

Mark Souder's Tele-Town Hall Q&A
9-9-09

Pam Connelly-Castle of Columbia City:

I would like to know why the American people are responsible for the health care expense of most ALL public servants? Congress people, Senate people, President and family, etc.? The average American does NOT receive the same benefit for themselves, yet pays for those that make much more money to have better?

Mark: It is part of the benefit package for government employers just as most other large companies provide. The insurance coverage requires significant co-pay. My insurance plan is a government HMO.

Kathy Roberts of Roanoke

Please keep a transcript of the tele-meeting, and put it on your website so we can read the questions and answers. This would be helpful for us.

Mark: We will post what we can, but I am not sure this can be done with our technology.

Mark Andrews from Fort Wayne

Say I want to know 2 things. Who paid for the bus you were on for the Health-Care Rallys. And why don't I have the same health care plan as you do. Isn't that a Government run health plan? Thank you,

Mark: I wasn't on any bus. I live in Fort Wayne and drove to the rally myself. I have a private plan that is an HMO. There is no "public option" plan for government employees.

Ken Workman from Auburn

Where can we find copies of the proposed Republican health care plan? It is being said that none is being proposed for consideration.

Mark On my website are the Republican plans I support.

Donna Maskell from Fort Wayne

Congressman Souder, One of the alleged goals for health care reform is to make sure everyone has insurance so that we don't pay for them by higher costs on everybody who does have health insurance. But then they talk about paying for the reform, which apparently cannot pay for itself, by taxing things we buy or taxing employers. All these costs get passed along to the public anyway. How is this an improvement in the cost control? Can it even be proven to be more efficient than the current system?

Mark: Good points. In my opinion, it will be higher costs for a worse program.

Dan Clark from Silver Lake

What good is health care to those of us whose can't afford it? I've been laid off since last October so I lost my insurance. I can't even get an interview much less find a job. Unemployment just barely covers the bills; 'course that doesn't include luxuries like clothes, food, gas, etc. What's a guy gotta do to get a job in this state?

Mark: I am sorry that there is no direct answer as to how to get a job. I have been working hard to help the various industries in our area recover. Unfortunately government debt, with higher interest rates and inflation, will make a recovery harder. Clearly the best solution to limit care costs is a job. We need reforms – like association health plans, tort reform, catastrophic and pre-existing condition risk pooling to help make health care more affordable.

Barbie Cambell from Fort Wayne

Can't we keep health care issues away from taxes and leave it in the hands of the corporate world?

Mark: The Democrat majority believes exactly the opposite

Paul Doenges from Fort Wayne: I am convinced that the current health care bill should be eliminated and one which keeps government out of control of our health should be considered next year. Will you commit to work to see that happen?

Mark: I am doing everything I can to stop it

Doug Miller from Fort Wayne:

Will you support and start a bill that will make it mandatory that every member of our government is on the same health plan as the citizens of the United States of America?

Mark: If there is a federal takeover of health insurance, Congress must be included in such a plan.

Ken Workman from Auburn: Where can we find copies of the proposed Republican health care plan? It is being said that none is being proposed for consideration?

Mark: On my website are the Republican plans I support.

Robert Taylor of Fort Wayne: Why can't I buy insurance any place in the country? Why not tort reform? These are the two biggest reasons for hi insurance cost. Why spend trillions to insure 7 million people?

Mark: Powerful lobbyists favor restricting your choices to within a state and the trial attorneys don't want lawsuit restrictions. Good point on costs. Nobody has accused Congress of being logical.

Steve and Marcy Parker from Claypool: How can you justify the cost of any Health Care Reform with the Government so out of Control with their spending already? Even our Great Grand Children will never be able to pay off the National Debt our Government has put us in.

Gerry Wiley from Columbia City:

Thank you for caring about what we think and working to be a true representative of your constituency. Can we have a health-care reform that fully addresses the real problems?

1. There is no limit to the amount of money that can be spent on health care. We cannot deny that there must be "rationing" of expensive procedures and diagnostics. One of the rationing factors is when it costs something meaningful to the user. Otherwise masses of people will go to the "emergency clinic" with every sneeze! We must require meaningful co-pays and empower doctors to not prescribe excessive diagnostics and procedures.

2. To provide some healthcare to all, we must have an efficient way to address the non-critical day-to-day illness. I spent 10 years in the USAF. When we went to sick call, we usually didn't see a doctor. We saw a nurse or corpsman that could dispense simple medications and would refer us to a doctor if we needed one.

3. The medical "industry" needs to become "fair". Why on earth is a colonoscopy billed at \$3300 "adjusted" to \$500? Why is a simple ear surgery billed at \$9600 but paid at \$3000? How can the price of prescription drugs vary by 300% and more between the U.S. and Canada? A vendor should state a price and every customer should get something CLOSE to that price. We cannot trust a system we know is crooked!

Bruce Buck from Fort Wayne

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns over health care. My biggest concerns are taking care of US citizens who really are in need of serious medical attention that are being denied because they do not have insurance and the cost of meds for US senior citizens. I say US citizens and seniors because we have to take care of our own before we should even consider helping outsiders.

I think requiring everyone who earns X amount of income or more should be required to carry a minimum amount of insurance on themselves and family members. Those under X amount should receive it without cost or at a greatly reduced cost.

The seniors in our country helped build and protect our nation. We are indebted to our seniors for their contributions. It is wrong for us to put such a financial burden on them just because they are no longer in the workforce. This reminds me of CIA tactics. We like you and will help you as long as you are important to our objectives. Colin Powell hit the nail on the head when he said living is about doing what is right. That is

what most of us citizens believe the foundation of the United States of America was built on and should continue to be based on.

Mark: Your second paragraph would be a possible compromise solution if done through the private sector. Unfortunately, the President seems to be demanding a so-called “public option” which will lead to a federal government takeover.

Kristin Riley from Fort Wayne

For the most part you vote in line with the Conservative values of the people who have elected you in your District but your votes are nullified by the Democrat majority. This weekend many of our citizens are taking to the streets in Washington and elsewhere to show our outrage at the runaway spending and reckless policies of this Administration. We the People have decided that it is time to stand up and fight for this Country. It is not enough to just sit in Washington and cast your vote so I would like to know what are you doing now and what will you do in the future to fight for us?

Mark: I will continue to fight in committee and on the House floor for the conservative values of the district I represent. I encourage you to follow my website or receive the radio commentary on CD (you can add your name to the list to receive it through the website).

Tim Corcoran from Fort Wayne

Could you break down the 46 million uninsured? How many are illegal. How many make more than \$50,000/year. Where do the bulk of these people live in the US? How many illegals live in this country and will the Democratic controlled government make them legal, and if so will that add to the 46,000?

Mark: Of those uninsured:

- Approximately 23% are already eligible for health insurance, but not yet enrolled for a safety net program like Medicaid or SCHIP
- Approximately 22% have incomes that are over 300% of the federal poverty level, but choose not to purchase insurance.
- Approximately 9.3 million are not U.S. citizens
- Nearly 60% of the uninsured are under the age of 35
- The true target uninsured population of individuals who are citizens, low-income, and do not qualify for other federal assistance is about 10 million people.

Martin Sacks from Warsaw:

I would like to see the rush to pass this bill from the President and others slowed down. Rushing always results in bad decisions and mis-applied programs that have to be endured and fixed afterward. I would rather see no program passed rather than a bad one. Let's take time to do it right, or not at all! Anything that is less than our current, best in the world system is unacceptable to me.

I think any plan without tort reform is doomed to continue the costly, crippling activity of the "ambulance chaser" lawyers that file suits that add so much unnecessary cost to the health care system. We definitely need to address this problem, whether or not we pass a

health care bill. I firmly believe if that problem were brought under control, the current system would not be as costly, and all of this rushed reform might not be necessary. Thank you for your service to us.

Mark: I agree that tort reform is essential. The liberal Democrats are in a rush because the more people learn about their plan, the more they oppose it.

Therese Spencer from Fort Wayne:

Is it your intention to vote against any health care reform bill offered up by the Democratic majority? What if it contains a public option plan, such as expanding Medicare to the under age now?

Mark: Any public option will drive out private health care. The Democrat plans seem to be based upon hostility to profit and private choice. So while it is conceivable I could back a Democrat plan, it is unlikely.

Sara McKeefer from Syracuse, IN

Thanks so much for considering my question, which is: I contact Senators Lugar and Bayh frequently but always get a 'form' letter back a month or two later that has little or nothing to do with what my expressed concern was. This leads me to believe they aren't really listening and certainly don't have our back in Washington. How can we know they really are listening to us, care about what Hoosiers think, and aren't just professional politicians?

Mark: Because of the volume of emails it is hard to answer individual questions. The taxpayers fund the stuff so we try to be as frugal as possible yet at least get some sort of answer out to people. Most members at least try to get an overall feeling for the concerns from our constituents and specifics on things we have not heard before.