

take away my health care. My response would be, We want to guarantee you health care at very little cost, at high quality.

I think it's foolish. You know, why the ranting and not the reasoning? As you know, our President has said not a penny over \$1 trillion. In fact, not a penny over \$900 billion. We are reinventing, innovating the system so that we can guarantee Americans the best, the most affordable, the most accessible quality.

Ms. CHU. Absolutely. My town halls actually showed the opposite of what some might think. It showed people who were very sincerely concerned about their futures, who wanted to have that security and stability and peace of mind and who very much needed this alternative.

But you raise a very good point. Not only will this do so much good for the people of America; it is also fiscally responsible. The Congressional Budget Office has actually said that this will actually reduce the budget deficit over the next 20 years.

Ms. WATSON. JUDY, you bring so much credibility because you were a statewide officer in California, and you dealt with a lot of these fiscal issues. So we're very pleased to have you here. I represent Hollywood, and anything can happen there. We had a rally out in front of the Catholic church on Sunset Boulevard, Blessed Sacrament. Right behind the church was Selma Avenue School, the last school I taught in. We had the Catholic priest who was emceeding; we had a rabbi, female; we had a Muslim priest—Muslim minister; and we had Protestant ministers there; and they were testifying.

One gentleman came up—he had a heavy accent. He said, I am an American citizen. I have worked four jobs. My 2-year-old daughter got sick. I did not make enough money to pay for insurance coverage. My daughter died. There wasn't a dry eye because everyone in the audience could put themselves in that position. There was a real tall gentleman off to my left. He had a placard that he kept pushing up, and it had the face of our President, Barack Obama, with a Hitler kind of moustache. So disrespectful. So when I got to the mic—you know, I'm Catholic. I made the sign of the cross. I spoke to him in Latin and pax Domini. He put that sign down, and a woman in front of him kind of hid it. I found out he was an actor, and someone paid him to come.

I would like to kind of give the viewing public some idea of how the health reform bill will impact on my district. Forty-eight percent of the district has employer-based coverage. These constituents can keep their own insurance if they like. In my public forum, I had the audience raise their hands if they were insured, and most hands went up. How many of you like your insurance? Most of the hands went down. So I said, If you like it, you keep it. If you don't, you have a marketplace to choose the plan that best fits your family's needs.

So the bill that will be in front of us in a few days improves employer-based coverage for over 304,000 residents in the 33rd Congressional District of California. That's Los Angeles, Culver City and Hollywood. It provides credits towards insurance costs for up to 173,000 households. There are 22,200 individuals who have preexisting medical conditions that could prevent them from obtaining health insurance. The bill ensures that they will be able to obtain insurance, where they have been denied in the past. It will improve Medicare for 75,000 beneficiaries, including closing the prescription drug doughnut hole for 6,100 seniors.

It provides a tax credit for 15,100 small businesses in my district that have 25 employees or less and pay an average wage of less than \$40,000. It allows 16,300 small businesses to obtain affordable health care coverage by joining the exchange. It provides coverage to 138,000 uninsured individuals, and that includes 30 percent of the district's residents below the age of 65. It protects 1,100 vulnerable families from bankruptcy due to unaffordable health care costs. It reduces the cost of uncompensated care for hospitals and health care providers by \$29 million. That is the direct impact on my district.

In the State of California, more than 20 percent of the population is uninsured. Workers at private sector businesses of all sizes are experiencing an increased likelihood of being uninsured, although it is most pronounced in businesses with fewer than 10 employees. More than a third of the uninsured have family incomes of more than \$50,000 per year. Of families with incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000 in the State of California, 27 percent are uninsured. Seventy percent of uninsured children are in families where the head of the household has a year-round full-time job.

Mr. Speaker, we are so pleased that this House can come up with a piece of legislation that will guarantee our children, our working-class families, and our seniors full coverage so families won't have to go bankrupt because they had preexisting conditions, and the poorer the family, the less health care they have had because they simply can't afford it.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's incumbent on us—it should be bipartisan because I don't understand why people would rant and rave over providing all Americans with affordable health insurance.

□ 1830

If we are going to be the strongest country on the globe, then we need to ensure that we have a healthy population. If we choose to go thousands of miles away and fight unnecessary wars, and we want victory, then we have to be sure our military is healthy. We have to be sure that our families can sustain themselves while their loved ones are over fighting for this country. If we want to ensure a victory, then

let's provide the infrastructure on our land that will help Americans be the strongest people on Earth.

It is an embarrassment, and right now the Inter-Parliamentary Union is meeting here in the Capitol Visitor Center. When we went over a few months ago to join them, they said, Why is America not at the table with us? We were embarrassed to say that we're caught up in a health care debate whether to give health insurance to all Americans. How can we pride ourselves of being the strongest leader, and we cannot even provide health care in an affordable fashion to our citizens?

I want everyone to hear this. A robust option, a robust health option, says that you can make a choice. You can look at a marketplace of plans that will address your family's needs. You can buy into that plan. It also says that seniors, when they get to that doughnut hole, when they have spent 24 or \$2,500, they are not going to fall into that hole where they have to make decisions whether to pay their rent, pay their house note, their car note or buy food, because this bill will help you lift that burden. We are going to pull people out of the doughnut hole.

We are going to say to you, if you lose your job, your coverage will continue. We want to say to you Americans, if you fall ill, you don't have to be bankrupt. We want to say to America that we care about your health. We are willing to put our policies on the line for you.

Do not be confused, and do not let the opposition misstate the benefits. You will receive more health benefits under this plan. Just know, we are providing for you the best health care insurance, and we are keeping it within the budget that our President has set.

I do hope that if you come here to the Capitol, or you go to the offices of your Representative, or if you write them, e-mail them or call them, encourage them to vote for a policy that will insure all Americans. We want to be sure we are the strongest, the healthiest and the happiest nation in the world.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 3548. An act to amend the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 to provide for the temporary availability of certain additional emergency unemployment compensation, and for other purposes.

HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) is recognized for 60