

I would note parenthetically, that Obamacare will exacerbate Obamadebt. (When you eliminate double-counting of Medicare cuts, Social Security cuts, and the use of CLASS Act premiums, the Democrats claim of deficit reduction disappears into another massive wave of red ink of \$466 billion over the first 10 years and \$1.4 trillion over the second 10 years.) Even without passage of this bill, under the President's 2011 budget proposal, federal spending will increase to a record \$3.8 trillion in 2011 alone. By 2020, the President's own 10-year budget analysis projects a more than doubling of debt to a record \$18.6 trillion.

Because Obamacare diverts \$500 billion from Medicare, there is no doubt whatsoever that senior citizens and disabled persons will lose certain health benefits they now enjoy. Medicare Advantage is protected in Florida—the so-called Gatorade fix—but not in my state of New Jersey or anywhere else. Medicare Advantage is used by over 11 million people nationwide including 15,983 people in my Congressional district alone. The Senate bill slashes nearly \$120 billion from Medicare Advantage plans, jeopardizing millions of seniors' existing coverage. So much for the President's promise that if you like your health plan, you can keep it; no you can't!

Madam Speaker, for the first time ever, Obamacare forces Americans to acquire an approved health plan or pay a stiff penalty—like they committed a crime.

The penalty is huge—the greater of \$750 per person per year (up to \$2,250 per family) or 2 percent of household income. No person in America should be coerced into buying medical insurance.

Under Obamacare, premiums for non-group family insurance will increase by as much as \$2,000 per year. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that by 2016, premiums will increase by 10–13 percent over what would happen under current law. Conversely, CBO had estimated that the Republican plan which I strongly support would decrease some premiums by 5–10 percent.

The Republican alternative focuses on lowering health care premiums for families and small businesses, increasing access to affordable, high-quality care, and promoting healthier lifestyles—without increasing taxes or adding to the crushing debt Washington has placed on our children and grandchildren and without cutting Medicare.

Obamacare would also create nearly 160 boards, commissions and programs and would vest sweeping powers on bureaucrats to determine what benefits are covered and not and at what cost.

Even though last September, President Obama stood a mere 20 feet away from where I am standing now, and told a joint session of Congress that “no federal dollars will be used to fund abortions, and federal conscience laws will remain in place,” his legislation today constitutes the largest expansion of abortion since *Roe v. Wade* itself, and makes a mockery of that pledge.

Additionally, Obamacare fails to institute real medical liability reforms to end junk lawsuits and curb the costs of defensive medicine—these have long been identified as significant forces in driving up health costs.

The goal of responsible health care reform should be to provide credible health insurance coverage for everyone, strengthening the health care safety net so that no one is left

out, and incentivizing quality and innovation, as well as healthy behaviors and prevention. This means that the current private health insurance market will have to be reformed to put patients first, and to eliminate denials of pre-existing conditions and lifetime caps and promoting portability between jobs and geographic areas, including across state lines. The tax code should be modernized to promote affordability and individual control, provide assistance to low-income and middle-class families. Medicare requires reform to be more efficient and responsive, with sustainable payment rates.

Of course, responsible health care reform will respect basic principles of justice: it will put patients and their doctors in charge of medical decisions, not insurance companies or government bureaucrats. It will also ensure that the lives and health of all persons are respected regardless of stage of development, age or disability.

It's time to go back to the drawing board and address what's broken and fix it.

The American public deserves better than what's on the table.

HONORING MEREDITH O'MALLEY

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Meredith O'Malley, a very special young lady who has exemplified the finest qualities of service and citizenship. Meredith has recently been named one of the top youth volunteers in Missouri for 2010 in the 15th annual Prudential Spirit of Community Awards.

Meredith is recognized for this prestigious award because of the positive impact she has made in her community. Her initiative, creativity, and selfless volunteerism make her a worthy recipient. Meredith should be proud to be a model citizen amongst the youth in her community and my congressional district.

Madam Speaker, I am confident Meredith will continue to use her many talents as tools for the betterment of her community and our nation. I respectfully urge you to join me in commending Meredith on this monumental achievement.

AUTHORIZING NEW AWARD PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL WORKERS

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 15, 2010

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2377, “To direct the Secretary of Education to establish and administer an awards program recognizing excellence exhibited by public school system employees providing services to students in pre-kindergarten through higher education” introduced by my distinguished colleague from Nevada, Representative TITUS.

The program which shall be known as the “National Classified School Employees of the Year Awards,” will allow all of our classified

school employees who work as paraprofessionals, clericals, custodial and maintenance, transportation, food and nutrition, skilled trades, health and human services, security, and technical services who provide exceptional service to public schools in the United States that play a vital role in providing for the welfare and safety of students. The awards program established and administered under the Secretary of Education will recognize those who strive for excellence in all areas of service to the education community and will recognize exemplary employees for their outstanding contributions to quality education in the United States.

Nominations will be submitted to the Secretary of Education by a chief state school officer no later than November 1 and shall consider nominations from local education agencies, school administrators, labor unions and professional associations based on work performance, school and community involvement, leadership and commitment, and local support. Prior to March 31, the Secretary of Education shall select an employee from each occupational specialty to receive an award under this recognition program.

I believe in recognizing those individuals who take time out to make a difference in the lives of our young people and I feel that the “National Classified School Employees of the Year Awards,” will highlight the great work put forth by great people who have a great impact not only in the lives of our children, but in the area of education and in our local communities. I would like to personally thank all of those who work and contribute to the area of education through their selfless service and tireless efforts.

HONORING MEGAN CORBIN

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Megan Corbin, a very special young lady who has exemplified the finest qualities of service and citizenship. Megan has recently been named one of the top youth volunteers in Missouri for 2010 in the 15th annual Prudential Spirit of Community Awards.

Megan is recognized for this prestigious award because of the positive impact she has made in her community. Her initiative, creativity, and selfless volunteerism make her a worthy recipient. Megan should be proud to be a model citizen amongst the youth in her community and my congressional district.

Madam Speaker, I am confident Megan will continue to use her many talents as tools for the betterment of her community and our nation. I respectfully urge you to join me in commending Megan on this monumental achievement.

H. CON. RES. 248, THE AFGHANISTAN WAR POWERS ACT

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution. The immediate