

the end of the day, 14,000 more Americans will lose their coverage. Over the past decade, health care costs have risen on average four times faster than workers' earnings. We cannot wait. We must act now with reform that guarantees that everyone has access to high quality care, regardless of income, employment or preexisting conditions. We also must bring down the cost of care to make health insurance affordable for everyone.

That's why we must pass a bill with a robust public plan, a plan without a trigger. A robust public plan will increase competition. It will bring down costs. The public plan must be tied to the current Medicare provider network infrastructure and rates so that it will be able to start immediately. This connection will also increase the savings provided by a public plan. We must pass a health bill with a robust public plan, and we must pass it now. The American people cannot go any longer without high quality, affordable coverage.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Ms. FALLIN. Mr. Speaker, this debate on health care reform is probably one of the most important debates this U.S. Congress has had, because this debate on health care could move us towards socializing our health care system and turning over our personal health to the Federal Government to make decisions about our health, and also turning over a large portion of our national economy to the Federal Government.

This debate on health care reform should only be about doing what is right for America. And limiting choices on the kind of health care plan a citizen of this Nation can have is not right for America. Putting a Federal bureaucrat between the patient and the doctor is not right for America. Moving 114 million Americans off private insurance on to a government socialized plan is not right for America. Exploding our deficit with huge, massive new tax increases for a government-run health care plan is not right for America.

We should not be taking away the freedom to control something as important as our own personal health care and our outcomes of our health care, to the Federal Government. We should not be taking that away. Health care reform is about doing the right thing, and it is going to be right for Democrats and Republicans to come together to reform health care.

THE NEED FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Almost 50 million Americans are without health coverage. Many millions more worry about the stability of their coverage, that they will lose coverage or that at a time of accident or illness their insurance will not cover critical needs. In my home State of Pennsylvania, families have seen a 100 percent increase in their health premiums since 2000. Nearly one in five Pennsylvania families pay more than 10 percent of their income on health care, and American businesses are struggling with increasing premiums, forcing them to pass on more of the cost to employees or to drop coverage all together.

The Federal Government is the largest payer of American health care costs and currently paying nearly half of the \$2.5 trillion health bill. And while costs keep rising at a rate faster than inflation, health outcomes for Americans are not improving.

The status quo is simply unacceptable. Inaction is unacceptable. We must move forward in offering a uniquely American solution to strengthening and reforming our health care system. Health care reform means making difficult decisions. Without congressional action, there will be higher costs and greater uncertainty for all of us. It's time to act.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, in an interview in The New York Times earlier this year, President Obama discussed the difficult decision that he and his family faced to replace his grandmother's hip after she broke it after she was terminally diagnosed with cancer. In that interview, he said, "Whether, in the aggregate society making those decisions to give my grandmother or everyone else's aging parents a hip replacement when they're terminally ill is a sustainable model, is a very difficult decision. There is going to have to be a conversation that is guided by doctors, scientists, ethicists. And then there is going to have to be a very difficult democratic conversation that takes place."

With all due respect, Mr. President, I think that this is a conversation that would be best left between the doctor and the patient. We don't need a government plan. We don't need government bureaucrats standing in the way of this relationship. We don't need them out their rationing out what care is best in this relationship. And so I, for one, reject the idea that government bureaucrats will make better decisions about health care than the doctors and the patient. So any proposal that seeks to ration care in such a way should be opposed, and I will do so every single time.

WHERE IS THE COMMON SENSE?

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

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, first Congress passed a multimillion dollar bailout to reward bad behavior on Wall Street. Next Congress passed a trillion-dollar-plus stimulus plan which Members were not allowed to read. It was sold on the promise that unemployment would not exceed 8 percent, but unemployment is now at 9½ percent and rising.

Next the House passed a national energy tax. They called it cap-and-trade so Members wouldn't have to say they voted for a new tax. Members were not allowed to read that either. It will cost every American family and every American business lots of money and drive a lot more jobs overseas.

Now Congress wants to pass a bureaucratic-managed and rationed health care plan, again costing Americans trillions of dollars and, worse yet, their medical freedoms. No doubt Members will not be allowed to read the final version of that either. Where is the logic? Where is the common sense? When will Congress think about the working folks, the seniors, and the savers who made this country great? Congress needs to look past the special interests and start listening to the people back home.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make clear that there is not anyone in the United States Congress who does not want to make our Nation's health care system better. There is bipartisan agreement that Congress must help the American people by working to lower the high cost of health care and provide access and availability to the American people who are uninsured. This is not the time for Congress to rush to the President's desk in a reckless manner legislation which would amount to nothing short of nationalizing one of the best health care systems in the world.

Make no mistake, there are much-needed reforms that Congress can and Congress should address. We must solve this problem in a focused and in a bipartisan way and not allow some extreme proposal to make its way to the President's desk that will be another massive spending program. With Federal spending at the highest level in American history, the economy in a severe recession and unemployment rising every day, another massive government program with more spending, more borrowing and higher taxes will only hurt this struggling economy and the American people.