

“full-time” is calculated, many volunteer companies are concerned about having to provide health coverage for firefighters or face a penalty. The IRS has been asked to rule on this determination, yet Congress has not received a response.

Having served as a firefighter and EMS volunteer since 1983, I know as well as anyone just how crushing this impact would be for these volunteer organizations. Fire department and municipality support for fire and EMS volunteers is important; however, incentives given to these community volunteers do not change the fact that these are volunteers serving their neighbors.

I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join in support of the commonsense effort by cosponsoring H.R. 3685.

#### THE TRAIN WRECK CONTINUES

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

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Georgia was absolutely right; the train wreck of ObamaCare continues.

This week, we have three pieces of news. First of all, people going to the exchanges that were told they qualify for Medicaid really aren't. In fact, they won't find out until months past January 1 that they won't have insurance.

In the State of Maryland, 25,000 people got cancellation notices and 3,700 have signed up so far on the ObamaCare exchange, leaving tens of thousands of Marylanders without insurance on January 1.

As the gentleman from Pennsylvania just mentioned, volunteer firefighters are now given a mandate that their volunteer fire companies have to buy insurance for them because now, under strange definitions, they are considered employed. Mr. Speaker, my volunteer firefighters aren't employees. We are going to drive volunteer fire companies out of business.

This train wreck continues.

Mr. Speaker, Americans deserve better.

#### A LESSON IN HOW FAR THIS COUNTRY HAS MOVED

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEWART). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I was grateful to hear from my dear friend—and I do mean dear friend. I think greatly of Ms. KAPTUR. I was glad to hear somebody has gotten a good report on the so-called Affordable Care Act.

We are continuing to hear sad story after sad story of people continuing to

be laid off, people continuing to be cut from full-time to part-time and people being forced onto food stamps because they just can't make it with the loss of income going from full-time to part-time, the loss of their insurance.

And as people have now realized across the country, though we were told there were 30 million without insurance, it looks like by next fall, November of next year, there will probably be many more than that that lost their insurance even though they liked it and wanted to keep it. Because, as we know, if you like your insurance, there is a good chance you won't be able to keep it.

There is a story from December 11, “Four in Ten Would Rather Pay Fine Than Buy Insurance.”

I am sure there are people like me. You take a look at how much the insurance is going to cost, how much it has skyrocketed several times more than what I have been paying if I were going to keep insurance with the deductible now skyrocketing and dramatically increasing under the potential policies, higher than what I have now, and when I look at the costs several times higher than what I have now, and since I am not accepting the subsidy and I am not paying into the attending physician for that care, I will be going without insurance.

It has been amazing to me how many in the liberal media—and I say “media” loosely, because they are really in the business of trying to protect this administration and twist stories any way they can to make anyone who objects to something this administration has done look bad, so I will loosely refer to them as “media”—how they have been aghast that anyone would even consider going without insurance. And it really is a lesson in how far this country has moved, in so many ways.

□ 1645

I know, in the early sixties, there was no such thing as Aid to Dependent Children, that program born out of the best of intentions because deadbeat dads were not a small minority of Americans. Different races, different backgrounds—some even well-off—were just not assisting financially the children they had fathered, and so the government wanted to help.

So, in the mid-sixties, here came the Great Society. We want to help these people—these poor moms—who had to deal with deadbeat dads who wouldn't help. They said, We will help. We will give them a check for every child they can have out of wedlock. As people who study governments and government assistance, it is well documented: when you pay for an activity, you get more of that activity. We went from 6 to 7 percent of children in America being born without a father in the home to now over 40 percent, and it still seems to be heading upwards toward 50 per-

cent. The United States Government in the 1960s, not by what it said but by where it put its money, decided we would be a lot better off with more fatherless homes. Nobody was saying that, and I don't believe anybody intended that result, but it is what they got. In the act of paying people for an activity, you get more of that activity. So we had more children growing up in fatherless homes.

Also, back in those days, health care was so much cheaper. It wasn't at the extraordinary level that it is now. It wasn't nearly as expensive. Even though I was a small child, I didn't know people who had health insurance because, for so long, nobody had health insurance. If you had a problem, you went to the doctor, and they assessed you a charge after your visit, after they saw what the doctor did. He would write something down on your chart. We went to a few different doctors there in my small hometown of Mount Pleasant—a great town. I still love it. There are still great doctors there—but back in those days, people in my hometown in east Texas knew what doctors were charging what for what. I mean, you could actually compare apples and apples when it came to health care. If you found out some doctor said he was going up on his prices and another doctor had not gone up on his prices, then you went to the doctor who was cheaper unless you felt like he wasn't as good, but we had a number of really excellent doctors, and they cared about their patients.

Then, eventually, you heard of somebody having health insurance, and it was true insurance. A small premium was paid either monthly, quarterly, semiannually or annually, but it was a small premium to insure against a catastrophe—a dramatic illness, a car wreck—something that you could not foresee. You paid a small premium to insure against this unforeseen event just in case it happened down the road because, during those days, Americans were very independent. Americans did not want to go on welfare. Most Americans did not want to receive government handouts—they felt like it was a matter of pride—and they certainly did not want an insurance company telling them what doctor they could go to, what hospitals they could go to or which hospitals they couldn't go to, which doctors they couldn't go to, which medicines they could not get if the doctor prescribed them. They didn't want an insurance company telling them, if they needed to go to this doctor because he was an expert on this type of treatment, that you couldn't go there because it wasn't in your plan. What plan? I am the only one who is planning for my life. No insurance company is going to tell me where I can or can't go. I mean, that was the type of independent thought that there was in America.

There were a lot of problems in those days, and I thank God for Martin Luther King, Jr., because, through his actions and his life and his efforts, through peaceful protest—some around him got upset and didn't always abide by peace, but the man proclaimed everything needed to be done in peace because he was an ordained Christian minister, and he knew those were the teachings of Jesus. Because he did what he did, some people say that what he did for America was he allowed African Americans to be treated as equals. I would submit to you, since I was very young, what he did was allow me to grow up and mature in an America in which as a young, white Christian I could treat brothers and sisters like they were brothers and sisters. It didn't have to matter what color anybody's skin was. They could be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin. That was a great thing for America.

As we progressed toward making America a greater place with more liberties, more equality, more freedom, at the same time—really unrelated—there was this effort of let's start giving money from the government to individuals or to individual programs that, though unintended, would make them more dependent upon the government for their lives and their livelihoods. People quit thinking as independently. Oh, well. The government is giving me money, so maybe they would do good to tell me what I can or can't do with a few things. Then, eventually, more and more employers had employees saying, Hey, I know this other company. Their employer is buying health insurance for their employees. That would be helpful because then I wouldn't have to ever worry about having a terrible accident or some cancer or some terrible disease that would bankrupt my family. So more employers started adding health insurance to their benefits. Unfortunately, it created a system in which the employer owned the insurance policy instead of the employee. The employer was paying for it, so the employer owned it.

One of the reforms that many of us were proposing, instead of the catastrophe known as the so-called Affordable Care Act, was that we wanted employees to own their insurance policies. Fine and dandy if an employer wanted to pay for insurance, but the employees should own them so that, if the employees go somewhere else, they are still their policies. They are portable, and they go with them. They still pay the same rates, and they aren't jacked up through a COBRA plan or something like that. Somehow, along the way, we grew more and more dependent on insurance companies to manage our own health care, and at the same time, as things like Medicare were created to help those seniors who needed help, more and more dependence grew upon

the government, itself. The problem with an insurance company or with a government managing someone's health care is that they get to say what you get and what you don't get in the way of treatment.

So it has been quite an evolution to the point at which we are now where your religious beliefs, under the United States Constitution, have been so weakened and so nullified that now the United States Government can pass a law like the so-called Affordable Care Act—it is hard for me to just call it the "Affordable Care Act" because it is so disastrously expensive and unaffordable for so many people, including for me now.

The government could say, You may believe with all of your heart because of your religious conviction that abortion is the murder of a life and being, but we, the government, now control your health care, and you don't have that religious choice anymore. Oh, it may be a matter of conscience. It may be that, without regard for religion, you believe that killing a life and being that could live on its own outside the womb would be murder, but we, the government, now say you have to help pay for that type of murder. Even 20 years ago, nobody would have believed that we would get to the point where the government could order an American to pay for the killing of another, albeit an unborn child.

I guess it really comes home to me because of our first child being born 8 to 10 weeks prematurely and holding her in two hands. I could have held her in one hand, and I kind of did from time to time, but usually, in those early days, I used two just because she was so fragile, and I just did not want to risk someone I loved so much being harmed. The doctor there at the hospital in Shreveport, where our child was taken—she was very fragile—said, Look, talk to your child. She knows your voice. Her eyes don't work very well, but she knows your voice because she could hear your voice when she was in the womb. It is very comforting, and it really gives her a feeling of security to hear your voice. If you just caress her little arm or her little forehead while you talk to her, it is such a comfort. She knows you. She can't see you, and she doesn't know what you look like, but this child has known you from long before she was born, so talk to her and touch her.

I put my finger down by her hand. So many people have had this happen, but when it happens to you, it is so special. This tiny, little hand would wrap around the end of my finger and just hang on and not let go. She wanted to live. She knew me, as the doctor said, before she was ever born. The doctor pointed out later as he came by—as we noticed on the monitors—her breathing was still extremely shallow as her lungs were not quite developed, and her

heart rate was still escalated, but they stabilized as long as she was holding on. He said, She draws security. She draws life. She draws your love. So, in my heart, in my mind, in my soul, I know that child knew me before she was born, and I was a comfort to her. My wife had to stay in the hospital in Tyler for a few days. It was really emotionally difficult, as well as physically, what she had been through.

But now the government would say, Though it may absolutely devastate you and break your heart to know of some young girl who wants an abortion, you are going to have to help pay for it—pay for the abortion.

□ 1700

Even 20 years ago, that would have seemed inconceivable that anybody in the United States, any governmental entity—whether it is executive, legislative or judicial—would say even though they support abortion they are going to make somebody who had religious beliefs fervently against it pay for it. But under ObamaCare, under the so-called Affordable Care Act, that has happened.

Some of us told the President we have solutions; we have sent word to the White House many times we have solutions. We have been told—and we heard the President say it again here recently in the last few days—that they don't have any solutions. I remember him saying those same things back 4 years ago when, obviously, it was spoken out of ignorance. I know he didn't intend to deceive anybody. He apparently did not know that there were people who had great alternatives.

For my part, the bill I proposed, the solution I proposed, would return control of people's health care to themselves. If you like Medicare and you are a senior, great, stay on Medicare; but if you would like a Cadillac policy, not a bronze but a gold-plated, platinum-plated policy, then we will pay for that. Say \$5,000 now might be an appropriate—of course, some of the policies I was looking at, a \$5,000–\$6,000 deductible, policies like that makes them a lot cheaper for seniors—and then give the seniors the cash for the whole deductible so they wouldn't be out a dime.

I proposed that to representatives of the AARP. They were so gracious, came to my office, I explained it: this would be so awesome for seniors because it means they will never have to buy another supplemental policy; they will never have to buy another wrap-around insurance policy. And seniors' money is so tight on Social Security. It is really tight. I know a family that struggled, but they bought the supplemental policy.

Now, won't that be great? I know AARP cares so much about seniors. This would be great. Well, we will have

to look at it, look at it closely, give us some more information and we will look at it. Stupid me, I was just too naive. I didn't know AARP made many more times off selling supplemental insurance than they did off membership dues or anything like that, that it was just a cash cow for AARP to sell supplemental insurance.

So, of course, they couldn't afford to say that a policy that just really was a wonderful thing for seniors—no more out-of-pocket for deductible, co-pay, this just took care of them, and they made their own choices, and they had a debit card to pay for their health care all the way through their deductible amount. How could I expect AARP when they are making hundreds of millions of dollars clear profit off of supplemental policies say, oh, let's forego the supplemental policies for the good of seniors. So, obviously, they didn't.

But we can and do have alternatives for health care reforms that are true reforms that get competition back in health care. How can you have a free market system working in health care if nobody knows what any procedure, anything really costs? If it is medicine, they know their co-pay.

We have got to get back to the point where people know what things cost and they have more direct control. If we get to a place where we are truly helping those who cannot help themselves and we make it advantageous for those to put in a health savings account money so that they can take care of their own deductible if they are under 65, they are not on Medicare and bill to that point, and then it becomes very clear that most people when they start at an early age will have so much money in their health savings account built up that they hadn't spent over the years that they not only will not want the government telling them what kind of health care they can have, they won't need it.

And then for those who are young and chronically ill that will never build up an HSA, those who are actually unable to help themselves, we help them. There is a very small percentage that would be; but under the Affordable Care Act, as it is called, unjustly, the government gets control. As I have said, it is all about the GRE, the government running everything. They get to run your lives because when they can control health care, they can control everything.

They control not only what is in your bedroom—I have heard so many folks on the other side of the aisle say, we don't want the government in the bedroom. Well, I don't either; but now by the bill they passed, ObamaCare basically puts the government in every room in your house. They tell you—well, it is just so invasive.

But if we can get back to the day where insurance companies and the government did not tell people what

they could or couldn't have for their well-being, if we restored the independence to Americans by helping the economy just bring about a new economic renaissance—I have talked to so many people. They are in business and they are so afraid. They are afraid to hire anybody because of ObamaCare. They are afraid because of the EPA or the intrusiveness of the Justice Department, OSHA, all of these governmental agencies that come out of nowhere when you are trying to stay in business and keep your employees paid.

If they didn't have to worry so much about a government that is so invasive, this economy would take off. People would be making so many times more than what they are in so many places. We would end up being energy independent. What we thought we never could be 9 years ago when I first got here, we can be that. We use natural gas that we have got hundreds of years of. Just what we know, for goodness sake. Then we could be not only energy independent; that would mean we were not funding any country's terrorism where some of their energy money goes for terrorism. We would see an economic renaissance; we would see the economy explode, and people would have enough money.

With all the money they would be getting paid, they would be able to say, look, Doctor, I want to know how much you are charging and how much you are charging because you are both very good doctors. But if one of you is charging \$6,000 for an MRI and one of you is charging \$400 for an MRI—and I have been challenged on that and actually I am familiar with what some insurance companies have paid for MRIs over the years, because as an attorney when you help somebody who has been in a car wreck or been injured by the negligence of another, if you have a settlement or you win a court case, then you are required under Texas law to put that money in an escrow account and you cannot distribute it until such time as the medical has been paid. So you had to make sure everybody had been paid.

When they were paid in full, then you checked if there was a health insurance company. Okay, everybody says they have been paid in full; I have got documentation from all the health care providers you have paid them in full under their agreement with you. So now all I need to know is how much you paid for these charges, and then I reimburse you, and then I can disburse what is in escrow.

There were companies that had paid less than \$400 for an MRI, much less. So anyway, our CAT scans, it is amazing how little—and I have seen bills recently \$6,000 being charged for an MRI. Well, they are not getting paid \$6,000. But then, on the other hand, if you come in and say, I need an MRI, but I don't have insurance, then normally

they will cut you a deal. Okay, you are paying cash, we may cut you a deal. Say they had a 50 percent off sale: we will only charge you \$3,000. Well, for heaven's sake, why couldn't you just pay what Blue Cross paid? Why couldn't you pay what Aetna paid?

That is the kind of thing a real reform would get us back to. You don't get a bill for \$6,000 or nobody goes to them anymore. You have to know what is being charged, and we have got to get control back to the individual.

Anyway, when you are looking at how much things cost, I can identify with people in America. We have three daughters; they finished their college. We had set money aside years ago when I was in private practice making more money—actually, in municipal bonds, and when they got in college it was going to more than take care of each year. But after I had a huge cut in pay to go become a State district judge—I felt like it was something of a calling, something to help my community, a way to give back, even though you really put a lid on what you can make financially—we ended up going through that money.

I was determined that my three girls would not have to pay college loans that they wouldn't have had to pay if their father had not gone into public service. This was my contribution to the community, to Texas, to the country. I shouldn't force a contribution onto my children when their college should have been taken care of. So my wife and I are paying the college loans for our children.

So when you start adding up the expenses and you see the amount of the loans and what has to be paid and then you see you have health insurance here that is now skyrocketing, deductible going dramatically up, wow, I know some have written, gee, what if you are in the hospital for a few days and run up \$180,000 or so in health care costs? Well, the answer is easy. If I or my wife ran up \$180,000 in health care costs and I don't have insurance, then I would go to the health care providers—as I have done back in the days when I was an attorney—what kind of deal can we cut here, because I pretty well know what the insurance companies are paying you and I expect to get the same kind of deal or we will go to another hospital that will do this kind of cash deal for us? Maybe you take out a note for \$18,000 and pay everybody off.

I have been surprised, even conservatives in the media have not really been aware of how little health care actually costs. They see a bill, like one in the media that said, hey, my father had heart surgery, he could never have paid that \$150,000 in expenses, but Medicare took care of it. And as I told him, if you think that costs \$150,000, you are not near as smart as I used to think you were. But you negotiate and you work it out and you take out a note and you pay that off.

I know that there are people running around the country saying, oh, no, oh, no, what if you don't have insurance? Well, nobody in America had insurance at all not that long ago. I don't want to go back to those days. We have made so much progress. But why not build to the point where those who can build a health savings account do that?

I am encouraging our leadership: let's don't wait until ObamaCare comes crashing down and the world gets so angry that they demand a repeal and it does get repealed. Let's go ahead and start having hearings now on how good real reform would be, where we have competition, where people get to make their decisions, where people are encouraged to, and do, build a health savings account where they get to decide who they see, that there is no doctor that is out of the plan.

We need to restore liberty to Americans while giving them a safety net, not a trap net from which you can never arise. It ought to be a safety net where you can come out of; but it is more like we are capturing Americans with a net thrown over them and the government now has that net over you and you can never get out from under. We control everything about you.

And now we have added 18,000, or we are in the process of adding 18,000 IRS agents. If you think a proctologist looks closely into your situation, wait until the IRS agents get hold of you.

□ 1715

I mean it should not be that way. We have got to restore freedom in America. This article says, "4 in 10, we would rather pay the fine than buy insurance." People in the media are freaking out, how stupid, how crazy. Well, actually, it doesn't help the survival of ObamaCare or the Affordable Care Act, as it is improperly named.

My staff has given me this. We just had someone else report that here is another constituent whose policy expires July 2014, but they stand to lose \$40,000 if they try to keep it. They can't get definitive information, but they had to make a decision by December 7, and they don't know what to do. And they are sure not getting that help from the Web site.

Here is an article, "Oregon signs up just 44 people for ObamaCare despite spending \$300 million." Well, there was a great investment. Well, probably as good as investing it in Solyndra and all the other solar companies. "Paper Application Missing From Healthcare.gov," another great article, Jeryl Bier from the Weekly Standard. "ObamaCare sign-ups rise, but 800,000 short of their goal." All of these are really harbingers of the complete failure of ObamaCare.

I don't mean anything derogatory by using the term "ObamaCare." I am sure that President Obama didn't mean anything derogatory by calling health

care in Massachusetts "RomneyCare." So just as I am absolutely certain the President never meant—and Democrats never meant—anything offensive by using the term "RomneyCare," we don't mean anything offensive or derogatory by using the term "ObamaCare." The President embraced it one time.

Anyway, it requires looking at more closely the reforms that need to be made. I would rather have insurance. I wasn't crazy about my insurance, but I liked it okay. We had health savings accounts. We have got to work out what do we do with the money we built up in our health savings account. Hopefully, Aetna is not going to screw us over and not let us have the money we built up.

There were certainly some reforms that needed to be made to the health savings account law so that we do have more flexibility. You could put unlimited amounts in there, but once it is in there, it has to be used for health care. You can't pay a penalty and fine and take some out. So that you build some up, you could give some of your HSA out to, say, a Salvation Army HSA.

I know there is not one out there right now, but those kind of things. You could gift some of your HSA to your children without tax implications. You have money in your HSA when you pass away, then you could leave it to your heirs or to a charity HSA. I mean, there are all kinds of great things that we could do if we passed proper laws to make this work better.

But the goal would ultimately be to have health care affordable. The President and so many keep saying, you know, interchangeably, health care and health insurance. They are not the same thing. You can get health care without having any health insurance. I know that because I have waited hours behind people in the emergency room with children or with family, seniors. I have known that people ahead of us, that didn't have any money, didn't have any insurance, they got health care just like I did, at the emergency room. That was when I had insurance and my in-laws had insurance, Medicare, but everybody was getting the same kind of care.

So health insurance and health care for my liberal friends in the media, Mr. Speaker, they are not the same thing. They are not the same thing at all.

SYRIA

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I also want to comment before we're done here today about what is going on in Syria, because there is so much false information going on. There are many really fine people, including friends in the Senate who are smart people but are just actually ignorant of the facts on the ground there.

This administration had decided that we should support the Syrian rebels.

There are indications that this administration, because Congress has not specifically appropriated in so long, the administration figuratively has got sacks of money and so they decided, Oh, we will support the rebels in Syria.

Now, 2 to 3 years ago, it might well have been Syrians who were not radical Islamists, who wanted freedom, but this government didn't step in until the rebels were infused with and really governed by more radical Islamists.

The stories that are going on in Syria, just like others in the Middle East, the horrors of what the Muslim Brotherhood, the radical Islamists were doing in Egypt, especially after Morsi got arrested—this administration blamed the military when actually, as the Egyptian pope told me, this was not a coup. This was the Egyptian people rising up, wanting to be free of radical Islamists leading.

These were moderate Muslims, secularists, Christians, hand in hand, arm in arm, protesting, demanding Morsi be forced out by the military. It was an uprising of greater numbers than participated in the American Revolution. The Egyptians rose up in greater numbers than they ever have in the world. They were seeking both moderate Muslims, Christians, Jews, secularists, other religions. They were just wanting not to be ruled by radical Islam.

Instead, this administration and some Senators, including from my party, felt like we ought to be helping the rebels that were just really infused and overtaken by radical Islamists.

As moderate Muslims told a few of us in Congress back in September: What do you guys not understand? I mean, it was the Muslim Brotherhood that really was behind the attack on 9/11/2001. It was technically the Taliban, but basically it is Muslim Brotherhood you were at war with in Afghanistan. It is Muslim Brotherhood that you have now helped in Libya, helped in Egypt, now helping in Syria. What do you not understand? These are the guys that have been at war with you. We are moderate Muslims. We don't want them taking over things.

For some reason, it sure seems to be because of the advice this administration is getting from people that Egyptian media had indicated were Muslim brothers at the highest levels of advice that this administration gets. But as a result, this administration thinks we need to keep helping these radical Islamist-infused rebels that are absolute terrorists. They are doing the most unthinkable, unimaginable acts to Christians, especially Christians. And as a report in Britain has indicated recently, Christians are the most persecuted group in the world right now. This administration is choosing to help the people over and over, help the people, help the groups that are most radically brutalizing Christians.

Here is an article from The New York Times, "Brutality of Syrian Rebels, Posing Dilemma in West." It talks about just the horror and the disgusting nature of the killings that were going on against unarmed civilians, and yet we are supporting the rebels?

Here is one, "Media urge Syrian rebels to stop kidnappings." Hmm, well, fortunately that was written a long time ago.

Here is one, "2 Bishops, Priest, 12 Nuns Still Missing After Being Kidnapped By Syrian Rebels," by Lee Keath of the AP. It talks about the horrible nature of those kidnappings.

I had the honor of having a visit today by Mother Agnes.

Some in the left-wing media who were so overwhelmed with trying to protect this administration, they don't want to look facts in the face. They want to try to destroy the reputation of anyone with whom they disagree. They have taken Voltaire's attributed line, "I disagree with what you say, but will defend to the death your right to say that," and kind of disintegrated it into "I disagree with what you say, and I want to destroy you for doing so."

I have read a number of terrible things about Mother Agnes in the last couple of days, but I met with her. Some had written that she is just the basic primary defender of the Assad regime. She told me she is not defending Assad; he is a bad man. But, as she said with a little twinkle in her eye, the media is getting out in the open everything that seems to be done wrong by the Assad regime. Anything brutal, anything inappropriate the media is getting that out there. I am just trying to get the full story out.

Yes, Assad is not a good man, but the people that are trying to take over now are worse. She knew these nuns who had been kidnapped. She knew these people who had been persecuted and brutalized. She knew of people personally of having unthinkable acts done to them by these Syrian rebels that this administration has been choosing to help.

Well, we get finally to a story that says that the administration was going to cut off—I thought I had it here—but a story about the administration would suspend assistance to the rebels because of the horrors and the brutality of what they were doing. That is nice, but these stories have been coming out for years, for at least a couple of years. Stories even here from The New York Times, "Brutality of Syrian Rebels Posing Dilemma in West," that story was September 5. And around those same times there were stories about this administration sending hundreds of tons of weapons to these people who were brutalizing Christians.

How long does it take? I realize there are all kinds of things that demand people's time when you are a leader of

a great Nation like the United States. You have to stop and do a selfie from time to time. There are all kinds of things that disrupt your time. But at some point, somebody should have gotten information and said, Look, you know, you want to help the radicalist Islamist rebels in Syria. Really, some of the brutality on Christians has really gotten kind of rough even for us. Maybe we ought to suspend that. That should have gone on months ago. And yet this administration was determined to help.

"Syrian Rebels Attack Christian Village, Behead Priest," Katie Pavlich. Whew, man.

□ 1730

Rebels have attacked a Christian village in the war-torn country of Syria, beheading priests, brutally killing others. Not surprisingly, the rebels have ties to al Qaeda.

This is from townhall.com:

The rebels launched the assault on the ancient Christian village of Maaloula—which is on a UNESCO list of tentative World Heritage sites. The village, about 40 miles, 60 kilometers, northeast of Damascus, is home to about 2,000 residents, some of whom still speak a version of Aramaic, the ancient language of biblical times believed to have been spoken by Jesus.

Heavy clashes between President Bashar Assad's troops and Nusra Front fighters persisted in surrounding mountains Thursday, according to the Observatory, which collects information from a network of anti-regime activists.

Speaking by phone from a convent in the village, a nun told The Associated Press that the rebels left a mountaintop hotel Thursday after capturing it a day earlier. The nun said the frightened residents expect the Islamic militants to return to the Safir hotel and resume shelling of the community.

"It's their home now," the nun said.

Al Qaeda-led rebel force groups have also reportedly vowed to continue their attacks on Christians as soon as the United States "liberates" the country from its President Bashir al-Assad.

Yesterday, Republican Senator John McCain inserted an amendment into a resolution approving military force in Syria with a goal of shifting the power on the battlefield from the Assad regime and to rebel forces.

On September 4, 2013, JOHN MCCAIN said:

My amendment calling for changing momentum on the battlefield in Syria passed SFRC by voice vote, a significant measure.

Meanwhile in Egypt, Coptic Christians continue to be slaughtered and nearly 100 churches have been burned to the ground.

President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry haven't commented on the brutality against Christians in Syria and have done very little to protect Christians living in Egypt from violence being waged by the Muslim Brotherhood.

An objective look at what happened in Egypt is very clear. After the masses, the millions of Egyptians rose up and said, Enough. President Morsi has been usurping powers that don't belong to him under our Constitution. And under the Egyptian Constitution, there is no power of impeachment. So

we demand that the military remove this unconstitutionally acting leader so that we can set up new elections.

I am urging the people in Egypt to go ahead and get those elections done so you get back to having a more democratic process, having a more republican form of government. I don't mean republican like the Republican Party. I am talking about Republic as Ben Franklin when the lady asked what have you given us, and he said, "A Republic, Madam, if you can keep it."

It was clear that Morsi was not going to allow the Egyptian people to keep their republic. The people rose up and demanded that they be able to keep their republic by having the military remove Morsi. They did remove him. I still can't find anyone in the media that is reporting what General al-Sisi said to me in the presence of our acting U.S. Ambassador to Egypt, in the presence of Democrat and Republican Members of Congress that, yes, they had evidence that Morsi was trying to contract to have General al-Sisi murdered before he was arrested.

Yet this administration, not only was very supportive of Muslim Brother Morsi, but when he was removed, they threatened to cut off aid if they didn't get him back. And after they refused to get him back, then this President cuts off all aid to Egypt. It is amazing because, as this article points out, it was not until Morsi was arrested that the Muslim Brotherhood started staging these violent acts—burning churches, killing Christians. They were persecuting anyone who disagreed with them. The military did a very good thing. They cracked down on the Muslim Brotherhood, they stopped the burning of churches, they stopped the killing of Christians. As the Egyptian Pope has told me:

They did a good thing. We are not threatened like we were before they stopped it all. Please, tell your government that the military has stopped the burning of churches and killing of people. It is a good thing.

How did this administration respond to the Egyptian people ensuring that the burning of churches and the killing of Christians stopped? It rewarded those noble efforts by cutting off aid.

As we keep hearing from allies in the Middle East, Muslim, other religious beliefs, you guys keep helping the wrong people. How can you not understand you are helping the people that hate you. Now they are cutting a deal with Iran, led by Wendy Sherman, who was the policy director for North Korea when President Clinton and Madeleine Albright made that atrocious deal to give them nuclear power plants, nuclear help, and in return all they had to do was promise not to develop nuclear weapons, which they readily did. In return, the Clinton administration agreed not to inspect their nuclear facilities for what amounted to about 5 years. It gave them plenty of time to develop nukes.

If someone is evil enough to behead, to brutalize, to persecute innocent people, to somehow think it is a noble thing to terrorize and kill innocent people, how do you not understand that they are also capable of lying, as well? You want to trust people that want to kill you and have said so many times? I think it is time we wake up. The world is less safe because of some of the actions that we have taken. We need to be wise about what we do because just as Jesus said, To whom much is given, of him much will be required.

We have been given much. We have been blessed more than any nation in the world. We have more freedoms. We have more assets. We have been blessed more than any nation in history. Much is required, and part of that requirement is that we use wisdom and discernment in choosing those whom we wish to help; and we should not be helping people who choose to kill or brutalize, persecute people because of their religious beliefs, because of their tribe, because of their skin color, because of their national origin. That is un-American, and it is time we stopped helping people who are acting in ways contrary to what we hold dear.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### THE DECLINE IN U.S. RESEARCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, tonight we are going to discuss the National Institutes of Health.

In many respects, the National Institutes of Health is the goose that keeps laying the golden eggs, the golden eggs that help cure many of the maladies that many Americans suffer from, the goose that lays the golden eggs that create jobs, the goose that lays the golden eggs that help us bring down the cost of health care. But we are at the brink, we are at the tipping point of killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Let's put it in perspective. Not so long ago, then-President George Bush was part of a bipartisan effort to double the funding for the National Institutes of Health. It was \$21 billion. Doubling of the resources for the NIH was extraordinary and received with great fanfare and appreciation because there was so much that the researchers were ready to do with that money.

What have we done since then? Since then, in 2003 dollars, we have seen a gross decline in the money to fund the National Institutes of Health. Now it is down to the equivalent of \$17 billion. So for the next hour, we are going to talk about what that means to every

American who is suffering from a cancer, for every American that is suffering with a chronic disease like diabetes, for every American who is suffering from Alzheimer's and whose family is trying to cope with it.

Former Republican Senator and Majority Leader Bill Frist recently wrote:

When Alzheimer's is cured, when HIV is cured, when MS is cured, I want it to be America that discovers the breakthroughs and shares it with the world.

I agree with Dr. Frist. I want to see that happen too. I would like to think that every Member in this House wants to see that too, but it is not going to happen if we keep starving the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Let me read you another quote:

Whenever you hear about a research breakthrough in anything to do with cancer, diabetes, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, influenza, whatever, in the United States, it's extremely likely that NIH supported that effort.

That was Dr. Francis Collins, head of the National Institutes of Health who made that statement. He also doesn't mince words. Recently, in response to sequester cuts to the NIH budget, he said:

I think we'll no longer be the world leader in the production of science, technology, and innovation. You can't look at the curves and say, Oh, well, it'll be fine, if we stay on this track. It will not be. China is coming up so fast, they are so convinced that this is their pathway towards world leadership; they're not going to slow down.

He recently recounted a trip that he took to China in 2011 where he was taken on a tour of a former shoe factory. You need to know a little bit about the history of Dr. Francis Collins. He is called the "father of the human genome project." He and a number of other scientists are responsible for absolutely unlocking DNA sequencing. So he was invited to China to see what they were doing.

He was taken to this old shoe factory, except it is not a shoe factory anymore. Inside that factory were 3,000 scientists who were focused on sequencing the human genome and the medical and economic potential of this technology. In fact, the capacity at that one factory is more than all of the genome sequencing centers in the United States.

Dr. Collins said to me with great sadness, Within 3 to 5 years, China will eclipse us.

Mind you, we have invested billions and billions of dollars in unlocking the human genome with the intent of seeing great strides made; but we are on the verge, we are at the tipping point of seeing this all come to a screeching halt if we continue to ignore the fact that we are starving the NIH.

Here is an interesting chart. This shows how much R&D spending is going on around the world. China from 2012 to 2013 had an increase of 15 percent.

□ 1745

Germany, up 5 percent, Japan up 5 percent, South Korea up 5 percent, Canada down 3 percent, the United States down 5 percent.

This says it all. If we don't want to see the outsourcing of medicine in this country, the outsourcing of science in this country, we have got a huge wake-up call that we must listen to.

I am joined this evening by my good friend from San Diego, SCOTT PETERS, who I want to engage with him and have him speak a little bit to this issue as well. I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS).

Mr. PETERS of California. Thank you, Ms. SPEIER. I would like to thank you, my colleague from California, for organizing this discussion and for your continued efforts to end the assault on NIH funding.

Mr. Speaker, for decades, our country has been at the forefront of scientific discovery. We have had the friendliest atmosphere for scientists to do their work, for innovators to start their new ventures, and for universities to invest in research laboratories.

We are in danger of losing that competitive advantage, and the across-the-board sequester cuts, which I adamantly opposed during my time here, is only amplifying the decline.

Now, instead of supporting and promoting our country's robust backing for scientific and health research, we are undercutting it through congressional gridlock and government shutdowns.

This inability to find bipartisan agreement has undoubtedly harmed our national reputation and limits our ability to bring the best and brightest here from around the world.

Earlier this year, I toured the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda to visit some of their labs, to meet with patients and hear from its director, Dr. Francis Collins, about the work that NIH does and how the sequester has affected them.

Dr. Collins, as Ms. SPEIER said, has been a constant voice against the sequester and has vocalized the impact it has had on the ability of NIH to invest in necessary research and grants. Just this year, more than 700 grants were cut and the agency was forced to pare down its operations by \$1.5 billion.

Dr. Collins told Sam Stein of the Huffington Post on the 10-year outlook, should sequester not end, and I quote, I think we may have just heard this quote:

I think we will no longer be the world leader in the production of science, technology, and innovation.

As the largest funder of biomedical research in the world, the NIH is not only a significant driver of research and innovation, leading to improvements in quality of life and better patient care, but it also drives job creation in related fields.