

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, this is a defining week in the history of this Republic. At no time in history has the Federal legislature mandated that everyone in this country buy anything; yet this week we are going to mandate, if this bill passes and is enacted into law, that everyone in this country under the force of law has to buy health insurance.

The Founding Fathers are rolling over in their graves today because they knew that we should be leery of a large central government mandating things to even the States that they have to comply with. They told us to have a healthy distrust of Big Brother, the Federal Government. They told us basically to sleep with one eye open and one eye closed because our freedoms could be at risk from within. We are at that moment in the history of this great Nation, and we must stand strong and resolute.

In Tennessee where I live, our Democratic Governor, Phil Bredesen, has called this the "mother of all unfunded mandates," because it forces all these new people into State Medicaid programs. In our State it is called TennCare. It is a multibillion dollar mandate to the people of Tennessee, and we don't have the money to pay for it. And we will not raise taxes to pay for it; we will not go into debt to pay for it. It is wrong for the States to be run over like this.

They carved out the 10th Amendment and gave States some sovereignty. There are liberal publications today writing that article VI allows the Federal Government to override the States. But that is on matters of equality and justice, not a decision of policy by the Federal legislature to mandate costs and taxes and debt on its people.

We must stand strong against this bill this week in the Congress. But if it is enacted into law, we must lead a repeal movement to immediately, as soon as possible, repeal this bill before it goes into effect. And then, if we are not able to repeal it, the Governors of this country should come out of their chairs and stand against this bill.

I will tell you, in Tennessee, if I am to become the 49th Governor of our great State, we will meet the Federal legislature and the Federal Government at the State line to oppose this mandate, because we will not raise taxes, we will not go into debt, we will not be violated like this. And we must let our Founding Fathers rest peacefully, knowing that these living laboratories of democracy, our States, are allowed to exist, setting our own taxes, setting our own rules, living in the United States but not being run over by the United States.

Mr. Speaker, this is a defining moment in the history of our country. We must be resolute. We must fight with every ounce of our energy to stop this Federal invasion and this overriding of States' rights.

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

woman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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

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

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

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

#### CUBA'S PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Orlando Zapata Tamayo, a prisoner of conscience who went on a hunger strike in one of the Cuban gulags, one of the many gulags that is full of political prisoners in that island prison of Cuba.

He went on a hunger strike to protest the multiple constant beatings that he was suffering under, that he and other political prisoners have to deal with on a constant basis. So he did, he went on a hunger strike. And after 80 days of being on a hunger strike, he passed away. He passed away after 80 days on February 28.

Right after that, another pro-democracy activist, very well known, another also former political prisoner named Guillermo Farinas, also began his own hunger strike. Mr. Speaker, he is still on a hunger strike today, 21 days after the death of Mr. Orlando Zapata Tamayo. He is already under very, very difficult circumstances. He is exceedingly frail, and his health is quickly deteriorating. But he is not stopping, again, to protest the conditions of the many political prisoners, but also to protest the lack of freedom, and to demand freedom for all political prisoners in Cuba and demand freedom for all who live on that enslaved island.

On March 11, Mr. Speaker, Felix Bonne announced that if and when Guillermo Farinas were to give his life in this hunger strike, that he would follow him; that he would be willing to give his life on a hunger strike to protest the conditions on the island, to protest the enslavement of all Cuban people, and the mistreatment of the political prisoners.

Today, March 17, 30 women known as the Ladies in White who go and protest peacefully in the streets of Havana,

and what they ask for is for the release of the political prisoners, of their relatives, their husbands, their sons, their brothers, today, 30 of them were thrown in prison. They were arrested, again, just because they were asking for the freedom of the political prisoners.

Today's march was led by Reina Zapata. She is the mother of Orlando Zapata Tamayo who, as I mentioned, died after 80 days on a hunger strike. Again, they were also arrested, taken away. Some of them had to be sent to the hospital because of the way that they were taken away.

And I mention this, Mr. Speaker, because it is important that the world understand that the people of Cuba are standing up, they are speaking out, they are protesting. They are protesting the conditions on the island, the lack of freedom, the oppression, the brutality of the Castro brothers who have been now the dictators on that island for over half a century.

So it is important that we also stand up and speak out, that we stand side by side with those in Cuba who are giving their all, including their lives, in the cause of freedom.

I know that there are some who still believe that it is okay to excuse those horrors; that we should try to make a buck, if we can, from that regime, with that regime at the expense of the suffering of the Cuban people. But, Mr. Speaker, as you know, there is no more noble people than the American people, which is why the vast majority stand side by side with the suffering of the Cubans, with the cause of a free Cuba.

So it is important that we remember as we debate and as we speak and as we live in freedom that just 90 miles away from the shores of the United States there are people who are suffering and who are dying for the cause of freedom. Mr. Speaker, we stand with them, we admire them, we support them. And we know that that cause will not be in vain, that their deaths will not be in vain, and that Cuba will be free.

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#### HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, there's a motto inscribed on Nebraska's State Capitol. It says, "The Salvation of the State is Watchfulness in the Citizen." Mr. Speaker, Nebraskans and all Americans are watching this health care debate. Frankly, I think they're growing tired—tired of the backroom dealing, tired of the abuse of the legislative process, and tired of the unwillingness of this body to craft the right policy for our country.

Overall, Nebraskans, and I assume most Americans, want a good health care bill, one that truly strengthens