

Federal Government did create Medicare, Medicare which now serves 40 million Americans, disabled and old, and which does a very, very good job of doing that.

So I look forward to the debate we're going to continue to have with the other side on how best to create health care reform.

INTRODUCING THE RAISE ACT,
H.R. 2732

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, if the gentleman from Kentucky wants to know why Republicans oppose the government takeover of our health care system, I would invite him to consult the many, many refugees from Canada and Britain who have come here to America to get their health care, because they simply can't survive with bureaucrats telling them what treatments they'll get and when they'll get them.

The Republicans are proposing to bring within the reach of every American family a basic health plan that they will own, that they can change if it fails to suit them and that they will hold wherever they work and under whatever circumstances they work; but Madam Speaker, I'm here on different business this morning.

I'm here to talk about the right of workers. Their right to gather and to bargain collectively with an employer is a fundamental right of labor. It often strengthens the position of individual workers as they negotiate with a powerful employer. Yet survey after survey tells us that union members are less satisfied with their jobs than nonunion workers, and many Americans today simply refuse to work in union shops at all.

So why is it that a bargaining process designed to improve workers' satisfaction should produce such dissatisfaction?

Perhaps the answer rests with the simple human desire in each of us to excel in what we do and to be recognized and rewarded for that excellence. Collective bargaining increases the ability of workers to take a stronger position to negotiate with an employer, and this is good, but they're then left to give up any individual rewards for outstanding work.

Union workers end up trapped with a one-size-fits-all contract that denies them the dignity that comes from individual excellence and achievement. No matter how hard that worker toils or no matter how much he produces, he gets paid exactly the same as the coal worker who puts in minimal effort.

Well, why shouldn't workers get extra pay and performance bonuses beyond the union-negotiated wage base? Why does the wage floor set through union contracts also have to be a wage ceiling for those union members who go the extra mile to get ahead?

Union leaders may see value in wiping out individual initiative to build solidarity among rank-and-file members, but those workers would be far better off if they could enjoy both the advantages of collective bargaining and the additional rewards of individual performance raises and bonuses. Many unionized businesses would gladly pay individual workers more if they could. Some have tried, but over the years, the National Labor Relations Board has repeatedly struck them down.

For that reason, I have introduced the Rewarding Achievement and Incentivizing Successful Employees, or RAISE Act, H.R. 2732. It will allow working union members to escape the false choice between collective bargaining and individual reward that our outdated labor laws have forced upon them. Senator VITTER has introduced a similar bill in the Senate.

Under the RAISE Act, union members would retain all of the collective bargaining rights under current law, and employers would be bound to the wage and benefit schedules negotiated under those laws. In addition to the floor established by the union contract, employers could add bonuses for those workers who go the extra mile, combining the benefits of collective bargaining with the rewards of individual achievement.

Years ago, Admiral Grace Hopper observed that, in all of her years in the United States Navy, she had determined that the greatest impediment to human progress is the phrase "but we've always done it this way." That's the only answer we've heard so far in opposition to this simple reform, and in days like these, that's no answer at all.

CONGRATULATING MRS. KIM
HENRY, OKLAHOMA'S FIRST LADY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. BOREN) for 1 minute.

Mr. BOREN. Today, Madam Speaker, I rise to share a kind word and to send my congratulations to one of Oklahoma's great women, Kim Henry, Oklahoma's first lady and the wife of our outstanding Governor.

Born in Norman and raised in Shawnee, Mrs. Henry would mature into a confident and independent woman who would eventually find her calling as a public schoolteacher. Throughout her tenure as Oklahoma's first lady, she has been a devoted mother to three beautiful daughters, and has been an active member of numerous charities.

One of those prominent Oklahoma organizations is the influential Sarkeys Foundation. Formed in 1962 by S.J. Sarkeys, the Sarkeys Foundation has contributed over \$55 million to various Oklahoma cultural and economic initiatives. Last week, the Sarkeys Foundation asked Mrs. Henry to be its executive director. This is a significant moment in her life and also for the State of Oklahoma.

Congratulations to Oklahoma's first lady, Kim Henry. Your hard work and dedication to the State of Oklahoma doesn't go unnoticed.

"THE STATE OF THE UNION'S
FINANCES, A CITIZEN'S GUIDE"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, Members of Congress in the House and the Senate get literature sent to them every single day. In fact, we probably get four or five books a week. I don't know how many little leaflets and pamphlets we're asked to read, but we don't have time to read them all. We ask our staff to read some of them, but we don't have a chance to really get into the minutiae of some of these brochures.

Our colleagues in both the House and the Senate got this little booklet called "The State of the Union's Finances, a Citizen's Guide." These are going to be given, I guess, to people all across this country. I hope every one of my colleagues and everybody in America gets a chance to read this little booklet. Now, this was sent to us by our colleagues FRANK WOLF, Republican of Virginia, and JIM COOPER, Democrat of Tennessee. I just want to read to you a little bit about the situation that America faces, because Americans right now, I don't think, are really aware of the fiscal problems we're facing.

As of the fall of 2008, we had \$12.2 trillion in explicit liabilities. That's publicly held debt, military and civilian pensions, retiree health benefits, and others things related to that. We had \$1.3 trillion in debt for Federal insurance, loan guaranties, leases, and so forth, and we had a \$42.9 trillion debt from Medicare hospital insurance, Medicare outpatient services, Medicare prescription drugs, and Social Security. That's a total of \$56.4 trillion in debt that we have right now, today. That amounts to \$184,000 of debt for every man, woman, and child in this country; it amounts to \$435,000 of debt for a full-time worker; for each household, it amounts to \$483,000 in debt. That's the national debt today.

George Washington said we should avoid ungenerously throwing upon posterity, our kids, the burden we, ourselves, ought to bear. In 1796, they had a deficit, and George Washington said that we can't allow this to happen because we don't want to leave a burden to our kids and to our grandkids by spending too much money.

I'm telling you right now, colleagues and anybody else who is paying attention, what we're going to leave our kids and our grandkids is something that they will curse us for because they're going to have to pay extremely high taxes, and the inflationary problems that they're going to face are going to be insurmountable.