

## HEALTHCARE REFORM

During these difficult economic times, families are struggling with the challenge of a lost job, a recent foreclosure notice, or simply fighting to make ends meet. Too many also struggle with the ability to afford basic health care. Any time a parent or a child goes without health care coverage it's a crisis. That's why we must do everything we can to make sure every family has access to affordable health care.

Despite what those in the media might suggest, there are principles of reform that Republicans and the President agree upon.

We agree that every American should have access to affordable health care, regardless of any pre-existing condition. A life threatening illness or debilitating disease should not put you or your loved one out of reach of quality health insurance. The President agrees, stating that "no American should be denied coverage because of pre-existing conditions."

We also agree that the right health care reform will improve upon effective prevention, wellness and disease management programs. These common sense programs attack the root cause of many of the "cost drivers" in the current health care system, which drive up costs for all Americans. Addressing spiraling health care costs must include resources to help families make smart and informed health care decisions.

A health care plan built on these two principles would go a long way toward reducing costs and increasing access for many American families.

Despite areas of agreement, I am deeply concerned about reports that indicate Democrats are committed to a government "option" or a government-controlled health care plan. In simple terms, a government "option" will only mean a government takeover of health care. That will mean higher taxes, rationed care, government bureaucrats in charge of health care decisions best left to patients and doctors and millions of Americans losing their current coverage.

The President already urged Congress to set aside more than \$600 billion for health care reform. Our national debt and budget deficits have surpassed all time highs, and while health care costs are a leading cause of this fiscal insanity, more taxpayer dollars spent on health care by the federal government will not solve the problem, only worsen it. And despite what some Democrats may suggest, there aren't enough loopholes in the tax code to cover the trillions of dollars of costs a government takeover of health care would create.

And when tax hikes aren't enough to pay the bill, the only option left is to ration care. That has been the unfortunate consequence of government-controlled health care in countries such as Canada and Great Britain. One gentleman from Great Britain, Mr. Bruce Hardy, was denied access to Sutent, a drug that would help treat Mr. Hardy's life-threatening kidney and lung cancers.

But the British government has determined the cost of Sutent is simply too much, so the government denied care. As Mr. Hardy's wife lamented in a New York Times report, "It's hard to know that there is something out there that could help but their saying you can't have it because of cost. What price is life?"

This story is all too common when the government is in charge of making health decisions. The ultimate result of these dangerous policies is even less coverage for individuals. Currently, roughly 45 million Americans do not have health care. However, millions of Americans who do have coverage receive their health care through their employer. A government "option" will virtually eliminate the current health coverage these families rely upon. One study found that as many as 120 million Americans would lose their current health coverage as a result of a government "option."

We can do better. Whether it is a complete government takeover of health care, or new and excessive regulations that achieve the same effect, Congress should not create an environment where innovative health care solutions, intended to better serve patients and lower costs, are discouraged. House Republicans believe we can reform health care without raising taxes, and rationing care. It's possible to guarantee access to quality, affordable health care without government control.

Our goal should be to empower patients and their doctors, not allow Washington bureaucrats to stand in the middle of this important relationship. I am eager to work with my colleagues in Congress to tackle this difficult challenge, and to deliver the right health care reform that is centered on patients and quality care.

## NATIONAL ENERGY TAX

As the summer months quickly approach and families start to plan vacations, our country continues to struggle with high energy costs. That is why the Democrats' cap and trade, or better known as cap and tax, energy plan is an irresponsible proposal that will do more harm than good. The simple truth behind the Democrats' energy plan is that it raises taxes, kills jobs, and will lead to more government intrusion.

The Democrats' energy plan is really a \$624 billion national energy tax that will hit nearly every American family. This new national energy tax will be paid by anyone who turns on a light switch or plugs in an appliance. With Democrats still hiding many of the important details of their energy plan, a study that looked at a similar proposal estimated that the impact will be roughly \$3,100 every American household will have to pay to the federal government.

Also disappointing is the fact that the Democrats' national energy tax will hit the poor the hardest. Experts agree that lower income individuals spend a greater share of their income on energy consumption. So while every American will be paying more for energy, low-income households already living on the edge of desperation will be hurt even more.

The truth is, President Obama is aware of the impact his energy plan will have on American families. While still a candidate for president, then-Senator Obama said that under his cap and tax plan utility rates would "necessarily skyrocket," and said that those costs would be passed along to consumers.

The impact of this national energy tax will not only be seen in home utility bills or at the pump, but various estimates suggest anywhere from 1.8 million to 7 million Americans could lose their jobs as well.

Though the President is promoting the 'green jobs' that may be created by his cap and tax plan, any new jobs created will not come close to compensating for those lost to this reckless energy policy. We have no greater example of the devastation a cap and tax system can have on an economy than in Spain. After years of promoting "green jobs" Spain has the highest unemployment rate in Europe, standing at a whopping 17.5 percent.

Cap and tax has sought to be an environmentally friendly plan, the truth is it will relocate manufacturing plants overseas to countries with far less stringent environmental regulations, in turn trading pollution to another part of the world. Republicans are for clean air and clean water, and are committed to solving our energy crisis. Republicans just believe there is a better way to achieve energy independence without destroying our economy and killing jobs.

Congress should never put hard working families in a position where they have to decide between paying for food and paying their energy bill. Republicans believe there are better solutions than fewer jobs, more taxes, and more government. House Republicans support an "all of the above" energy solution that produces American energy made by American workers, encourages greater efficiency, conservation, and promotes the use of alternative fuels.

House Republicans are working hard to produce real alternatives, and have created an American Energy Solutions Group that will offer a better solution to the Democrats' dangerously flawed cap and tax proposal. House Republicans will be hosting energy summits across the country in the coming weeks to gather ideas directly from the American people about how they think we should address our nation's energy challenges.

Despite the Democrats' best efforts to raise taxes, grow government, and keep much of our nation's valuable natural resources under lock and key, Republicans will continue to fight for energy solutions that put the American people first.