



December 4, 2009

CBO Confirms Government-Run Health Care Raises Premiums and Stifles Choice

Although Democrats have alleged that their government takeover of health care will lower costs and increase consumer choice, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) recently confirmed that the Senate health care bill would raise health care premiums for struggling middle class families and kick millions of Americans off of their current plans. Specifically, the CBO analysis found that in the non-group market, average premiums would be about 10 to 13 percent higher in 2016 than under current law. The result would be a premium increase of \$300 per year for individuals and \$2,100 for families. In addition, contrary to repeated promises that government-run health care will not force Americans off of their current plan, the CBO found that millions of individuals will lose their current individual health insurance plans by 2016 as a result of a Washington takeover of health care. While both the House and Senate health care bills will raise premiums and hamper patient choice, Congressman Miller supported the Republican alternative that would reduce health care premiums by up to 10 percent according to CBO. As Congress continues to debate health care reform, he will continue to fight against a harmful government-run health care system.

White House Holds “Jobs Summit” As Unemployment Continues to Climb

This week, the White House held a “jobs summit” against a backdrop of rising unemployment, soaring debt, and a failed economic stimulus package. While Democrats have rooted their economic recovery plan in the so-called stimulus, its outcome has produced countless examples of wasteful government spending while more than three million Americans have lost their jobs. In fact, the Administration predicted unemployment would remain at eight percent or below through the year if an economic stimulus plan won congressional approval. Since the enactment of the so-called stimulus, however, unemployment now stands at 10 percent. Although Recovery.gov claims that over \$118 million stimulus funds have been spent in the 42nd Congressional District and have subsequently created 183.1 jobs, this means that each job created cost taxpayers over \$646,000. Congressman Miller is deeply troubled by the Administration’s flawed economic policies and will keep fighting in Congress to ensure that real job-creating solutions are implemented.

Administration Announces Long-Awaited Afghanistan Strategy

Months after General McCrystal’s request for additional troops in Afghanistan, President Obama this week announced his long-awaited decision during a national address at West Point. Specifically, he plans to send 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan in the next six months to reinforce the 68,000 already there, and also requests American allies to boost their commitment. In addition, the President indicated that he will begin to draw down U.S. forces from Afghanistan in July 2011. While Congressman Miller is pleased the Administration has again recognized the Afghanistan war is one of necessity, he is concerned that arbitrary timelines will embolden the enemy and provide an advantage to the Taliban whereby they can just wait out U.S. forces. Out of commitment to our national security and troops, Congressman Miller will work with his colleagues in the coming months to ensure our Armed Forces are fully equipped to decisively win the war and come home safely.

House Passes a Permanent Estate Tax Extension

On Thursday, the House passed legislation to permanently extend the estate tax on assets transferred following a death at the current level, also known as the death tax. In 2001, Congress passed the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act, which included a phase out of the death tax by increasing the exemption level and reducing the tax rate. The current exemption is \$3.5 million and the rate is 45 percent, which is the same level that would be permanently extended by the legislation the House passed this week. As a cosponsor of legislation to fully repeal the death tax, Congressman Miller opposed the House-passed legislation because it continues to tax individuals at their death which, in effect, is a double tax on assets that were already subject to regular income taxes.

Open Enrollment Season for Medicare Part D

Congressman Miller would like to issue a reminder that open enrollment season has begun for Medicare beneficiaries to join or change their Medicare Part D plan. Open season runs from November 15 – December 31, 2009 and the changes will be effective January 1, 2010. Medicare Part D is a federal prescription drug program for Medicare beneficiaries and offers a variety of options. For questions regarding Medicare Part D, please visit Medicare's website at <http://www.medicare.gov>, call 1-800-MEDICARE, or call Congressman Miller's Brea office at (714) 257-1142.