

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Markup of Committee Prints: Proposed Matters for Inclusion on Reconciliation
Recommendations, H.R. ____, the Gasoline Regulations Act of 2012 and H.R. ____, the
Strategic Energy Production Act of 2012
Full Committee
April 24, 2012

This so-called “reconciliation” is to reconcile to a bill that passed the House but did not pass the Congress, although I think the legislation was deemed passed for the purposes of a reconciliation bill. What we are doing is, instead of a budget that reduces the deficit in a balanced and fair way, we are taking the Ryan budget, which specifically targets those most in need and puts our nation’s financial recovery at risk.

Let me talk about some of the things in this reconciliation package.

- First of all, it reneges on the bipartisan budget agreement that 27 Republicans on this Committee voted for. It’s like the Republicans changed their minds.
- It slashes Medicaid in ways that will hurt hundreds of thousands of people -- including at least 300,000 children -- rather than shielding low-income programs as specified in the budget agreement, which passed the House, that was worked out with the President, and that we all voted for.
- It impedes implementation of the health reform law that is already benefiting millions of Americans instead of providing access to care for the uninsured.
- The reconciliation establishes a federal medical malpractice system that tramples on the meaning of “states’ rights” – a central tenet of I thought was the Republican way of thinking.
- It fails to protect Medicare from billions of dollars in cuts under the sequester.

But perhaps we should not be surprised because this initiative is completely consistent with that Ryan Budget resolution that Republicans passed on the House floor last month.

Under that resolution:

- Defense spending is not only protected from sequestration, but increased over investments in health, education, and research.
- Medicare eventually is going to have to come to an end. People will have to take a voucher and see what they can buy.
- The number of uninsured individuals would certainly rise.
- But good news. Millionaires and billionaires would receive more tax cuts because the Ryan budget allows them the Bush tax cuts to be in place permanently and then adds more tax cuts on top of that.

So we're going to, I think, vote for a reconciliation, I suspect pretty much on a partisan basis, that is going to be a very troublesome one and one that I don't expect is going to be law, at least while we have people who control the government other than the Republicans who control the House on the Senate side and in the White House.

We're also going to mark up two bills that contain the Republican response to gasoline prices.

I don't think we find too many credible experts who would agree with the idea that these bills are going to reduce gasoline prices at all

House Republicans say the answer to high gasoline prices is more drilling and less environmental protection. Yet every economist and oil market expert tells us that this will have no meaningful impact on world oil prices. The global oil market is so big that it's simply not possible for us to affect prices through increased production in the United States as envisioned by the legislation.

These bills are about using high gasoline prices as another rationale to advance a deeply anti-environment agenda. That's political opportunism.

The majority knows that all of these bills are going nowhere. We need to stop pretending and get serious about legislating. I urge my colleagues, when we get to actually voting on these bills, to reject them.