make permanent our efforts to wipe out the marriage tax penalty. My hope is the entire Congress, Democrats and Republicans, will work together and pass this legislation as well. Let us make the Bush tax cut permanent. Let us benefit over 100 million taxpayers who, unless we act, will see higher taxes in just a few short years.

□ 1300

DOE'S LITTLE SECRET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, we have assumed for some time that the Department of Energy has made an overwhelming effort to prove that their research on the Nation's spent nuclear fuel is based on sound science and safe for Americans. Well, Mr. Speaker, I stand before my colleagues today to ask that despite the DOE's claims that Yucca Mountain is a geologically safe place to store 77,000 tons of the Nation's nuclear waste, that we take a closer look at the truth behind these claims.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, Nevadans have become aware of some very disturbing information about these DOE claims. In its final environmental impact statement, the DOE evaluated the handling, transporting and disposition of spent nuclear fuel and high level radioactive waste to Yucca Mountain.

Although 131 sites across this country contain this nuclear waste and although the waste at these sites require individual attention due to radioactivity dangers, the Department of Energy has entirely neglected to evaluate the effect of waste transportation of at least 54 different sites. Mr. Speaker, this negligence is simply unacceptable.

In considering the dangers of hauling nuclear waste across the country, through our neighborhoods, near our schools and parks, it is obvious that the DOE should have investigated these important facilities. Most of these facilities are research reactor sites at major universities and significant commercial research and fuel fabrication plants. Shipping the high level radioactive waste from these facilities is a hazardous undertaking that cannot be ignored, and the DOE has done so.

Similar movement of research reactive fuel has been explored in the past. In just one instance, after a mandatory preparation of an extensive report, several years of analysis, and two arduous legal challenges, a shipment of foreign research reactor fuel was transported to North Carolina.

The question is, shall Americans stand by and wait for a mistake in shipping this hazardous research reactor fuel or will we demand that the DOE take into account these 54 sites before it presents our government with a proper environmental analysis?

Clearly, the Department of Energy has altogether ignored a vast and critical component of its Yucca Mountain project.

Mr. Speaker, Americans should be outraged at this negligence, and again, I ask that we take a closer look at the reports handed over to us by the DOE.

Finding a solution to our Nation's nuclear waste problem should be a process of justice, sound science and integrity, not one of carelessness and political expediency.

Mr. Speaker, the Yucca Mountain project is not an equitable solution. It is not a trustworthy solution or a suitable solution to our nuclear waste problem.

I urge all my colleagues to make a responsible decision on this potentially devastating resolution tomorrow. Vote no on the Yucca Mountain project. Vote no tomorrow on House Joint Resolution 87.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m. today.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Emmett J. Gavin, Prior, Whitefriars Hall, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

Gracious and loving God, as the world around is blossoming with new life, grant the fullness of life, hope and prosperity to all Your children throughout this troubled world. As we gather here at the seat of government of this great and blessed Nation, we are all too mindful that our world is gripped with conflict and division. We pray for peace and an end to hatred and discord in all corners of our world. Let all Your children come to know, accept and celebrate that You are a God of inclusion and compassion and acceptance. And knowing and rejoicing in that blessed assurance, let all peoples join together in a sacred commitment to peace and unity throughout our world.

We particularly pray this day for a decisive and definitive end to terrorism in all its hateful forms throughout the length and breadth of the family of nations. Transfer all Your people into agents of reconciliation and healing and help us to have the courage to use the great blessings we enjoy as a Nation to be the leaders in bringing about a more just and equitable world.

In this month of May, when we will, as a Nation, remember with gratitude and pride the men and women of our Armed Forces who have laid down their lives in defense of freedom, we pray in a special way for the safety of our military personnel throughout the world who are striving to bring an end to terrorism and injustice. We beseech You Almighty and loving God to bring them all home safely.

We thank and bless You, Lord, confident that You will hear and answer our prayers. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. FROST led 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.

PRIVATE CALENDAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is the day for the call of the Private Calendar. The Clerk will call the bill on the Private Calendar.

NANCY B. WILSON

The Clerk called the bill (H.R. 392) for the relief of Nancy B. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be passed over without prejudice.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This concludes the call of the Private Calendar.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON RULES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Rules:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 7, 2002.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I hereby resign from the House Committee on Rules.

Sincerely,

TONY P. HALL,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Resources:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 7, 2002.

Hon. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House, U.S. Capitol Building,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I hereby resign from the House Committee on Resources.

Sincerely,

JAMES P. MCGOVERN,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: