

House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform? If not, please explain why not.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please have your staff contact Jason Foster at (202) 224-5225. Thank you for your prompt attention these important issues.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
Ranking Member.

Mr. GRASSLEY. How much time do I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 4 minutes remaining.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. I want to talk about immigration and a part of the immigration issue that concerns me, and, by golly, it has something to do with government oversight as well.

Last August, some lawyers at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service drafted internal memos outlining ways that the administration could get around Congress and grant undocumented aliens in the United States legal status. These amnesty memos outline ways that the executive branch could use discretionary authority to make sure thousands—who knows, maybe millions—of people here illegally could stay here without a vote of Congress.

A number of Republicans sent a letter to President Obama urging him to abandon any such plan. We sent several letters to Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano asking for statistics and a briefing on these memos. We asked for assurances that such plans to bypass Congress—I emphasize “plans to bypass Congress”—not be implemented. What did we get? All we got was radio silence.

I raise this issue again today because I am bothered by reports that there is another push for this administration to grant amnesty through Executive order, which only should be done by the law of this Congress, to certain groups of undocumented populations. Surprisingly, the push for this is coming from our friends on the other side of the aisle. Yesterday, 22 Democrats sent a letter to President Obama asking him to turn a blind eye to the law. These 22 Senators said they were OK with having an executive branch go ahead and go around Congress and grant amnesty to those who would be eligible under the so-called DREAM Act. These Senators said they didn't have the votes to get the bill through the Senate last year.

Their approach is in a nonconstitutional fashion to ask the President to have his administration use what is referred to legally as prosecutorial discretion to keep these undocumented individuals here. They claim doing so would be “consistent with our strong interest in the rule of law.” They say doing so would “help to conserve limited enforcement resources.”

I am appalled, and I hope a lot of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle are appalled, that Members of this body think that an Executive order to grant

amnesty behind our backs is not an assault on the democratic process. Congress has the power to change immigration laws and only Congress has the power to change immigration laws. The President has limited authority to grant relief in limited and emergency circumstances. I support the President's power to do that, but it was not meant to be used in a blanket fashion. The request by 22 Members of this body is an affront to our country's longstanding belief in the rule of law, and it is an attack on this body's duty to legislate on behalf of the American people, a power to legislate that the President does not have.

I happen to agree that our immigration policies have to be reformed. I will commit to moving legislation that expands upon or improves the legal avenue we currently have in place. Once again, we have not seen leadership by this President to work on a bill this Congress can support. Until that time comes, it would be foolish and disappointing if this President circumvented the democratic process and did what 22 Members of this body asked him to do in the letter to which I referred.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I rise near the end of this very important and profoundly significant budget debate to make some points not only about the dollars and cents in our health care system, but also to speak about a growing and persistent threat—the threat of irresponsible cutbacks to vital health care services for our Nation's most vulnerable—in the name of an ideological war on women's health care.

Our Nation is in the midst of a fiscal crisis. We need to recognize that there is a very immediate and important imperative to cut the costs of health care in this country. The costs of health care are spiraling out of control at a rate five times the rate of inflation.

The President, commendably, is talking about the need for serious measures and sensible conversation about what can be done to control and reduce the costs of health care. Just this week, the administration initiated Partnership for Patients, which is another step in the President's continuing efforts, and I believe this body's continuing efforts, to prevent and reduce needless costs to our health care system. For example, reducing the incidence of readmissions to hospitals and providing for better outpatient treatment after people are out of the hospital; reducing the incidence of hospital acquired infections; to reducing the incidence of overprescription—or misprescribed drugs—these kinds of costs are preventable. We have an obligation to reduce those costs in health care when they are preventable.

Higher quality at lower cost has to be our objective. And, lowering costs also means preventive care for women when they cannot afford it. That is what Planned Parenthood does. The threat of H. Con. Res. 36 is to that profoundly important goal—higher quality health care at lower cost—that we can achieve as a nation if we invest in preventive care.

The threat of H. Con. Res. 36 is, therefore, not only to the 1.4 million Medicaid patients across the country who would be deprived of that preventive care, and not only to the more than 60,000 women in Connecticut who are at risk, but to all of us, to our families, and to our fiscal health. We know Planned Parenthood saves \$4 for every \$1 invested. Smart investments that go to provide the Pap smears, breast exams, and other kinds of preventive health care that not only save our health care system money, but that are an absolutely critical part of high quality health care in the United States.

But this debate is about more than costs. It is about human beings. It is about those women who need that preventive care for their future and their family's futures and eventually for their children's futures. Every woman across our Nation, including 1.4 million Medicaid patients who consider Planned Parenthood their primary source for preventive health, deserves to visit a health care provider she trusts—a health care provider that many of us have in this body whether we are men or women.

I am talking about women such as Rebecca in Meriden, CT. Rebecca's parents' health coverage did not extend to her, and she made too much money to qualify for Connecticut's Husky Program—too much money meaning \$10 an hour and working part time, a total of \$10,000—too much money to qualify for Husky. She depended on Planned Parenthood for regular health screenings and contraceptive care. As she said in her own words:

Planned Parenthood was my saving grace for my reproductive health.

Women such as Maya, a 23-year-old uninsured young woman, a waitress, part time, doing an unpaid internship for a nonprofit organization. She went to Planned Parenthood for her routine Pap smear, and the results showed abnormal cells that required a biopsy and an operation to have the precancerous cells removed. That procedure could have been lifesaving for Maya; as are all of the routine screenings that Planned Parenthood provides for countless women across the country and in Connecticut. All of these procedures take place day in and day out around Connecticut, for a price they can afford. These stories from Rebecca and Maya are heard around our Nation, at least 60,000 strong in Connecticut alone.

As Martin Masselli, Community Health Center advocate and the president of Community Health Care, Inc. in Middletown, recently said: