

are hit with more new taxes. What is the plan to protect small business from bearing the brunt of new taxes for this health care idea?

Madam Speaker, these are seven of the questions I have been asked by the people I represent, and I would hope the President could address some them and questions by other Members of Congress.

Madam Speaker, does anyone really believe that big government can do a better job of running health care? It is a glittering illusion to think our health care problems can be solved by more expensive, big-bureaucratic government. We do need reform, but a government takeover will only add to the problems we have now. We need to fix what is broken, not break what already works.

So, Madam Speaker, since our President is an innovator of new communication ideas, I respectfully submit that a townhall meeting between the President and Congress might just be the way to cut to the chase in this health care debate and allow the President time to answer the questions of the American people.

And that's just the way it is.

#### THE AMERICAN ECONOMY IS THE ISSUE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, our economy is the issue. Today, the World Economic Forum released its annual Global Competitiveness Report. Switzerland has now replaced the United States as the most competitive economy in the world. The United States fell out of first place due to its weakened financial markets and macroeconomic instability.

This, Madam Speaker, is another wake-up call for our country, if anyone is listening. Due to the global economic crisis, precipitated by irresponsible U.S. financial institutions, nations throughout the world continue to struggle managing their financial futures.

Let's take note of an important fact: Switzerland maintains a positive trade balance, not a trade deficit. In 2008, Switzerland enjoyed a \$17 billion trade surplus, a third straight record year. And yet the nation is also now ranked as the most competitive in the world. We have almost a trillion-dollar trade deficit.

Now, think about this: Free trade fundamentalists here in the United States would say that it is not possible, that you can't be competitive while running an enormous trade surplus. Some of them even try to tell us that trade deficits are good.

Well, here in the United States, the free trade fundamentalists would have us believe we have to roll over for the Chinese or anyone else who wants to dominate our domestic market in order

to be competitive. But facts are facts. Switzerland is both the world's most economically competitive nation, according to the World Economic Forum, while enjoying an enormous trade surplus.

Madam Speaker, we have a lot of work to do here in our country and in this Congress to help our Nation regain its world-leading position in the competitiveness ranking. We now rank, shockingly, 108th in the world in the soundness of our banks. Switzerland fell in that category too, down to 44th, but not as far as the United States.

In regulation of securities exchanges, the United States ranked a dismal 47th in the world, compared to Switzerland's third-place ranking.

In property rights, Switzerland was first, and the United States 30th.

In infrastructure, that is, roads, bridges and so forth, Switzerland was first. The United States, 14th.

In math and science education, Switzerland was fifth and the United States 48th.

In infant mortality, the United States ranked 36th. Doesn't that speak to a decent health insurance program in this country?

In life expectancy, we were 30th. In the quality of primary education, 30th.

Madam Speaker, we have a lot of work to do. Our Nation is losing ground internationally. Second place overall isn't bad, but we have to make the necessary investments in our physical and social infrastructure or we will fall even further.

One the authors of the World Economic Report, Dr. Sala-i-Martin, a professor of economics at Columbia, put it this way: "Amid the present crisis, it is critical that policymakers not lose sight of long-term competitiveness fundamentals amid short-term urgencies. Competitive economies are those that have in place the factors driving productivity enhancements on which their present and future prosperity is built. A competitiveness-supporting economic environment can help national economies to weather business cycle downturns and ensure that the mechanisms enabling solid economic performance going into the future are in place."

We have a lot of work to do as a Congress. We need strong reform of the financial sector to restore strength to our banks, not cosmetic changes; we need investments in infrastructure and education; and we need health insurance reform. Our economic competitiveness as a nation and our ability to create jobs hang in the balance.

Madam Speaker, it is time for Congress to take the reins and stop this stampede of greed, to provide leadership that will help our Nation and help our people through these tough times. We want the United States to be a world leader again in job creation, innovation and economic competitiveness. We can do it, but not unless the financial industry is a part of the team, pulling in the same direction,

making our country stronger, not putting us further at risk, and not taking huge bonuses while 15 million Americans remain unemployed.

Madam Speaker, the economy is the issue. The American people know that. The President and Congress have our work cut out for us.

#### IMPLEMENTING A PROPER U.S. APPROACH TO HONDURAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my deep concern regarding the most recent strong-arm tactics of the U.S. Government to coerce the people of Honduras into accepting the return of former President Manuel Zelaya into power.

Have some U.S. officials forgotten what democracy really is? Democracy does not belong to nor is defined by one man nor one government. It cannot survive without respect for the rule of law. Yet this has been forgotten.

The U.S. and the international community failed the Honduran people and Honduran democracy as Zelaya violated the constitution and took unilateral actions to extend his hold on power. Our government said and did nothing as democracy came under attack in the months leading up to Zelaya's removal from office. Yet when the Honduran Supreme Court, the Attorney General, the National Congress and the human rights ombudsman took the necessary steps in accordance with the constitutional tenets, then the U.S. and the amorphous international community quickly sprung into action to defend Zelaya and punish Honduran democratic institutions and virtually all of Honduran civil society.

With no apparent regard for U.S. security or political or economic interests, the United States is doing all we can to ensure that Zelaya is put back in charge. The U.S. has terminated millions of dollars in U.S. assistance to the people of Honduras. We have stopped critical counternarcotics cooperation. We have suspended necessary visa services. Last week, the State Department declared that the presidential elections to be held in late November in Honduras will not be recognized unless Zelaya is returned to power.

As the U.S. has been employing its harshest tactics against the Honduran government and the Honduran people, the U.S. has also at the same time eased restrictions on the Cuban dictatorship, pushed for engagement and dialogue with the Cuban, Syrian and Iranian regimes, while failing to hold Chavez and Correa accountable for the blatant violations of freedom of expression and other fundamental rights of their citizens.

The U.S. has crossed a dangerous threshold by announcing, as I stated, that we will not acknowledge the upcoming Honduran elections unless the

current democratic government of Honduras accepts Zelaya's return to power. This threat not only deliberately ignores the rule of law and the checks and balances carefully crafted in the Honduran constitution to prevent the rise of tyranny, but it also seeks to replace them with mandates from outside actors who are carrying water for Chavez, for Castro, for Zelaya and the like. The U.S. position undermines the fundamental right of the Honduran people to elect their own leaders in multiparty, transparent democratic elections, free from coercion.

How our present course of action serves our interests or supports Honduran democracy remains an important yet unanswered question. Elliot Abrams, currently at the Council of Foreign Relations and a former official with the Reagan Administration, recently wrote it was Zelaya who wanted to mess around with that election and hold a referendum on that date, allowing him to be reelected in perpetuity, just as his mentor Chavez had done in Venezuela, and now that Hondurans want to go back to regular elections, what does the U.S. do? The United States won't allow them to do so.

The presidential candidates in Honduras, Madam Speaker, have not changed since Zelaya was removed from office. The dates of the election have not changed. The presidential term has not been moved or modified. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal is taking steps to ensure that this is the most transparent election in Honduran history.

□ 2015

The U.S. should be assisting rather than undermining the preparations for the upcoming elections to ensure that there is no interference with the democratic electoral process in Honduras. Mary Anastasia O'Grady of the Wall Street Journal wrote, "A lot of Hondurans believe that the U.S. isn't using its brass knuckles to serve their democratic aspirations at all, but quite the opposite, the aspirations of a neighborhood thug. Though some in our country believe that being popular among Latin America's left-wing dictators is the key to a successful U.S. policy in our hemisphere, freedom must be and must remain our driving force." Freedom, Madam Speaker. If it is not, the U.S. would have not only forgotten the meaning of democracy but would have forgotten what our Nation is, what we stand for and what defines us. Freedom.

#### HONORING ERNIE HARWELL

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

Mr. McCOTTER. Madam Speaker, I quote:

"For, lo, the winter is past,  
The rain is over and gone;

The flowers appear on the earth;

The time of the singing of birds is come,

And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

Every April, we Michiganders heard Ernie Harwell recite these lines from the Song of Solomon from his broadcast booth; and we welcomed him and another season of Detroit Tigers baseball back into our homes. Ernie Harwell is not only a part of our culture; he is a part of our families.

For 42 summers around radios and sand lots throughout Michigan and America, Ernie's voice embodied and expressed the grace, skill, triumphs and travails of the greatest of American games—baseball. Everyone either tried or knew someone who tried to mimic his legendary calls of "long gone," "he stood there like a house by the side of the road," or "that foul ball was caught by a youngster from"—and on pins and needles we'd wait to hear from what city the lucky fan hailed. Of course, down inside we knew no one, including Ernie, knew where the fan was from, but it didn't matter. We knew where Ernie's heart was. It was and is with baseball and with us.

But a heart as big as Ernie's is not confined solely to Detroit or to baseball. Across the country, generations of sports fans grew up listening to Ernie. He announced games for both NCAA and pro football teams; for the Masters golf tournament in his native State of Georgia; for the Major League Baseball All Star Game and World Series; for the Brooklyn Dodgers, New York Giants, Baltimore Orioles, and yes, for the Detroit Tigers, who, in gratitude and admiration, placed Ernie's statue in the main concourse at Comerica Park.

Yes, Ernie is also a part of the Detroit Tigers' family, as Tiger Hall of Famer Al Kaline affirmed: "Ernie is probably the most beloved person who has ever been in Detroit with the Detroit Tigers. He is loved by everybody and rightfully so. He's a great broadcaster, but an even better person."

Yet while we and the Tigers and sports fans across the Nation embrace him, no one, of course, loves Ernie more than his wife of 68 years, Lulu, and their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. So blessed with their love and support, and faithful and thankful to God for bestowing this bounty upon him, Ernie now courageously faces the recent diagnosis that he is afflicted with incurable bile duct cancer. Viewing his condition not as an end, but as a beginning, Ernie says, "Whatever's in store, I'm ready for a new adventure. That's the way I look at it."

Madam Speaker, may we all honor this man, savor his company amongst us in the time God grants, and greet all of our lives' challenges with the faith, equanimity and dignity of Ernie Harwell.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. NEUGEBAUER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### ESCALATION OF THE CZARS DEBATE

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

Mr. SOUDER. With the embarrassing demise of Mr. JONES, the czars debate has escalated even beyond where it was when we left for the July break. Depending on how you count, there are some 30 czars. It's been said, in many different places actually, that there are more czars in this administration than the Romanovs who ruled Russia for three centuries had czars. There's an energy czar, an urban czar, an infotech czar, a faith-based czar, a TARP czar, a stimulus accountability czar, a non-proliferation czar, a terrorism czar, a regulatory czar, a Guantanamo closure czar, a climate czar, a cyberspace czar, many more. They even had for a while a de facto car czar, Steve Ratner, who wasn't a czar but ultimately he became the car czar even though initially they said there wasn't going to be a car czar.

Now, the challenge here is that this appears to be an extra-constitutional approach. Now, the Constitution says government officers with significant authority, principal officers of the government, are to be appointed by the President subject to approval by the Senate.

Now, this has been interpreted, with the expansion of government, even to go five layers down; that they're expected to have delineated duties, deputy secretaries, assistant deputy secretaries, directors of different offices, come up to congressional committees, come up to the Hill, if not actually to get approved by the Senate, but at least to be accountable for what they do. We have it in the Government Reform and Oversight Committee, we call in many of these different people who have all sorts of delineated duties.

Now, a clear way to avoid the checks and balances of this system is to put them under the White House rather than having a delineated position. This gives them potentially a consulting position as though they were a policy person at the White House, even though they're moving through the bureaucracy. The motive behind this obviously is that many things are not just in one department. For example, almost any of these different categories; obviously faith-based czar, there are departments in each part of the administration. TARP crossed multiple things. Terrorism crosses many of the departments. So the question is, when you have a traditional line structure, what do you do when you have things kind of stove-piped, and how do you interrelate with this?