

Last summer we saw Americans from all across the country outraged at the prospect of a government takeover of health care. Those voices continued to resonate in Washington following the approval of what the Wall Street Journal has called the single worst piece of legislation since World War II. We are now at a critical juncture and one step closer to seeing this nightmare come true.

Despite this, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and congressional Democrats have pushed forward in their attempt to radically change health care in this country. Nearly every Republican and 39 Democrats opposed this legislation – the only bipartisan agreement here was one of bipartisan dissent.

This legislation is horrible. I, along with most Republicans, support health care reform, but not at the expense of what is widely regarded as the best health care system in the world, and certainly not at the expense of a majority of Americans, who like the care they currently have.

This bill is 2,032 pages of a pure and unadulterated government takeover of health care. The total package would cost \$1.3 trillion more than what we are spending now and would increase taxes by nearly \$800 billion. These taxes wouldn't be limited to the wealthy; it would extend taxes on everything from wheelchairs and hospital gowns to artificial organs.

This bill wasn't, and still isn't, about reform, it is about forcing Americans to submit to the will of the government. It uses the word "shall" 3,425 times, which means that at least 3,425 times it compels an individual to do or not to do something. Yet it conveniently leaves out members of Congress. So, while the representatives who voted in favor of this bill believe it is good and want to impose it onto the rest of the American population, they are not willing to have their health care governed by the same system. This should tell you something about what is in this bill.

Speaker Pelosi's health care bill creates 118 new programs, boards, commissions, and bureaucracies. One glaring example is the creation of the office of a "Health Choices Commissioner." This commissioner is tasked with determining the "essential benefits" that all insurers will be required to offer. If you fail to purchase "approved" insurance, you will be subject to a fine in the form of a 2.5 percent tax on your gross income. If you fail to pay the fine, then you will have committed a felony, punishable by up to five years in prison and a fine up to

\$250,000 – all of this is included in a bill supposedly designed to improve our health care.

Make no mistake, this bill will expand government further into our daily lives than any of us have ever imagined. It will increase health care costs, increase the budget deficit and increase taxes, while simultaneously decreasing the quality of health care.

There are viable alternatives out there. Take, for instance, HR2520, the Patient's Choice Act, the plan I support. This plan is directionally opposite of the plan that passed the House. This plan doesn't raise any taxes on anyone, it doesn't spend one penny of additional money, and, most importantly, it removes the government and employers as intermediaries between patients and their care.

To call the House bill socialized medicine would misstate the truth. This is nothing less than command-and-control government designed at turning the spirit of the individual into the monotonous creep of the collective, all courtesy of President Barack Obama. Failure to defeat this bill would mean higher taxes, and higher deficits, but first and foremost it means a restriction of our freedoms. Let's reform health care, but we absolutely cannot allow our freedom to be eroded in the process. The president and Speaker Pelosi have made this about restricting your freedom, taking away your money, your choices and your free will.

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