

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 “H.R. 1173, the Fiscal Responsibility and**  
**Retirement Security Act of 2011”**  
**Subcommittee on Health**  
**November 15, 2011**

Today, Republicans on this Subcommittee will vote to tear down the only framework we have in place to begin to address the nation’s long-term care crisis.

The Community Living Assistance Services and Supports -- or CLASS -- Program is an important effort to provide assistance to elderly and the disabled who need help with daily living. This voluntary, privately financed insurance program is designed to allow the elderly and disabled to live independently -- to stay out of institutions and in their homes. And for those who are no longer able to be on their own, the Program also can assist with the astronomical cost of nursing home care.

CLASS is not perfect. But rather than working with us and with Secretary Sebelius, House Republicans want to throw out CLASS altogether and replace it with absolutely nothing. Their plan: To keep the status quo.

- House Republicans would have our most vulnerable citizens and their families continue to believe that Medicare is the answer when, in fact, that program covers only minimal and short-term long term care needs.
- They would push private long term care policies even though these policies are often too expensive or difficult to purchase and don’t always cover the services that are needed, when they are needed. That is why less than 10% of the population holds these policies.
- House Republicans would watch the elderly and disabled spend down into poverty, so they can qualify for Medicaid coverage to pay for their long term care and supports.

- At the same time, they would turn their backs on both the states and the federal government as they struggle with ever-rising costs of long term care under Medicaid. The price tag for these services in 2010 alone was some \$120 billion.

We simply cannot persist in relying on this patchwork of options. Not when 25 million Americans will be in need of such services by 2020. And not when long term care is draining our Medicaid resources.

Instead, we should maintain the framework that CLASS provides for moving forward to achieve the goal we should all share – ensuring that Americans who require long term care and support services are able to get what they need.

Regrettably, H.R. 1173 does just the opposite. It does not fix– it just repeals. Once again, there are no answers from House Republicans – and no solutions. Once again, they set us back in our long struggle to deal with this terribly complex and difficult challenge.

For these reasons and more, I urge my colleagues to reject H.R. 1173.