

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
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Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
“Setting Fiscal Priorities in Health Care Funding”
Subcommittee on Health
March 9, 2011

What the Republicans are conjuring up today is a completely contrived issue about funding for the Affordable Care Act that is entirely false and misleading. Don't fall for it.

The fact is the Republicans are trying to turn back the clock on a law that:

- Reduces the deficit by over \$210 billion in the next decade.
- Expands healthcare to over 32 million people.
- Closes the Medicare drug donut hole, provides free preventive care under Medicare, and strengthens the Medicare trust fund.
- Prohibits predatory and abusive behavior by insurance companies.
- Addresses public health challenges that confront our nation, such as obesity and health disparities through support of the public health infrastructure.

This hearing is about having appropriate resources to fund the Affordable Care Act.

Every member of this committee has a history of voting for both mandatory and discretionary spending. In fact, a Republican led congress passed legislation that included over \$400 billion of mandatory spending that was NOT paid for in the Medicare drug bill.

It is a fundamental part of the responsibility of an authorizing committee like Energy and Commerce that has jurisdiction over programs like Medicare, Medicaid and CHIP to determine where mandatory funding is needed to ensure a program's sustainability. Similarly, assuring funding to implement and support the Affordable Care Act is critical to its viability and success.

The legislative proposals being discussed today are marked by irony and hypocrisy.

For example, one proposal repeals the monies for states for the establishment of exchanges. Just last week we held a hearing where Republicans argued the need for state flexibility under health reform and discussed the fiscal constraints that face States today. This proposal would take away monies that allow states to do the work necessary to design a health insurance exchange that meets the needs of their residents.

Our members have been discussing the need for an expanded healthcare workforce, specifically primary care physicians to serve the growing demands for service. According to his testimony, Dr. Goodman agrees. It is ironic that one of the Republican proposals cuts support from our healthcare workforce.

In a third proposal they claim that education programs aimed at decreasing teen pregnancies should not have a stable funding source. However Republicans, including Representative Istook, fully support mandatory funding for abstinence only programs and have voted numerous times for such programs.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses and would like to apologize ahead of time that I will need to leave at times for another committee hearing that was scheduled at the same time as this.