

On November 2, the Post echoed this endorsement of consumer freedom writing, "Retirees have a choice of insurance plans with widely varying costs, and some are faced with decisions on how much to spend out of pocket. If they choose to pay top dollar for branded medicines, the incentive to invent new medicines will rise. If they prefer to save money, incentives for innovation will decline a bit. Either way, a balance will be struck that reflects broad social preferences."

My colleagues, the Democrat bill, H.R. 4, that was passed, not through the democratic process here in Congress, but put on the floor without amendments, will not help the part D Medicare prescription drug program, it will hurt it. If you don't believe it, read these editorials of the Washington Post.

VOTERS MADE A MISTAKE TRUSTING DEMOCRATS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, there is something awry in this House. You know, we have heard for the last 2 years I have been here in Congress about how if the Democrats were allowed to be in the majority, there was going to be openness, Mr. Speaker, there was going to be transparency, there was going to be bipartisanship; and yet right here the first rattle out of the box we have 3 weeks where the Republicans are not allowed any input whatsoever. Oh, we can come to the floor and fuss about it, but that is not input, there are no amendments, there are no changes that were allowed to be made. But now this week, we are beyond the 100 hours. And of course that was pretty ironic because promises, pledges, I assure you we are going to have openness, we are going to be bipartisan, well, when they saw around election time it was, gee, they had a chance of taking the majority, what did they do? Well, we don't want to keep that bipartisan promise, so let's change that. How can we do that? Oh, we will make a new promise. We will promise we are not going to keep our prior promise and we are just going to ramrod some things through in the opening days of Congress. Then they found out they enjoyed that, they liked that. Don't let them have any input. That is not right to Americans that nearly half of Americans are not allowed input into what goes on.

But this week takes the cake. Unbelievable. We have a bill that has only, as far as we can find out, had input from Congressman OBEY and Senator BYRD, it is the Obey-Byrd \$463 billion earmark. Now I have got some folks up here from my district from Lufkin, Texas; the mayor is here, the city manager. In fact, nine of my 12 full counties had never voted for a Republican

for Congress before, they are conservative Democratic counties. They don't run their counties and cities this way. They don't say the mayor is going back in the back rooms and is going to put together the budget for the next year. We are not going to have any kind of hearings, we are not going to allow any input. And here in Congress, in the past we have had review by subcommittees, and then the subcommittee hearings and taking testimony, and then we had a voting it out of subcommittee called a markup. Then we had review by the full committee. Then we had input from both Democrats and Republicans. Then we had a voting it out of committee. And then it went to the Rules Committee, and then the Rules Committee considered it. And then it came to the floor. And then there were opportunities for amendment, not on \$463 billion of American taxpayer money, no, not here. There is no subcommittee, no committee, no Rules Committee. Well, they may take it to Rules, but I am not sure about that because it won't matter. It is coming to the floor tomorrow for a vote on the \$463 billion Obey-Byrd earmark. That is not openness and transparency. I don't care how many new promises you make to break your old promises, that isn't right to the American people of my county, my county seats, Gilmer, Jefferson, Tyler, Longview, Marshall, Carthage, Henderson, Nacogdoches, Center, Hemphill, San Augustine, Lufkin; they would never run their city governments like this, they would never run their county governments like this. People would run them out of office if they tried to do what is going to be done tomorrow with \$463.5 billion of America's taxpayer dollars. That is just not right. That is not right.

You know, Democrats had kind of run the budget process in the ground, and people had enough. They saw the way Senator BYRD cost us hundreds of millions or billions of dollars building an FBI facility in West Virginia. They saw the way the earmarks got out of hand under Democrats, so they voted in Republicans in 1994. Republicans did a great job, welfare reform, bringing the budget to where it balanced. And then they got a little complacent, some of my colleagues got long in the tooth and forgot why they were there, and so we got voted out. And the Democrats said, trust us, we have learned our lessons, we are not going to let this happen again. And all I can think about over and over again is that line in Animal House where after the senior fraternity members had wrecked the young freshman pledge's car, the guy put his arm around the young freshman and said, in effect, well, you messed up, you trusted me. Well, voters trusted Democrats with the majority. And now, as we consider \$463 billion Obey-Byrd earmark that didn't have input from our friends across the aisle or Republicans, you messed up, you trusted them.

CHARLIE ALLEBACH, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 2 minutes.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I come here today not to speak about the great weighty issues of the day, whether it be Iraq or the budget process and procedures of the House, homeland security or any number of issues. No, Mr. Speaker, I come here today to talk about the career of a wonderful individual. You know, it was Tip O'Neill who once said that all politics is local, and I rise today to honor the career of one of our Nation's great local civic leaders, civic officials, Charlie Allebach, Jr.

Charlie has been serving the people of the Borough of Souderton, Pennsylvania, for almost 43 years. Let me say that again. That is for 43 years, he has served the people of Souderton, Pennsylvania. He first became a borough councilman in 1964—by the way, I was 4 years old at that time—he was appointed mayor in 1970, and he has been mayor ever since. But I just want you to know, too, that he has just announced his retirement.

Charlie has presided over the steady growth of a wonderful community, Souderton, Pennsylvania. If you don't know anything about Souderton, it is in the Indian Valley of Pennsylvania, Montgomery County. It has got a great tradition. The Mennonites have had an enormous influence on that area over the years, have deeply influenced the culture and tradition. There is a great sense of family and faith in that area. Souderton is an extraordinary community.

Charlie, also, I want you to know, has performed more than 2,400 marriage ceremonies, lent his time to local service organizations and has been devoted to the borough in every way imaginable.

On behalf of the people of the 15th Congressional District, I wish him the best during his retirement. We would like to keep him around in public office longer, but I understand that 40 years is a long time. We wish him the best in this richly deserved retirement.

I also ask that a copy of my remarks today be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD so that Charlie Allebach, Jr.'s career as the mayor of Souderton can be memorialized within the annals of Congress for all time and to all the people in the Indian Valley in Souderton, I know that they are perhaps watching today the proceedings of the House and I know they have such a deep affection for this man. We don't spend enough time in our lives as Members of Congress thanking and celebrating people who do things right, who enter public service because they believe in advancing the best interests of their community. They are not doing it for themselves. That is what Charlie Allebach is all about.