

panies into California. I'm talking about letting individuals out, empowering individuals—

The President. No, but it's the same idea, Marsha. It doesn't matter whether they're—companies are going in or people are going out. I promise you if—

Rep. Blackburn. Free it up.

The President. No, no, no.

Rep. Blackburn. Free it up.

The President. I promise you that the problem that's going on in California is going on in every State. It's not unique to California. It's not as if there are insurance companies that are given great deals in Iowa. That gentleman farmer who just talked about—these are some structural problems that exist in every State. It is—

Rep. Blackburn. Let them—

The President. —what is true—

Rep. Blackburn. Yes, let them—

The President. No, I want to say this; hold on a second, guys. What is absolutely true is that some States probably have higher mandates than others, and so you can probably attribute a certain amount of the cost in a high—a State that has more requirements for bare minimum coverage, doesn't allow driveby deliveries or requires mammograms or what have you. Those things all may add some incremental cost, but the truth of the matter is, is that that's not the reason that you're seeing such problems. In a lot of States, the problem is just you don't have competition at all. We want competition. We just want some minimum standards.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:12 p.m. in the Garden Room at the Blair House.

Exchange With Reporters Following the Morning Session of the Bipartisan Meeting on Health Care Reform February 25, 2010

Q. How is it going, Mr. President?

The President. It's interesting. I mean, I don't know if it's interesting watching it on TV, but it's interesting being part of it.

Q. Are you making progress?

Q. How is the progress?

The President. I think we're establishing that there are actually some areas of real agreement, and we're starting to focus on what the real disagreements are. If you look at the issue of how much Government should be involved, the argument that Republicans are making really isn't

that this is a Government takeover of health care, but rather that we're insuring the—or we're regulating the insurance market too much. And that's a legitimate philosophical disagreement. We'll, hopefully, be able to explore it a little more in the afternoon.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:55 p.m. in front of the Blair House. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion of the Deficit at a Bipartisan Meeting on Health Care Reform February 25, 2010

The President. All right, Joe, let's talk about cost, because—and now we're not talking about cost to families, but we're talking about deficit, how much respective ideas cost. I think this is a good place to talk about Medicare as well, because it's been brought up several times. Joe, go ahead.

Vice President Joe Biden. Mr. President, I'll try to be brief. There's a lot to talk about. I'd like to focus it, though, on the deficit, impact on the deficit, which we're all talking about. And I must tell you, maybe I've been around too long, but I—I'm always reluctant, after being here 37 years, to tell people what the American people