

will not only make it more expensive, but put Federal bureaucracy between them and their doctor. On top of that, it will hinder job creators from hiring by requiring them to either offer costly government-mandated health insurance or pay a steep fine.

So far, my colleagues and I in the House have taken 30 floor votes to repeal, defund, and dismantle the law. After it's gone, we can start over with commonsense reforms that will return choices to the patients and not burden job creators with higher costs, new regulations, and more uncertainty.

It's obvious to the American people that the President's policies are failing and making the economy worse. Instead, they want the government to stop taxing them more, stop creating new harmful regulations, and stop coming between them and their doctor.

House Republicans have been listening. That's why we will continue to work on repealing this unfavorable and costly health care law. It's why we already put forth a balanced, responsible budget, and it's why we put together a plan for America's job creators to create an environment in which small businesses can grow and hire and where health care is affordable again.

Currently, there are 27 bipartisan jobs bills that have been passed by the House and are languishing in the Democrat-controlled Senate. My hope is that the President and Senate stop talking to the American people and start listening to them.

THE AFGHANISTAN WAR: COSTING US DEARLY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Another day, Mr. Speaker, another wave of attacks by insurgents in Afghanistan. The New York Times reported yesterday that the Taliban killed five police officers with a roadside bomb in what it calls "a relatively peaceful province" in central Afghanistan.

Separate attacks in Kandahar led to the deaths of three officers, with six civilians wounded. A motorcycle bomb took the lives of several more people in Helmand province on Sunday night, and then yet another motorcycle bomb in northern Afghanistan on Monday, wounding 26, with 10 in critical condition. And a deeply disturbing video is making its way around the Internet showing a 22-year-old Afghan woman being brutally executed by the Taliban over accusations of adultery.

Almost 11 years after our military occupation began, the security situation in Afghanistan is clearly abysmal. Our troops are in danger, Afghan security forces are in danger, and innocent civilians are in danger. Nearly 11 years ago, we went to war with the goal of defeating the Taliban, and yet the Taliban is alive and well, winning recruits, operating in the shadows, and

ruling by terror throughout Afghanistan.

I'm not saying that ending the war and bringing our troops home will stabilize Afghanistan overnight. But I am saying that the longer we continue with our military occupation, the more we breathe life into the very forces we're trying to defeat. It is the resentment of our boots on the ground that is helping to sustain the Taliban.

There are clearly urgent humanitarian needs in Afghanistan, Mr. Speaker, and we have a moral responsibility to help meet them.

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This is one of the poorest nations on Earth, with infrastructure needs, children who need schools, and malnutrition that must be addressed. But deploying thousands and thousands of troops for more than a decade is not the way to meet these challenges. Our military is not trained or equipped to do that kind of work.

For pennies on the dollar, Mr. Speaker, we can have a true civilian surge, investing in development aid to improve the lives of the Afghan people. We could give USAID a fraction of the \$10 billion a month we spend on the war in Afghanistan and we could do a world of good. This approach isn't just the right thing to do, it isn't just a moral imperative, it's the SMART national security strategy as well.

On the other hand, the existing strategy of invasion and occupation has not served us well. The Afghanistan war has cost us dearly—in precious lives, in taxpayer dollars, in moral authority, and global credibility. It is undermining our national security interests instead of advancing them.

Mr. Speaker, it's time to do the smart thing—bring our troops home and, in return, invest in the hopes and future of the Afghan people—and do it now.

GOVERNMENT INCOMPETENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Indiana prison inmate Ryan Greminger collected unemployment benefits during his 2-year sentence in the county jail for a drug crime. He collected \$14,000 of taxpayer money. He was in jail, and the government continued to pay him anyway.

Only in America would we pay people in jail because they are unemployed. Greminger should not have obtained money from honest American taxpayers, but he did.

Government is becoming incompetent when it comes to paying unemployment benefits. According to CNN, the Federal Government overpaid \$14 billion in unemployment benefits just last year. That means 11 percent of all jobless benefits paid out were not supposed to be paid to those individuals. Those overpayments that should have

gone to people in need were sent by government to those who didn't deserve any money. You see, not all payments are to honest people who are looking for jobs and are out of work.

Inmate Greminger's case is bad, but there's more.

A convicted killer, murderer, in a California prison was receiving at least \$30,000 in unemployment checks. The murderer made sure that his family and his friends cashed his checks while he was locked up. So each month, his family fraudulently cashed his \$1,600 check, which they would then deposit in his jail bank account. Guess where it went next, Mr. Speaker? He shared the jail money with some of his low-life prison gang members while he was in the joint.

There's more.

The Federal Government reportedly sent a man \$515,000 in payments over 37 years—37 years, Mr. Speaker—because he was supposedly unemployed. Thirty-seven years of unemployment benefits for anyone is nonsense to me, but who exactly were they sending that money to in this case? A dead person who died 40 years ago. No wonder he wasn't working, Mr. Speaker; he wasn't around.

We count on our government to spend our tax dollars wisely, but it is inefficiently sending money to those not qualified to obtain taxpayer support—prison inmates and dead people.

Fourteen billion dollars is a lot of money in anybody's book. In the private sector, if a business misappropriated \$14 billion, the people in charge would be fired or go to jail, but not so with government agencies. These overpayments and wasteful incompetent spending really don't shock or surprise Americans anymore at all. There's so much waste of taxpayer money that we have become accustomed to it, and we actually expect government to waste money—too big, too wasteful, too incompetent, and too inefficient.

But the real problem is not waste, but the size and inefficiency of government. We're moving to a society that is just another European nanny state, where government is bigger, bloated, and controlling. The government says it will provide all our needs if we just turn over more power, authority, and money to government and government agencies.

Mr. Speaker, does anybody ever really get warm fuzzies when we hear about government programs like the post office, FEMA, the IRS, or TSA? I don't think so. Government doesn't do things better; it does things more expensively and wastefully. And government promotes a concept of more dependence on government, not independence.

We in Congress need to realize the obvious—that unlimited, out-of-control government is not the answer to our problems. But until we get a grip on government and move to a constitutional concept of limited government,