

Mr. McCOTTER. We are now a week removed from the President's celebrated health care summit, and we're a day removed from the President's press conference regarding moving ahead on the health care bill despite the wishes of the American people. Prior to the summit, which I referred to as the Shamwow Summit, I was one of the voices urging the Republicans not attend unless the President decided to start from scratch and find a principled basis for compromise amongst both sides. That principled basis was not found, and the principled divide remains.

The House and Senate Republicans went into the summit and they engaged admirably and honestly in the cause of putting forward Republican solutions to health care. Yet, what we found was that afterwards the President has decided to arbitrarily negotiate with himself what he purports to be a bipartisan compromise bill, one which magically has been obtained without the consent of the minority party.

As succinctly summarized by Mr. Charles Krauthammer yesterday, the summit was a Shamwow Summit, and the good faith of those Republicans in the room is now currently being used in a political charade upon the people to prepare them for the proposition that a bipartisan health care bill is before them. I quote Mr. Krauthammer: "But they," the administration, "wanted to present it to the American citizenry as having tried to reach out. That's why you had the charade of the summit last week, 7 hours of discussion, when it was already pre-cooked that that wouldn't change anything. But that's part of the deal. He," the President, "wants to appear to be offering to incorporate Republican proposals. And now the pivot, which we had today."

It is important as the health care debate continues that we not lose sight of the principled divide between the two sides. On the one hand, the Democratic majority wants to have government-run, bureaucrat-dictated health care. On the other, the Republican Party wants to have free-market, patient-centered wellness. No amount of taking Republican proposals and sprinkling them onto the faulty premise of a government-run bill will make it bipartisan or will make the Republican proposals effectual, as, contrarily, we will be taking the Democrat proposals and putting them on to a free-market, patient-centered wellness bill. It is a principled divide, one which Abraham Lincoln reminds us: important principles must remain flexible. In this instance, the bridge between the two parties has not been established and the divide remains.

Also within this debate I think it is important to point out a second important aspect. This is not merely about the money. It is about the liberty. We can all talk about costs. We can all talk about coverage. In my view, the

current health bill would have a catastrophic impact upon the fiscal condition of the United States, which is already tenuous at best. It is about the American people wanting to make sure they retain these decisions in their hands and that the forces that we see around us throughout the communication and innovation revolutions that empower them to make their own decisions every day at a greater extent than at any time in human history remain in their own hands rather than those of a government bureaucrat.

This is not mere supposition on my part. I cite two recent poll numbers. Referring to the Rasmussen report, only 21 percent of United States citizens believe that this government has their consent. I cite a second sobering statistic: according to CNN, 56 percent of Americans believe the Federal Government is a threat to the freedom of ordinary citizens.

As this health care debate proceeds forward despite the wishes of the American people, we are not only endangering their health care, we are endangering and jeopardizing their faith in their representative institutions, in their belief that this is a government of the sovereign people.

So in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I again point out that there is a principled divide between the two parties: one wants government-run, bureaucrat-dictated health care; one wants free-market, patient-centered wellness. As we move toward the former, the American people's faith in their representative institutions will be continually eroded as they watch in obstinate insistence by this majority and by this administration to pass a health care bill that the American people have said they do not want.

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

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE SYSTEM MUST CHANGE

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there are those who contend that we are moving too quickly, we're moving too swiftly, and that we must slow down. In fact, this translates into we really should not go forward at all. And to these who would contend that we should stop at this point, that we should simply let it go, my response is: we cannot let health care go, because it won't let us go.

The system is not sustainable. It is unsustainable as currently implemented. Currently, we're spending about \$2.5 trillion per year on health care; \$2.5 trillion is a big number. It's

difficult to get your mind around \$2.5 trillion; \$79,000 a second, however, is a number that we can comprehend. And that is what we are spending—\$79,000 per second. By 2018, depending on who's counting and how you count the numbers, we will be spending \$139,000 per second. That would be more than 20 percent of GDP.

We cannot sustain the current system. It must be revamped. This system has to change: 46 million people uninsured, depending on who's counting, when you count, and how you count. In my State of Texas, 6 million people uninsured and 1.4 million children in the State of Texas are uninsured. In Harris County, where I reside, 1.1 million people are uninsured. The system cannot continue as it is constructed.

We spend \$100 billion per year in emergency rooms; \$100 billion per year to cover those who are uninsured. That's money that could be well spent in a physician's office and would save us a lot of money and would also help us to deal with preventive measures as opposed to responding to illnesses when they become almost dire.

The system must change. We currently have a system wherein there are many people who are too young for Medicare. They make too much to receive Medicaid. And they don't make enough to buy their insurance. The system has to change. We cannot allow preexisting conditions to continue to prevent pregnant women from getting proper treatment. Pregnancy is a preexisting condition under the current system. The system has to change.

We must find a way to muster up the courage to take on this challenge. If we could pass and did pass Social Security when the polls were against it, if we passed other crucial measures when the polls were against them, we can pass health care reform. And for those who contend that in this country how you got here will depend upon whether you will get treatment, my response is this: if you commit a crime in this country and you harm someone, and we should harm you as the culprit, when we capture you, we will give you aid and comfort. In this country, if you are an enemy combatant and you hurt our warriors in battle and we should capture you and you have been wounded, we will give you aid and comfort. In this country, if you're on death row and you're going to meet your Maker next week, we will give you aid and comfort if you're suffering this week, and send you to your Maker next week.

If we can give the enemy combatant, the person on death row, and the person who is a criminal aid and comfort, surely we're going to give it to people who find themselves hurt and in the streets of life. The system must change.

Dr. King said it best. He said, On some questions, cowardice will ask, Is it safe? Expediency will ask, Is it politic? Vanity will ask, Is it popular? But conscience asks the ultimate question and that is, Is it right?