

in fear that his job will go away at the mill and he won't be able to get coverage. That's why we need health care reform.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, health care reform should be focused on lowering the cost of health care and health insurance. Yet Democrats are pushing a bill that would increase costs by having the government take over our Nation's health care system.

Under the Democrat bill, seniors will be forced to pay more for fewer Medicare benefits. Families will pay more out of their pockets for health care, and it will be more expensive for small businesses to offer health benefits.

On top of these higher individual premiums and prices, the Democrat bill increases government spending by over \$1 trillion in the first decade.

We need to lower costs and give families and individuals more choices, not increase costs and restrict choices through a government takeover.

One of the clear ways to reduce costs is to end lawsuit abuse. Frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care for everyone. Yet on this issue Democrats are on the side of lawsuits.

Mr. Speaker, legislation that increases spending over a trillion dollars while increasing the costs paid by seniors and families is legislation that I cannot support.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. JORDAN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, Americans hate being told what to do. It's just part of our collective DNA. We like freedom. We like the ability to choose. We like the ability to make decisions on our own. And what most Americans find troubling about this bill is it's 2,000 pages of the government getting between them and their family and their doctor.

Mr. Speaker, you're probably familiar with the old line: for most Americans when they're traveling down the highway and they see the sign that says 55, for most Americans that's not the limit; that's the challenge. That's just the way we look at things. And here we have this bill that's now going to tell us how we as individuals and as families and small business owners are going to get our health care. That's what Americans find troubling. That's why they're opposed to that. And that's why we need real reform and not this 2,000-page takeover of health care in our country.

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HEALTH CARE

(Mr. SMITH of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, millions of Americans are concerned with spending; and the spending contained in this bill and the more than 3,000 references to the word "shall" concerns Americans, especially as it relates to their tax dollars. This tax on medical devices, in my reading of the bill, looks like the sicker you are, the greater the tax you will pay. That is a huge concern to me.

When I look at the challenges that we face with needing to streamline government, with needing to first streamline Medicare and Medicaid and find this fraud that's out there first before we go about depending on the money that we find, we can make a lot of progress, rather than implementing 111 new agencies, commissions and bureaucracies in general. Mr. Speaker, we owe Americans better than this; and we can do better.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. BARTLETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday a member of the Mennonite Amish community called my office very concerned that if this bill passes, they're going to be fined because of their religious conviction. The members of this community do not buy health care insurance, and they don't cost the taxpayer anything. This community takes care of all of their health care needs. There is a conscience clause on page 300 of the bill. I read that. It's not clear to me whether they'd be protected or not.

But one thing is very clear to me: that those who wrote this bill didn't communicate with this community. This is a big community. We know there are problems. We know there are issues. This is just one more reason to reject this bill, start over and get it right because clearly they didn't get it right here.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. COBLE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, the majority of my constituents believe the United States has the world's best delivery of health care services. I concur. These same constituents are not averse to reform, but they fear the Pelosi health care plan will leave the gate wide open for the introduction of an overwhelming governmental involvement. I believe that fear is well founded.

Our health care system, Mr. Speaker, may well need some adjusting, some fine-tuning. What it does not need is a major overhaul. The Pelosi plan is, indeed, a major overhaul and should be rejected.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. PUTNAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PUTNAM. Well, the verdict is in. The Speaker's health care bill accounts for nearly 2,000 pages and \$1.055 trillion. It raises \$730 billion in new taxes. Businesses who cannot afford to cover their employees and individuals who cannot afford insurance would face \$167 billion in new taxes, and \$500 billion in new taxes would be on the backs of mostly small businesses. The bill would slash Medicare and Medicaid services to home health care providers, to nursing homes, to hospitals, to doctors, and it would impose a \$5 billion unfunded mandate on our States in the form of a new Medicaid burden at a time when our States can ill-afford it. The State of Florida alone would have a price tag of \$5 billion.

This bill is bad for the consumer. It's bad for patients. It's bad for our health care professionals. It is an expensive, unfunded burden on our States, and it is a stripping of freedom that is uncalled for in this era.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. MILLER of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, during such tough economic times, I find it incredible that the majority party insists on passing a health care bill that could destroy small businesses, the very backbone of our American economy. But that is exactly what this proposed legislation is going to do. It would institute a surtax of 5.4 percent on high-income earners, and over half of this tax is going to be paid by small businesses. The surtax would push the highest marginal tax rate to 45 percent of income, a rate we haven't seen since 1986. It requires small companies to provide a health plan that meets government standards. If a business can't afford it, the government will charge yet another tax of up to 8 percent.

It is destructive for American small businesses; it's dangerous for American taxpayers; and it's a disaster for the American people. And now we learn—no amendments to the bill. Shame on you, NANCY PELOSI. Americans deserve better.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, if I were talking to America, I would say, This is NANCY PELOSI's answer to health care. It's going to cost \$2.25 million per word, and we don't even have the manager's amendment yet, which is probably going to add another 600 or 700 pages to this. This is going to cut Medicare and Medicare Advantage by about, oh, \$460 or \$470 billion. Seniors are really going to feel it. It's going to end up rationing health care, maybe for everybody, but certainly for seniors. The taxes are going to go through the roof, and nobody's read this turkey. Nobody. They'll tell you they have. We've got a reading room right now; we're going to go through it. But even when we read this, we still don't have the manager's amendment.

We don't need this rush to judgment. We need to get it right. We need to take our time and get a real bill that's going to help the American people, not something that's going to cost an arm and a leg.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. HERGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, we need the facts about this massive 2,000-page prescription for government-run health care. Financial experts at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and other independent analyses have found that the Democrat plan for government-run health care will not only fail to reduce skyrocketing health care costs, it will actually increase them. Now with a vote looming on one of the most important bills to come through this Chamber in our Nation's history, I'm urging Speaker PELOSI to allow time for a proper analysis on how her bill will affect us in the long term instead of keeping Congress and the American people in the dark on the impact of government-run health care.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. PETRI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, health care reform is important, but it shouldn't come at the expense of the public's number one concern: the gut-punch of joblessness. The massive plans now under consideration threaten to disrupt one-sixth of our economy through tax hikes and punishing regulations. This is all in the service of a health care bill that is a budgetary train wreck. This bill forces drastic changes on a deeply divided public. It promises radical government intrusion in every sector of health care. It will have the effect of breaking the President's promise that you can keep what you have. It will not bend the cost curve down. It will burden the States with

huge new mandates. It will send insurance premiums through the roof. It cuts Medicare, seriously threatening popular Medicare Advantage plans; it allows for government funding of abortion; and there is no real liability reform.

We need health care reform, but we can do better than this. We must do better than this.

TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

(Mr. BUCHANAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I returned yesterday from a 4-day visit to Afghanistan to meet with the troops and our military leaders as part of a bipartisan congressional delegation. It's clear to me that our soldiers are performing at a high level in a challenging environment. Their dedication and spirit is strong as they work to prevent al Qaeda from regaining a foothold. It's also clear that we need to increase the number of troops there to help them succeed. I believe firmly that this is the best means of protecting the United States and our people from terrorist attacks. There is no question that the Taliban is a destabilizing force with ties to al Qaeda. The Taliban is a threat to the national security of America. We need to provide the resources to our troops to ensure that their counterinsurgency strategy is successful. The new troop level should be determined by whatever is needed to accomplish the mission. Congress should give strong consideration to our military leaders in answering this question.

Let me close by saying that I'm very proud of all the men and women serving in Afghanistan. They are highly skilled, motivated, and I am confident that with the additional troops, they can achieve their mission. They are genuine heroes.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. BAIRD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BAIRD. My colleagues, I have enjoyed the comments by my friends from the other side of the aisle. I just would rise today to point out one thing. The largest expansion of an entitlement program in the history of the United States of America since our creation happened under the watch of the Republican majority. It happened on a piece of legislation that we had less than 30 hours to read, there were no amendments allowed, and it increased the debt per decade by more than \$750 billion. The amount of Federal borrowing from foreign countries doubled under the watch of many of my colleagues here.

Now I am pleased that they're concerned about fiscal responsibility. Speaker PELOSI has pledged that the

bill will be available online, plus the manager's amendment, for 72 hours. We had less than 30 on the Medicare bill. We are at least trying to pay for this legislation. We will not, with this legislation, increase the debt \$750 billion, as did the Medicare prescription drug bill, passed by the former majority party.

Americans need health care reform. My friends on the other side of the aisle had 12 years to try to do something constructive, and they failed.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. AUSTRIA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. AUSTRIA. Mr. Speaker, this week marks a defining moment for this Congress and our Nation, with an \$11.9 trillion national debt that continues to grow as government encroaches into every aspect of our lives. We're about to vote on a nearly 2,000-page bill. We've heard all the details of this bill. It will increase the health care premiums for millions of Americans who are happy with their current coverage. It will cost nearly \$1 trillion, placing even more debt on our children and grandchildren. It will force businesses, large and small, to provide health care for their employees or pay fines to the government. It would unbelievably cut \$170 billion from the Medicare Advantage Program to pay for this bill, putting nearly 10 million seniors enrolled in Medicare Advantage at risk of losing their health care coverage. In Ohio, there are nearly 500,000 seniors on Medicare Advantage and nearly 30,000 of them are in my district alone.

Mr. Speaker, we all agree that our health care system can and should be improved. Unfortunately, Members of Congress are not listening to the American people, that more government is not the answer.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, before the Federal Government got heavily into health care in the mid-sixties, medical care was cheap and affordable for almost everyone. Doctors even commonly made house calls. We took what was a very minor problem for very few people and turned it into a major problem for everyone.

The people want medical care that is less expensive and less bureaucratic. The bill that we will apparently vote on later this week is 1,990 pages of bureaucratic gobbledygook. It will make health care even more expensive and even more bureaucratic. As Senator JOE LIEBERMAN said on Face the Nation, this bill "will actually hurt the economic recovery and our long-term financial situation."

The pattern seems to be that the Federal Government makes a problem