

is simply not fair. Many seniors on fixed incomes will be forced to cut back on their prescriptions, regardless of the consequences to their health.

Democrats in this Congress want to take a new direction to eliminate the doughnut hole. We believe that any prescription drug plan should provide enough monthly assistance so seniors no longer have to choose between putting food on their table or having the prescription drugs they need to live longer and healthier lives.

□ 1030

SEARCHING FOR THE PRESIDENT'S IRAQ PLAN

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President told the world that building a more hopeful future in the Middle East is "the greatest challenge of our time" and "the calling of a generation."

There is no question the President's policies in Iraq have created the greatest foreign policy challenge of a generation. What started off as a battle between democracy versus stability has now become a civil war between the Shiite and the Sunni. It became that way because of our incompetence and failure to plan.

We shouldn't expect a plan soon, because the President's Iraq Study Group just announced they will not release their plan for Iraq until after the November midterm elections.

Quote: "We think it's more important, frankly, to make sure whatever we bring forward is taken out of domestic politics."

This is how we are teaching democracy in the Mideast. Keep the voters in the dark until it's too late.

I will end the suspense. The new plan for Iraq, there is no plan and there never has been one. According to Brigadier General Mark Scheid, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld threatened to fire anyone who tried to come up with a plan for the postwar and hostilities.

The President tells us we're in a long war, but thanks to this White House's refusal to plan, it has become an endless war.

It's time for a new direction.

IRAQ

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I came here this morning to chastise the Republican majority for their failure to act on the minimum wage, but one of my colleagues said something so outrageous and indecent that it demands an answer.

One of my colleagues lauded President Bush's action on security and foreign policy, asserting that we hadn't

had any losses since September 11, that we hadn't been attacked.

We have been attacked in Baghdad. We have been attacked in Mosul. We have been attacked in Tikrit. We are being attacked every single day, because this President and this do-nothing Congress has sent our troops and our finest men and women, our sons and daughters, our husbands and wives, into harm's way, where they never should have been in Iraq. We have lost 2,600-plus. We have had 15,000 of them limping around America because of the absurdly incompetent, ineffective, boneheaded decisions by this President and this Congress which has allowed them to go into harm's way.

Those who sit there and pat themselves on the back and say that we have had unalloyed success have done a disrespect to the fallen in Iraq. They shouldn't stand here and pat themselves on the back. They should be covered in shame for their failure to hold this President accountable for the competence we need in Iraq.

THE REPUBLICAN MYTH OF A HEALTHY ECONOMY

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

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration and Republicans in this body love to tout the so-called success of their economic policies, but as any economist or working American will tell you, the facts just do not add up.

Republicans claim that their policies are increasing job growth, but the fact is they are presiding over the lowest monthly job growth rate of any administration since Eisenhower. The current tepid growth is less than one-fifth of the average of jobs created each month during the Clinton years.

When it comes to the real money American workers take home, the picture is equally dismal. Inflation-adjusted hourly wages have actually fallen since 2003, and the median annual income has decreased 3½ percent during this Republican administration. Meanwhile, productivity is up so Americans are working harder for less pay, while their employers reap the rewards.

The solution to our economic situation is not the Bush plan of more tax cuts for corporations and the wealthiest 1 percent. These policies have done nothing to benefit American workers and have driven our country into huge debt.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG LAW CREATES A GIANT HOLE IN DRUG COVERAGE

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, in the coming days, millions of American seniors are going to see why the Repub-

lican prescription drug plan was written to help the pharmaceutical companies and the private insurance companies rather than to help our seniors.

Republicans on Capitol Hill sided with the pharmaceutical companies when they wrote the law to forbid the Federal Government from negotiating lower prices. Then they sided with the private insurance companies when they allowed them to create private plans that include what is known as the doughnut hole, a giant gap in coverage, when seniors must continue to pay their premiums but receive absolutely no help with their prescription drug bills.

That is right. Under the private plans that the Republicans created, seniors will lose their drug coverage after they spend \$2,250 of their own money on prescription drugs.

This Friday, Mr. Speaker, is the day that the average senior is expected to fall into the doughnut hole. If congressional Republicans were really interested in helping our seniors, they would join us in filling the doughnut hole so seniors do not have to continue to face this giant gap in coverage.

CONGRESS SHOULD HELP SENIORS OUT BY FILLING THE DOUGHNUT HOLE THAT MILLIONS OF SENIORS FACE

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

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, this Friday, September 22, the average American senior will lose his or her prescription drug coverage that was promised by the majority.

This is the same confusing and complicated drug plan the majority created through the private sector rather than through the Federal Government's Medicare program.

Millions of seniors have already lost their coverage, but in the coming days, those numbers will climb as more seniors are expected to be denied their coverage when they hit the \$2,250 mark. How can this be? How can the majority create a plan where seniors are still forced to pay monthly premiums but are denied coverage?

How can a majority create a law that is supposed to help seniors and then not allow the government to negotiate to bring down drug prices? We must give the Federal Government the ability to negotiate on behalf of seniors so that we can bring down drug prices and eliminate the doughnut hole so no senior loses their drug coverage.

It is time we take our country in a new direction.

STAY THE COURSE IN IRAQ IS NOT A STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, Republicans support the Bush promise to