

Republicans do not favor a one-size-fits-all universal health care system. We understand what a one-size-fits-all system does. We know that that would mean universally poor care that leaves consumers basically with no power and no rights in the management of their own health coverage and their own health decisions.

Outside the Beltway, people are excited about Health Savings Accounts, personal health accounts. This editorial from the National Business Journal is titled "Health Savings Plans Can Help Business." This recognizes that small businesses will be able to offer health care to employees in a way that reduces paperwork and empowers the employee. As the editorial states: "This is part of an ownership society," something that we are hearing the President talk about daily. An ownership society. What this means is more health care coverage, more options, more power for consumers in those personal health accounts, and we think that that is a very good idea.

In another article that I have, this time from the Memphis Business Journal, the other end of my district, it has said that the new health care items, this is what is "getting the enthusiasm," is the health savings accounts. And why? Because they function like a health care IRA, giving consumers ownership over a tax-free account. What a great idea.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of what Candidate KERRY and the liberal left would tell us, it is clear that Americans are increasingly aware of what President Bush and the Congress have done to reinvigorate our economy, to expand health care options, and to win the war on terror. Faced with the horrific attacks on America, a trillion dollar hit to our economy, and a preexisting recession, the Bush administration and this Republican Congress have made significant strides in the right direction. And that is something we are looking forward to continuing in the year ahead.

SMART SECURITY AND IRAQ

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, as thousands of our brave American soldiers continue to fight and die and receive serious wounds halfway around the world, I want to speak about two Iraqs that are presented to the American people.

There is the Iraq that President Bush and his administration want people to see, the one that is supposedly one small step away from becoming a peaceful democracy. And then there is the real Iraq, the quagmire halfway around the world that the rest of us know.

In President Bush's Iraq, the war was never a mistake, never a failure, and never something to question, much less

regret. The same war, which as of today has caused the deaths of 1,027 American soldiers and seriously wounded at least seven times that many, not to mention the thousands of Iraqi civilians that have been killed, President Bush says he would have gone to war in Iraq even if had he known 2 years ago what he knows now.

That means he would have gone to war knowing that Iraq did not have a nuclear weapons program. He would have gone to war knowing that Saddam Hussein never harbored al Qaeda terrorists, and he would have gone to war knowing that thousands of our young soldiers would be killed. Somehow, and I do not know how, somehow President Bush fails to recognize the death, destruction, and deprivation that his war has caused.

The rest of us see a different Iraq than President Bush. In the real Iraq, America preemptively waged a war that was never a war of necessity and never a war to protect our Nation. Instead, President Bush and the Republican-controlled Congress led this country into a war that U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan recently called "illegal."

In the real Iraq, hundreds of soldiers have died because they were not given the battle armor that would have stopped bullets from entering their bodies, even after Congress made funds available for that very specific purpose. This was a drastic mistake made by the Pentagon.

In the real Iraq, President Bush, as Commander in Chief, has failed to properly address the insurgency that is killing scores of troops and civilians every day. This is a failure that could have and should have been addressed during the planning stages of the war.

In the past week, four Republican Senators have bucked their party line and acknowledged the sweeping problems that exist in the real Iraq. Senator CHUCK HAGEL of Nebraska said, "I don't think we're winning . . . we're in trouble. We're in deep trouble."

Senator RICHARD LUGAR, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, went further. When asked why only \$1 billion of the \$18 billion appropriated for Iraq's reconstruction has been spent, he said, "Well, this is the incompetence of the administration."

This did not have to be an unmitigated disaster. But Iraq is woefully unstable largely due to planning failures by the Bush administration: the failure to enlist most of our allies as partners in the war, the failure to anticipate the anger and intensity of the insurgency, and the failure to allocate the billions of dollars in reconstruction funds that could have helped secure that country.

Fortunately, we have opportunities to fix this awful mess. Earlier this week Senator JOHN KERRY offered a better, smarter solution to fixing the real problems in Iraq. JOHN KERRY's plan includes soliciting and enlisting support from our allies, properly training Iraq's security forces, and carrying

out a viable reconstruction plan that truly involves the Iraqi people, instead of giving companies like Halliburton the benefit of America's investment, while leaving Iraqi companies without contracts and the Iraqi people without jobs.

We need to engage in smarter policies if we want to stop the bleeding in Iraq. That is why I have introduced H. Con. Res. 392, to create a smarter security resolution for the 21st century. SMART stands for Sensible, Multilateral American Response to Terrorism. With SMART security, we would not be in the mess that we are in today. SMART security treats war as an absolute last resort. It fights terrorism with stronger intelligence and multilateral partnerships, and it controls the spread of weapons of mass destruction with aggressive diplomacy, strong regional security arrangements, and vigorous inspection regimes.

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.)

EXPRESSING OUTRAGE AT REPUBLICAN DOUBLE STANDARD

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, the Nation is talking about Dan Rather, CBS, and the false National Guard memos. Republicans are saying that he misled the Nation, that it is a scandal that threatens our body politic. Congressional Republicans are talking about an ethics investigation. And yesterday on a radio show, Bill Bennett said the Dan Rather incident went beyond bias. He said, "This is corruption."

Let me tell the Members something. Dan Rather is going to get a whopping, and he deserves it. CBS has a black eye, and they earned it. There is no excuse for what happened. However, all this outrage from the self-righteous right wing of this country has taken hypocrisy to a new low.

Let me ask my colleagues where was the moral outrage and where is the moral outrage when the President of the United States here in the State of the Union at this podium used falsified evidence to allege in his State of the Union that Iraq had attempted to purchase yellow cake uranium from Nigeria?

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Where is their moral outrage when Condoleezza Rice and DICK CHENEY repeatedly link Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, all the while knowing that no evidence supports the claim?

Where is their moral outrage when our President said we would find tens

of thousands of pounds of chemical and biological weapons when we invaded Iraq, even though he knew there was no absolute proof?

Where is their moral outrage when we are told that Iraq purchased aluminum tubes in order to refine uranium, even though weapons experts said otherwise?

Where is their moral outrage when Paul Wolfowitz told the Congress that Iraqi oil money would pay for reconstruction, all the while knowing that the burden would be placed on the American taxpayers?

And where is their moral outrage when we discovered that the chief architects of the Iraqi war, Vice President CHENEY, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, Richard Perle and Donald Rumsfeld, paid Mr. Ahmed Chalabi \$49 million in U.S. taxpayer money for faulty intelligence claiming that Iraq had mobile weapons labs and that we would be greeted as liberators? If this is how Iraqis greet liberators, they have a funny way of saying "welcome."

Mr. Speaker, the outrage of the self-righteous right over the falsified National Guard documents is nothing more than opportunistic partisan politics at its worst.

Did Dan Rather do wrong? Undoubtedly, and he is going to get what he deserves, as will CBS. Dan Rather deserves criticism and he should be held accountable.

But I fail to understand why Dan Rather's credibility has raised such a moral outrage, but the same critics cannot find that the President's credibility equals that of Dan Rather's. What civics class did they go to, where they learned that Dan Rather's credibility weighs more important to the fabric of this country than the President of the United States?

As far as I am concerned, both individuals have a piece of the public's trust; both individuals have to be accountable for what they say. Dan Rather said he was wrong and he will be held accountable. We have yet to hear that same explanation from the President of the United States.

I say this in all seriousness: I do not think the President of the United States takes it lightly. Dan Rather's poor judgment and false statements did not lead to where the country is today in Iraq and the cost we have paid both in lives and in our treasure. Time and again, this administration has used false statements and false documents to justify their actions, and America has paid dearly.

Mr. Speaker, my challenge to my friends on the right wing is, I will join you any time you want to condemn Dan Rather. If you want to have an hour debate here on the floor, I will be down there. But I offer you the invitation to come and join me any time you want to have an hour debate about the President's false statements and what he used to justify a war, knowing all the while that was not true.

Dan Rather will pay for this, as will CBS. But the President of the United States also has credibility, all of our credibility, and when it is misused, we all pay dearly for it.

So I ask the people on the right who usually talk about moral consistency to stop being so inconsistent in their moral relativism, where they see Dan Rather's credibility and his character as more important than that of the President of the United States. Understand that the President, our President, speaks for all of us, and his credibility is our credibility, and when we use it in front of the world and we are questioned from here forward because we no longer have told the truth and people do not believe us, we all pay a price that we are seeing every day in the news.

THE BUSH MEDICARE BILL'S DIRTY LAUNDRY

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to follow on the heels of the comments of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) about the Bush administration not telling the truth about Iraq and how much the country has paid for that and discuss how the President of the United States did not tell the truth about the Medicare bill and how, unfortunately, because of that, senior citizens of this country will be inflicted with the largest Medicare premium increase, 17.4 percent, that seniors have ever seen in the 38 years of Medicare's history.

On this chart we can look at what is entitled "Medicare Bill's Dirty Laundry." I want to talk for a moment how we got where we got, how this bill came to become law and led to that 17.4 percent premium increase that Medicare beneficiaries will be forced to pay.

First of all, the Medicare bill was written by the drug industry and the insurance industry, both industries having given the President of the United States tens of millions of dollars, and to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and Republican leadership, tens of millions of dollars for their political campaigns. So the legislation was written by the drug and insurance companies as a payback by the Republicans for the help that they had gotten from these industries.

Now, when the bill came to the floor of the House of Representatives, and everybody in this body remembers that night, the debate started at midnight, the votes started at 3 o'clock in the morning. The vote went for 2 hours 55 minutes as the Republican leadership attempted to bribe, as told the next day by one Republican Member, strong arm, twisted arms, waked up the President, got him on the phone with Members of Congress, campaign contributions flowed liberally to Republican

Members of Congress, and that vote, after 2 hours 55 minutes, the longest vote in Congressional history, two Members changed their vote at 5:55 in the morning and that Medicare bill barely passed.

Then the administration used tens of millions of dollars, of taxpayers' dollars, to try to convince the public that this was a good bill. At the same time we found out that this bill that was to cost \$400 million, we were told would actually cost about \$530 billion, from \$400 billion to \$530 billion. The President knew it, the head Medicare knew it, and they simply did not tell the people and the Congress of the United States. That is why we ended up with a 17 percent increase.

Then this was capped off by the fact that the President of the United States did not release this information about the 17 percent increase until they could almost do it in the dead of night. They chose a Friday afternoon right before the Labor Day weekend to announce to the public that, yes, this increase was going to be 17 percent.

Now, before the Bush Medicare bill became law, the nonpartisan Medicare trustees said the premium increase for 2005 for Medicare beneficiaries would be \$2. Instead, once the Bush Medicare bill became law, the premium increase jumped to \$11.60. The premium increase after the Bush Medicare law was more than five times larger than the previous premium increase was estimated to be.

So where does that money go? Where do the billions of dollars that come out of seniors' pockets on the one hand go? It comes out of seniors' pockets. By and large, it goes into the insurance company HMO pockets.

Insurance company HMOs had a 50 percent increase in profits last year. That is before the Medicare bill became law. In fact, that 17 percent largest increase in Medicare history premium goes directly into a \$23.5 billion slush fund for the insurance industry. The insurance industry, which enjoyed huge profit increases the year before, now is going to get a \$23.5 billion bonus, thanks to the increase in premiums for seniors.

So, Mr. Speaker, it makes a perfect circle. The Medicare bill is written by the drug companies and insurance companies; the bill passes Congress in large part because of huge contributions from the drug and insurance companies to the Republican leadership and to President Bush and to Republican rank and file members; the bill then means huge subsidies for the insurance companies, \$23.5 billion, and even bigger profits for the drug companies; and then, when all this is over, the premium goes up not \$2, but \$11, 17 percent, the largest premium increase in Medicare history.

Mr. Speaker, that is the kind of corruption that I hoped we would never see in this body, where campaign contributions result in a bill written for the drug and insurance industries