



November 20, 2009

House Government-Run Health Care Bill Fails to Control Costs

According to a recent analysis by the chief actuary at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the so-called Affordable Health Care for America Act—which narrowly passed the House earlier this month—would raise the costs of health care by \$289 billion over the next ten years. In fact, the CMS analysis found that most of the provisions in the bill that were designed to reduce overall health care costs would have a relatively small savings impact. The CMS analysis also found that the House government-run health care bill would cut Medicare by \$571 billion, resulting in doctors and other health care providers finding it difficult to continue their participation in the program, thereby reducing seniors' access to quality care. In addition, given the potential of a significant increase in demand for health care, CMS warns that those in need of care may face long wait lines if the House health care bill is enacted. Instead of voting for this sham of reform that fails to address the issues at hand, Congressman Miller voted for an alternative plan that would have lowered health care premiums for families and small businesses by up to 10 percent and would have increased access to affordable, high-quality care. He will continue fighting in Congress to bring real reform to our nation's health care system.

Majority's New Direction for America: Higher Unemployment and Phantom Jobs

In 2006, Speaker-elect Nancy Pelosi stated that "Democrats are proposing a New Direction for America". However, nearly three years into Speaker Pelosi's "New Direction," jobs are down and unemployment, poverty, and misery are up. Specifically, over the past three years the number of unemployed has increased from 7 million to nearly 16 million; the unemployment rate has skyrocketed from 4.6 percent to 10.2 percent; and the misery index, an economic indicator which adds the unemployment rate to the inflation rate, has increased by 27 percent. Further, the federal budget deficit has increased by a staggering 471 percent; federal spending has increased by 33 percent; and the national debt has ballooned to \$12 trillion. In addition to these harrowing statistics, this week the media reported more instances of waste, fraud, and abuse in the Democrats' \$787 billion Economic Stimulus Package. According to the Recovery.gov website, nine California congressional districts that do not exist received millions of federal stimulus dollars. What is worse, the website claims that 24.2 jobs were created in the nine nonexistent districts with a total of \$5.7 million stimulus funds spent, meaning that each phantom job created cost taxpayers over \$237,000. Rather than continue down the road of failed promises and wasted taxpayer dollars, Congressman Miller believes firmly that Washington must get its fiscal house in order and our nation's job creators must have increased access to their own capital to create jobs.

House Passes \$210 Billion Doc-Fix Without Paying for It

On Thursday, the House passed a \$210 billion stand-alone bill to protect doctors from scheduled cuts in Medicare payments over the next ten years, also known as a doc-fix. In 1997, Congress attempted to control Medicare's skyrocketing growth through a payment formula known as the sustainable growth rate (SGR), and since its enactment it has been difficult for Congress to adhere to the resulting reductions in physicians' payments. In fact, since 2002, Congress has stepped in to delay these cuts from taking place which has made the problem worse. Beginning January 2010, absent a change in law, Medicare physician payments will be reduced by more than 20 percent. In order to address this, the Majority cunningly detached the permanent doc-fix provision from the larger health care bill, the so-called Affordable Health Care for America Act, and introduced it separately—without it being paid for—so that the cost of the doc-fix would not count against the cost of the underlying government healthcare takeover bill. While Congressman Miller is concerned about Medicare's chronic underpayments and supports fixing the physician payment system, he opposed this legislation because it will add billions to the deficit and result in higher premiums for seniors. Instead, he voted for an alternative that was paid for through savings from tort reform, but it was procedurally voted down by the Democrat Majority.

Fire Grants Reauthorization Act Overwhelmingly Approved by the House

With Congressman Miller's strong support, the House on Wednesday overwhelmingly approved legislation to reauthorize the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) programs within the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Specifically, the legislation reauthorizes the AFG Program, which competitively awards funds to local fire departments to purchase emergency response equipment and training, at \$1 billion for each year from Fiscal Years 2010-2014. In addition, SAFER grants, which are competitively awarded to departments for the hiring, recruitment, and retention of firefighters, are reauthorized at \$1.2 billion per year through Fiscal Years 2010-2014. As Southern California is often threatened by wildfires, Congressman Miller is pleased that the House has passed legislation to reauthorize these crucial grants that aid firefighters in protecting our communities.

Congressman Miller Awards Bronze Star Medal to Vietnam Veteran

Congressman Miller was honored to present the Bronze Star Medal to Vietnam Veteran, Specialist Four Charles E. Seymour of the United States Army at last week's Service Academy Night at the Richard Nixon Library. Specialist Seymour was awarded the Bronze Star Medal on March 18, 1971 for meritorious service in connection with ground operations against hostile enemy forces during the Vietnam War. He knew he had received the award when he left Vietnam in 1971, but the award letter never made it into his service file. His award letter was missing for over 35 years and was recently discovered in his late mother's belongings. Congressman Miller was pleased to assist in obtaining the award and expresses heartfelt gratitude to Specialist Seymour for his faithful and dedicated service to our nation. Constituents needing assistance with any Veterans Affairs issues may contact Congressman Miller's district office at (714) 257-1142.