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Opening Statement Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Member

Hearing on “Examining the Impact of ObamaCare on Job Creators and the Economy”

July 10, 2012

This week, the Republican House leadership has scheduled yet another debate and vote on the House floor to take away access to health insurance coverage for tens of millions of Americans. They also want to eliminate key protections that were passed as part of the Affordable Care Act.

Without legitimate ideas of their own on how to replace the Affordable Care Act, House Republicans simply want to gut it, and they want to rehash this same debate over and over again.

Speaker Boehner proudly highlights on his own website that House Republicans have already taken “30 votes to scrap the president’s health care law” during this Congress alone. Thirty votes—despite the fact that the Senate has already rejected this legislation. It is difficult to imagine a more monumental waste of time.

The only difference between the first 30 votes and the vote scheduled for this week is that the Supreme Court, in a decision by Chief Justice John Roberts, has now ruled that the Affordable Care Act is Constitutional.

Nevertheless, this week, we will engage in another exercise in futility by spending hours and hours debating Vote Number 31.

Unfortunately, today’s hearing is part of this needless exercise. We are rehashing the exact same ground the Health Subcommittee covered a year ago in a remarkably similar hearing entitled, “Impact of Obamacare on Job Creators and Their Decision to Offer Health Insurance.”

As we learned back then, the Affordable Care Act will extend health insurance coverage to 30 million people. Millions of young adults have already gained access to health care coverage through their parents’ policies. Medicare beneficiaries are paying lower prescription drug costs. And more than 86 million Americans have benefited from preventive care free of charge, such as mammograms.

At the same time, hundreds of thousands of small businesses are receiving tax credits to maintain and expand health care coverage for their employees.

And millions of Americans are now receiving rebates under a new rule requiring that insurance companies spend at least 80% of your premium dollars on health and medical services or refund the difference. Imagine that—insurance companies returning your money rather than doling it out to corporate executives. This year alone, individuals are expected to receive \$426 million in rebates from their insurance companies, and small businesses are expected to receive \$377 million.

These are significant accomplishments that will help millions of people in very real ways. And there are more changes to come as additional provisions of the Affordable Care Act come online in the next two years to reduce the costs of healthcare further and provide patients with additional protections.

Despite these accomplishments, Republicans will continue the same old scare tactics today, warning about massive job losses and economic ruin should the Affordable Care Act continue.

The main problem with their theory is that it did not happen in Massachusetts. In 2006, then-Governor Mitt Romney signed into law the model for the Affordable Care Act, including subsidies for individuals purchasing coverage, a health insurance exchange, insurance market reforms, and mandates for employers and individuals.

As a result, today more than 98% of Massachusetts residents are now insured, with no indication of negative job consequences. With 6% unemployment, Massachusetts remains significantly lower than the national average.

The fact is that the Affordable Care Act—passed by both houses of Congress, signed by the President, and now upheld by the Supreme Court—is vital to the health of our people and the strength of our nation.

Let's put an end to this pointless political theater. The Supreme Court has spoken. It is time to focus on ensuring that the law is implemented effectively and efficiently so the American people can take full advantage of its protections.

Thank you.

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