

Mr. MCCARTHY. There will be no upsets.

Mr. HOYER. I guess the answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, is what will determine an upset. Will the American people be upset? Will the Republicans be upset? The answer to that question remains in the hands of our Republican colleagues, because what I want to do in observation, I disagree with all three of the propositions that the majority leader said in his closing statement.

This is not going to reduce the budget. Yes, on its face, they give a \$600 billion tax cut to the wealthiest in America. Where do they take it from? Medicaid, some of the poorest people in America. That is where that money comes from.

Premiums are going to go up. Deductibles are going to go up. You can quote me on this 2, 3 years from now. I don't think your bill is going to pass. But if it did pass, that is what would happen. You won't be able to test me because I don't think the bill is going to pass. It may pass this floor, but it will not become law.

The majority leader's statement, Mr. Speaker, that that is what the American people are expecting, I disagree with that. What the President of the United States said he was going to give to the American people is insurance for everybody. The majority leader ignores the 24 million. He hasn't spoken about that. He spoke about some other observations in the CBO report, as did Speaker RYAN. I don't blame him. I would try to point to some positive indicators myself.

I think this is going to up the deficit, it is going to up costs, and it will decrease the insured and make hospitals have more uncompensated care. We will have this debate next week, Mr. Speaker.

But on the last issue, I would hope, Mr. Leader, that we do agree on fiscal responsibility. I happen to believe, as you know, the debt limit issue is a phony issue, a totally political issue. It has been used as a political issue on both sides of the aisle. There should be no question but of course the United States is going to pay its debt, of course the United States is going to pay people whom it has bought things from, and of course it is going to pay people moneys that they have been promised. Of course it is going to do that. This is not about new spending. It is about spending that we have already incurred.

I would urge the majority leader to bring a clean bill to the floor. I will work with him. We will get the overwhelming majority of Democrats to vote for that. Let's not blame one another for the debt. There is plenty of opportunity to do that, and both sides are guilty of that result.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman has nothing further he wants to say, I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT FROM FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 2017, TO MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2017

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet on Monday, March 20, 2017, when it shall convene at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

WELFARE REFORM

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

Mr. DAVIDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about Welfare BRAC, an opportunity to reorganize our 92 social safety net programs.

Mr. Speaker, I call attention to the 92 programs that, over time, since the Great Society, our country has launched. I call attention to Ronald Reagan's prescient quote about the near eternity of government programs. It is very hard to take a program away once it is launched, and this plan acts on The Brookings Institution's data, which has rarely been accused of being on the right side of the political ideology.

It says that if we do three things, we will eliminate 80 percent of poverty: graduate high school, work full-time at any wage, and have no kids outside of marriage.

This program that I am proposing in this bill, H.R. 1469, the Welfare Benefit Reform and Alignment Commission, would nominate four Republicans and four Democrats. They would have 1 year to work together until September 30, 2018, to prioritize not taking any money away, but taking the 92 programs and making them fewer.

So if you think about the social worker out in the country trying to help somebody who is in a social safety net, each of these programs may have a 4-inch binder. I don't think we need 92. Maybe it is 6; maybe it is 12. It is not 92.

I encourage my colleagues to support this and work together to make this a more efficient program so we can help meet their needs.

THE HEALTHCARE BILL

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, just a little bit of history.

Let me, first of all, say happy St. Patrick's Day. Many know that the Irish fled in the 1800s, if my history is correct, because of the potato famine. We welcomed them as immigrants, and as an early member of the Immigration and Border Security Subcommittee, I remember the Irish sitting in our hear-

ing room saying: Remember the Irish as relates to immigration.

We all have come from someplace to do better. This last week, I sat in the Budget Committee listening to debate on the healthcare bill. I stand here today to argue vigorously against the Medicaid changes: \$880 billion taken away from Medicaid for low-income, hardworking Americans; the language that was added to the bill to instruct that we should not incentivize or that we should make sure that able-bodied men do not get Medicaid.

Well, let me say this. In the spirit of those who have come to this Nation, this bill cannot stand because it ignores the vulnerable and the people who need health insurance, who are, themselves, either addicted or have families.

I want to stand for what America is right for: its values. Let us vote down a healthcare bill that does not help America become unsick.

□ 1230

RECOGNIZING TODD ZOBRIST

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Todd Zobrist, a paramedic with Highland EMS in Highland, Illinois.

Yesterday afternoon, Todd was the first to arrive on the scene after receiving a call of a vehicle in Silver Lake with a person possibly inside. When he saw the vehicle partially submerged, he swam out in the cold water to search for anyone inside. He found an unresponsive baby boy, rescued him from the vehicle, and immediately began CPR on the roof of the vehicle. Todd was able to revive the 3-month-old at the scene and the baby was transported to a St. Louis hospital where he is expected to make a full recovery.

I would like to commend Todd for his heroic and lifesaving actions. It is a great tribute to a southern Illinoisan.

HEALTHCARE PLAN BAD FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS

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

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, here are the facts: the Affordable Care Act covered over 20 million Americans. The House Republicans' bill will strip 24 million people of their health care.

I have received thousands of calls, emails, and social media messages regarding this topic from constituents opposing a repeal and sharing their stories of how the Affordable Care Act has helped them and how terrified they are of losing their coverage. I would like to share just one of those stories.

Daria from Redlands wrote to me about how Medi-Cal, California's Medicaid program, is called a lifeline in her

family. Daria, who suffers from a debilitating and rare disease, closed her letter by saying: "There are tens of millions more like me. American citizens, Moms and dads. Working hard, struggling with illness. Loving our families through hardship and disease. All of us—these tens of millions of American families, would be absolutely devastated by the loss of our insurance coverage."

Mr. Speaker, what would you say to Daria about your plan that would cut Medicaid and raise the cost of insurance on families like hers while giving tax breaks to the uberwealthy?

Instead of working with Democrats to improve the bill, Republicans drafted it in secret, rushed it through committee in the dead of night, and are now ramming it through Congress. This plan is bad for the middle class.

FATHER TRAFFICKS DAUGHTER

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is said that there is no need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection. That is a father's job.

Recently, a Texas father arrogantly violated all of his responsibilities. He forcibly sex trafficked his teenage daughter. In the milky darkness of night, he would take her to truck stops and coerce her to have sex so he could pocket the filthy lucre.

The 16-year-old was sold to multiple customers in a single night. Every dollar the deviant collected was stolen at the expense of his daughter's childhood. His evil and greed were so boundless that this so-called father placed ads on the internet to sell his daughter. She was sold on the marketplace of sex trafficking. But the girl was rescued. The defendant was convicted and put in the deepest bowels of a Texas prison.

America cannot turn our back on the scourge of sex slavery. Mr. Speaker, our children, our daughters, are not for sale.

And that is just the way it is.

WE CAN'T GO THERE

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

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, the camera of history is rolling, and here on the House floor it is recorded. So I want to make sure that we are clear.

When I think about going back into the nineties, it was Bill and Hillary Clinton that put forward a healthcare plan. My colleagues on the other side had the goal of stopping it. And they did. We had nothing.

For 6 of the 8 years that I was here—from 2000 until 2006—they controlled both the House, the Senate and the Presidency, and they did nothing in reference to health care. It took 2008

and Barack Obama to come up with the Affordable Care Act, which gave 20 million Americans health care that didn't have it. It made sure that those that had a preexisting condition could continue to make sure that there was no discrimination against women and girls, so as to make sure they had equal health care. It also made sure that you removed the caps so that Americans would not be caught, as they were beforehand, going bankrupt, disturbing families and separating families who did not know how to make it until tomorrow. It was the Affordable Care Act.

Yet, here, history will record that our colleagues are prepared to vote on Thursday to take those 20 million Americans that did not have access to health care away from health care and back to the bad, old days. We can't go there.

VA ACCOUNTABILITY

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the House's efforts this week to improve the employment standards at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In recent years, complex bureaucratic processes can take up to a year to remove or discipline a VA employee for misconduct or subpar performance. The VA has even had trouble firing one employee who participated in an armed robbery and another who participated in a veteran's surgery while intoxicated.

Just last year, VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson testified at a hearing that it was too difficult to fire bad employees. That is why I was happy to vote in the House this week for the VA Accountability First Act of 2017. This legislation provides the VA Secretary more flexibility to demote, suspend, or remove employees for misconduct or subpar performance.

Additionally, the House has passed a second bill today to make the hiring process more efficient, allowing the VA to recruit and retain the best in the field. As a result, the VA can fire bad employees and replace them with good ones who have a passion, and we can retain at the agencies we want to work hard for our veterans. This will lead directly to higher quality care for our veterans, which is the whole reason and purpose we do this.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF MICHAEL JAY GROBSTEIN

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the memory of my good friend of nearly three decades, Michael Jay Grobstein of Encino, California, who passed away Wednesday, March 8.

Michael died at home, surrounded by his loving family, including his wife of 53 years, Barrie; his children, Marla and Marc; and his grandchildren, Miranda and Avery.

Fifty years ago, as a young and talented CPA, Michael founded a CPA firm which grew to be the largest accounting firm in the San Fernando Valley, Grobstein and Horwath. In that role, he provided financial and strategic advice to businesses throughout southern California, and beyond. There are thousands of people who are employed today at businesses that Michael guided with insight and wisdom.

Michael served as a founding member and president of The Executives, a group of business leaders in the Valley formed to support the Jewish Home for the Aging, where my own mother lives, along with hundreds of those enjoying their senior years. For that effort, Barrie and Michael earned the Circle of Life Award.

As lifelong residents of the Valley, both Michael and Barrie were involved in many charities, including the Junior Blind of America, the Grossman Burn Foundation, City of Hope, Cal State University Northridge, Sherman Oaks Hospital, and the Sheriff's Youth Foundation.

Above all, Michael was an example of one of San Fernando Valley's finest community leaders, and he was a good friend. He will be missed.

WE CANNOT LEAVE OUR VETERANS BEHIND

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

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor our veterans who have served in our country's Armed Forces.

For over 240 years, millions of brave souls have fought, bled, and some have died, to defend our American freedom. The Bible says: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Mr. Speaker, the American veteran truly has great love for his fellow man. Because of the great sacrifices of our veterans, we must see to their care and well-being. We have often failed in this obligation. We have left our veterans helpless, suffering through bureaucratic nightmares to get care they desperately need.

The Phoenix Veterans Administration has worked hard to improve its care for veterans, and the newly opened Southeast Veterans Affairs Health Care Clinic in Gilbert is intent on providing the best possible care for our Nation's finest.

While conditions have been improving in Phoenix and around the Nation, there is still much work to be done. I have made it a priority to provide excellent service to the veterans in my district. They deserve nothing less.

Our veterans did not leave us behind. Mr. Speaker, we cannot leave them behind.