

'fortunately,' he told me, are covered through the state (ACCESS program). He seemed calm as he explained this predicament. 'My wife just got diagnosed with Lyme disease, though—a tick-bite right here in our back yard.' Eyes perked up among the others sitting about the grocery. He told me, 'We're paying cash for the lab bill.' It had originally been \$307 but they were able to get it discounted to \$187. 'The doctor's bill was \$80—and that's just for the diagnosis,' he added. 'For the actual treatment, we're dependin' on free samples.'" Mike—Harrisonville, 7/21/2009

"Martin has been out-of-work since last year. 'Obviously I have no insurance,' he said. He has insulin-dependent diabetes and gets some healthcare through the Pennsylvania ACCESS card. He explained that, 'If I go back to work, however, I'll lose my medical care.' That's a disincentive to work, I said. 'Sure is . . . I need to stay under twenty hours a week to get medical care. If I work more, there's no job, no way I could pay for the healthcare and medicines. I can't just drop the insulin.'" Martin—Harrisonville, 7/21/2009

"I would call myself a fiscal conservative,' Jim told me as we sat together discussing healthcare in his living room. 'I believe that health savings accounts, HSAs, and patient involvement in the decisions will be important to bring costs under control.' He added that in his experience, once health benefits are provided, it's 'very difficult to backtrack.' He's worked in government for 32 years and is currently retired. 'Personally, I think the government plan, if made available to all, would work well. I think that would be easy to implement. It allows choice, there's already a mechanism to collect premiums and there could be some income tiering.'" Jim—Bedford, 7/21/2009

"I think that it's possible to have a very basic plan as a public good.' Jo told me she's seen examples of that and she 'believes it's a good use of taxpayer money.' But she also realizes how it could get out-of-hand. 'It all depends on how and what "basic" is defined as,' she said. 'Sometimes that's too abstract.'" Jo.—Bedford, 7/21/2009

RULES OF THE HOUSE

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply disappointed in the Rules package assembled by my Republican colleagues. In their campaigns, they promised to improve transparency and to reduce the deficit. These Rules break those promises.

Under these Rules, the new Republican majority will enact a draconian budget without a single hearing, without any input from the Budget Committee, without any outreach to Congressional Democrats, and without a direct vote by the House of Representatives. Merely by entering a statement into the record, the Budget Chairman can subject all spending beyond whatever levels he deems appropriate to a point of order. This level of concentrated authority runs contrary to the premise of transparency that Republicans campaigned on, and, given its disregard for scrutiny, runs the risk of greatly damaging our economy and the welfare of millions.

The rules themselves make a mockery of prudent budgeting. While the Republican rhet-

oric has been laudable in some instances, their "Cut-as-you-go" rule is riddled with loopholes. For instance, it allows tax cuts for corporations to be deficit financed, while programs like child tax credits must find offsets. In fact, these rules forbid eliminating even the narrowest special interest tax loophole to find revenue for effective government programs.

The most casual glance at the origin of this country's debts illustrates the fallacy of their approach. Without finding a dime to offset the cost to our Nation, these rules make it possible to both make permanent the 2001 and 2003 Bush tax cuts for the highest-income taxpayers and to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which not only saves nearly \$150 billion during the next 10 years, but reduces healthcare costs by nearly a trillion dollars during the following decades.

In no way do these rules result in the type of prudent budgeting that my Republican colleagues campaigned on, nor does it resemble anything like what any hardworking American family must do. At a time when the Republican majority is pledging greater openness, the Rules are also anti-democratic by depriving 600,000 taxpaying D.C. residents of their ability to have their voice heard in the Committee of the Whole.

The Rules package also undermines opportunities to continue investing in America.

By eliminating the point of order guarding Highway Trust Fund balances this Republican majority threatens investments in communities large and small across the country. Historically, this point of order ensured that Congress delivered on the transportation investments promised in the transportation authorization, and that States and communities could count on the long-term commitments made in that legislation. By removing this point of order, and allowing Highway Trust Fund balances to accrue and mask the actual deficit, the Republicans are engaging in budget gimmickry that undermines our economy and the safety of our communities.

Organizations from the Chamber of Commerce to the American Association of Highway Transportation Officials have expressed their strong concern about destabilizing transportation funding, and have urged the Republican Conference to make changes. I join with these organizations in expressing my concern and disappointment.

At a time when the need to invest in our communities is higher than ever, these rules will make it possible for the Republican Congress to decrease our investment in infrastructure, undermining efforts to rebuild and renew communities across the country. In addition to the new rule regarding the Highway Trust Fund, these Republican rules also limit the ability of the House to raise revenue for the Highway Trust Fund. At a time when our needs are greater than ever, and individuals and organizations across the country are calling on Congress to upgrade our Nation's roads, bridges, and transit systems, limiting our options—as these Rules do—is shortsighted and foolhardy.

THE WALK FOR HEALTHCARE: HEALTHCARE STORIES FROM MARYLAND AND WASHINGTON, DC, COLLECTED BY OGAN GUREL, M.D.

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 6, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following stories, collected by Dr. Ogan Gurel.

"Tamara told me, 'She was lucky having health insurance.' Knowing generally that lack of insurance was a problem, she didn't have any particular personal stories to share. But when I asked about health reform, she said, simply enough, that, 'More should be done.'" Tamara—Hagerstown, 7/22/2009

"Patrick has been on and off insurance all his life. 'More off than on,' he further clarified for me. 'My credit rating is trashed because of medical stuff.' And in the 80s he had a skull injury. 'I actually had insurance but not everything was covered so I just couldn't pay.' He seemed relaxed for someone for whom the system seemed not to work—forced into debt, even with insurance, and now suffering the consequence of ruined credit. But perhaps one gets used to such predicament.'" Patrick—Hagerstown, 7/22/2009

"Tiffany doesn't have a job, nor does she have health insurance. As a single mom, her daughter gets assistance through the state. For herself, she did have to go to the emergency room one time last year but as she didn't fill out the form for medical assistance in time (there was a three-month time limit), she ended up owing \$4,000. Now she's being taken to court by the hospital, Washington County. 'I get phone calls every day from the bill collectors,' she tells me. 'And I'm scared to go back to the doctor for anything including my frozen shoulder.' With some trepidation, she told me she knew somebody who was threatened with jail for not responding to court summons for a medical bill. 'It's not a good situation to be in,' she told me. Despite her unhappy troubles, Tiffany insisted on smiling when I took her picture.'" Tiffany—Hagerstown, 7/23/2009

"I met Terry at the Oriole Club, a local bar where I stopped in during a ferocious thunderstorm to take a water break. Terry believes in preventative medicine, eating right, exercising—being positive. She doesn't have insurance and with two kids, she's busy providing them with a home and feeding them right. Last year she got very sick but nobody would take her. Because she has no primary care doctor, it costs \$250 just to get in the door. The others seated along the bar gave knowing looks. She told me she prayed a lot, especially when her temperature hit 104. 'But I survived,' she said with a smile. 'But, if you don't have insurance,' she told me, 'you're treated different.'" Terry—Middletown, 7/23/2009

"Sonny told me the story of a girl in town. Many of the others seated at the bar recognized her plight. 'She's worked for ten years, without insurance,' Sonny told me. And she got sick with a gallbladder problem and, 'probably because she couldn't work on account of her illness,' she was laid off. She needs a gallbladder removal but the doctor keeps putting her off. 'Nobody wants to treat her,' he added. 'And she went to see the specialist but he wanted \$300 up front.' Karen, sitting alongside, squirmed in disapproval. 'Everyone's giving her the run-around . . . And there seems to be no way out of her situation.'" Sonny—Middletown, 7/23/2009

"Chris works at the Days Inn in Frederick. He's an insulin-dependent diabetic (that's his