

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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**Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Remarks on the One-Year Anniversary of the Affordable Care Act**  
**March 22, 2011**

This week marks the one-year anniversary of passing the Affordable Care Act - health reform.

This is a week to celebrate what we have already accomplished:

- the young adult who has been able to stay on their parent's health insurance,
- the child that has secured health insurance despite a pre-existing condition,
- the small business able to provide health insurance for their employees with the help of tax credits,
- the person whose insurance was not canceled when they got sick,
- the person who is able to access preventive benefits without a copayment,
- the senior who has already started seeing relief for prescription drug costs in the donut hole, and
- the person who no longer fears hitting a lifetime cap of benefits.

It is also a week to celebrate what we can expect in the next few years:

- a prohibition on discrimination against over 100 million Americans with pre-existing conditions,
- tax credits for middle class families to afford health insurance,
- the ability to purchase insurance in a transparent competitive marketplace,
- a prohibition on annual limits,
- the elimination of the donut hole created by Republicans in the Medicare prescription drug benefit, and
- free annual check-ups and preventive care in Medicare.

We did the right thing when we enacted the Affordable Care Act, and we are going to do everything in our power to protect and implement it.

It is incredible to me that people want to turn the clock back on this guarantee of health insurance.

The certain result of efforts to repeal or defund the health reform law will be to saddle millions of Americans with higher health insurance costs, less coverage, less competition, and higher costs on small businesses and employers across the country.

We are the last major country to secure healthcare for our citizens, and we've known for decades the toll it has taken.

- When Jimmy Carter proposed health reform, 27 million people were uninsured.
- When Bill Clinton proposed health reform, 39 million people were uninsured.
- Today, we have 50 million people uninsured.

Until we passed this law, the number of uninsured went up each year, employer premiums grew three times faster than wages over the last decade, and employers continued to drop coverage.

In the broken individual market, insurers have been proposing shocking rate increases to respond to healthier people leaving the insurance market.

We cannot allow the politics of today to destroy what took decades to accomplish.

The Affordable Care Act is a jobs creation bill, it is a health security bill, it is a financial security bill for every American family.

We need to spread the word and educate everyone about what the Affordable Care Act has accomplished and what it will bring.

It will lower health care premiums through increased competition and choice, not increase them as claimed by critics.

It will increase the number of insured Americans. Some 32 million Americans that do not have health insurance today will have it by the end of the decade. The Republican proposal from last year actually increased the number of uninsured.

The law encourages reform of the medical liability system.

The Affordable Care Act was responsibly enacted, reducing the deficit by \$210 billion in one decade and over a trillion in the second and third decades.

The bottom line is that this country cannot afford to repeal this historic piece of legislation. And blocking implementation means continuing to expose tens of millions of our

fellow citizens to avoidable illness, suffering, and premature death simply because they lack health insurance.

This week, let us celebrate the new era of “healthcare security” that the landmark Affordable Care Act has brought to millions of American families, seniors, and small businesses. And let us work together to ensure that all of the consumer protection and cost-saving benefits afforded by this new law are realized in the years to come.