

this week has been dubbed “Sunshine Week,” meaning that there needs to be greater openness and transparency.

We all agree that we need to do everything that we can, as my Democratic colleagues have said, to increase competition and bring the cost of health insurance down. We all agree that that needs to be done. But, Madam Speaker, this measure will not accomplish that at all. We have commonsense solutions that I believe we can utilize and implement in a bipartisan way.

So here we are in the midst of Sunshine Week, and as my colleagues have been saying: What is it that is happening? We are seeing every effort made to try and avoid the kind of transparency, disclosure, and accountability that were promised in that document, “A New Direction for America,” that then-Minority Leader PELOSI put forward.

Madam Speaker, I am convinced, I am convinced that we can do better. But we need to make sure that, as we proceed with this process, we have the kind of openness that the American people insist upon.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. BUTTERFIELD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, every process must end. After dozens of hearings on health care, we have all of the information that we need to create strong legislation to provide much needed health insurance reform. The American people cannot wait. It is time to vote.

Rising health care costs are crushing families and businesses, forcing small business owners to choose between health care and jobs. This isn't about politics or poll numbers. This is about making good on the promise of providing every American access to high quality, affordable health care. This is about having the courage to do what is right.

By voting for health insurance reform now, we are supporting the millions of Americans who quietly struggle every day with a system that works better for the insurance companies than it does for them.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues, Democrat and Republican, to join us in helping the American people by voting for health insurance reform now.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. BACHUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, the United States is the largest economy in the world. We are bigger than our four next competitors, and we got

there through personal freedom and individual choice. We didn't get there by government management.

Now, countries in Europe, we have heard a lot about the fact that they have government-run health care, but that is not America. We are distinct. We place our faith in the individual. We compete, but we don't compete with the government.

The Federal Government should not be given the power to make health care choices for you or your family or to force you, as a taxpayer, as a citizen, to pay for an abortion when it violates your values.

Let's listen to the majority of Americans. Let's start over. Let's have an American plan. Let's work on solutions that are consistent with our traditions of choice, freedom, and put our faith in the individual, not the government.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of finally passing health reform.

This bill is the product of countless hearings, hundreds of amendments, and a full year of national public debate. It is time to vote.

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, without reform, health care costs for American families will rise by as much as 79 percent in the next 10 years. That is unsustainable for taxpayers, for small businesses, for families.

The bill we will pass this week will take the necessary steps to rein in these costs. It creates incentives to reduce preventable hospital readmission; it eliminates wasteful overpayments to Medicare Advantage plans; and it increases our capabilities to fight fraud, waste, and abuse.

Passing health reform means lower costs for patients, better access to higher quality care, and, at long last, accountability for insurance companies.

I urge all of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, let's move our Nation forward by passing health reform this week.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. SMITH of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, the American people are speaking, and I think we should listen even as the House leadership again prepares to force through a partisan government takeover of health care.

The bill includes hundreds of billions of dollars in new taxes and more than

\$1 trillion in new government spending. Strong-arm tactics and legislative gimmicks should not be used to jam through a bill which will impact the life of every single American.

We need to focus on true reform which lowers health care costs, limits unnecessary lawsuits, and expands access by allowing purchasing across the State lines for health insurance, not simply a takeover which we already know will not control costs.

That is the type of reform Americans want, not this one-size-fits-all approach, putting bureaucrats between doctors and their patients.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. I had a remarkable American in my office this morning, Gary Hall, who won five golds, three silvers, and two bronzes in three Olympic Games in freestyle swimming, a remarkable person. And he told me a story about having insurance for 12 years while he was in the Olympics, but then after he lost the Olympics, he couldn't get insurance. Do you know why? He has diabetes.

Here is a guy who won gold, silver, and bronze medals and couldn't get insurance in America because he had diabetes. And the reason he couldn't get insurance in America is that we haven't passed our health care reform bill yet.

In the next few days, we are going to put up at least 216 votes, I hope, green lights on that board, to pass health care reform so that Gary Hall can get insurance; and even if you haven't won a gold medal, you can get insurance if you have diabetes. And these people who are smoking something, I don't know what, who think we aren't going to take a vote on this, I am going to take a picture of this board to show you the votes, because the green lights are going to be to make sure that people with diabetes can get insurance, and the red lights will be you can't get insurance even if you have won a gold medal. That is not right. It is going to change in this country.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Ms. JENKINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JENKINS. There are many problems with the Senate's government takeover of health care, problems with cuts to Medicare, problems with the Cornhusker kickback, problems with the massive job-killing taxes, problems with Federal funding of abortion, but the latest problem is that the majority doesn't have the votes to pass it.

Rather than finally listening to the American people's rejection of this misguided bill, the majority is planning to abuse the legislative process to pass their government takeover without a single up-or-down vote.

As a mom, I would never allow my kids to deem their rooms clean; so it is disgraceful that the majority plans to deem their \$2.5 trillion government takeover of health care as passed without a vote as provided for in the Constitution.

I urge my colleagues to do the truly courageous thing and demand a clean vote.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, the time is always right to do what is right, and that time is now. The spirit of history is upon us. We must pass health care.

There are those who have told us to wait. They have told us to be patient. We cannot wait. We cannot be patient. The American people need health care, and they need it now.

Will we stand with the American people or will we stand with the big insurance companies? We have a moral obligation to make health care a right and not a privilege.

We cannot wait a moment longer. We must pass health care, and we must pass it now.

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HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. LANCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LANCE. Madam Speaker, today, The Washington Post bore a headline that should be of grave concern to all Americans: "House may try to pass Senate health care bill without voting on it." The Post article said, "After laying the groundwork for a decisive vote this week on the Senate's health care bill, House Speaker NANCY PELOSI suggested Monday that she might attempt to pass the measure without having Members vote on it."

Despite deep reservations of a majority of Americans, congressional leaders plan to ram through their 2,700-page, nearly \$1 trillion proposal, by using a parliamentary maneuver that is both politically treacherous and likely unconstitutional. Article I, section 7 of the Constitution clearly states that a bill must pass both the House and Senate to become law.

I call on leaders of Congress to adhere to our Constitution's requirement of democratic accountability and allow a straight up-or-down vote on the ma-

majority party's health care proposal that is opposed by the American people.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, the great philosopher George Santayana said, "Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Now the Republicans say we should scrap the bill and start all over again. In 1994, Newt Gingrich very proudly killed Mrs. Clinton's health care effort. We have waited 16 years. Twelve years we had Republicans in control of this House. We had 6 years with the Republican Senate, a Republican House, and a Republican President—and nothing was offered.

What you're saying today is, "Let's kill the Democratic bill, and we'll wait another 16 years to 2026 until we try again." The Americans are going into bankruptcy—two-thirds of them because of health care. We cannot wait any longer. The time has come for a vote, folks. Let's stand up and tell the American people you want to wait until 2026 to try again. That doesn't make sense.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Madam Speaker, the health care debate has roused the American public like few other issues ever have. For months, the American people have stood up and said they don't want the government in charge of health care and they don't want the bill that's currently moving through Congress. Now I've received thousands of emails and phone calls and letters from my constituents, and the vast majority of them are opposed to this bill. But how long will it take for Washington to listen to the American public?

Congress should heed the will of the American people and start over on bipartisan reform that will lower health care costs for everyone. But instead, the Speaker and the House leadership are now suggesting they may pass this controversial bill without Members even actually having to vote on it. Using a legislative sleight-of-hand to pass an unpopular bill represents an arrogance in Washington that Americans find so frustrating about politics and business as usual in Congress.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, the American people are fed up with the most costly health care system in the world with too little good health to show for it. We are 38th of 195 countries in life expectancy. Pity those who think they can run on the theme: "Repeal health care reform." Democrats opposed Bush's version of prescription drugs for seniors because, unlike our health care bill that's coming to the floor, the Bush plan added billions to the deficit, didn't pay for the bill, and cut seniors off with the doughnut hole. But we never ran on the outrageous theme "repeal prescription drugs for seniors." Instead, we vowed to fix the prescription drug law if Americans would give us control of the Congress. They did—and we are. We are closing the doughnut hole, and we are paying for it. You're entitled to criticize, indeed to change the health care reform Americans have been waiting for for almost a hundred years. But it is simply a fool's errand to oppose it, and madness to try to repeal it.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, from The Cincinnati Enquirer to The Washington Post, the editorials today tell the Democrats to stop this health care reform and start again. I agree because I've always based my work on health care on increasing access. This bill fails at increasing overall access. The Senate bill expands Medicaid to cover families earning up to 133 percent of poverty level. The Medicaid rolls will explode under this proposal. But what does that mean? Some 40 percent of family practice physicians currently do not accept Medicaid patients. This is expected to increase to 60 percent. Some 60 percent of specialists currently do not accept Medicaid patients. This is expected to skyrocket to 80 percent.

This bill expands Medicaid beyond its capacity to absorb patients, it cuts Medicare for seniors, and leaves malpractice tort reform untouched and skyrocketing costs in place. This bill has the potential to bankrupt rural hospitals that have a disproportionate share of the problems inherent in the bill. This adds up to less access and lower quality. That is not reform.

REAFFIRM BONDS WITH ISRAEL

(Mr. QUIGLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, the United States and Israel have long shared an important friendship. That friendship is rooted in close moral and strategic bonds built on common values, common interests, and common