

**Washington, D.C.** - Congressman David Price (D-NC), who announced his intention to vote in favor of the legislation on November 3, issued the following statement today during floor debate on H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act:

Mr. Speaker, as the House of Representatives approaches this historic vote, my mind travels back to the formative years when I first became engaged in politics, and also to hundreds of meetings I have had with constituents since the citizens of North Carolina's Fourth district first sent me to Congress.

I came of age as the civil rights movement of the late '50s and early '60s swept across the country. It shaped and transformed my social, religious, and political views. I remember the culminating moment in 1964 when, as a Senate staff member, I crowded into the gallery and witnessed the dramatic passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

That momentous bill marked an expansion of democracy and of access to opportunity for millions of Americans. Today's vote is also momentous, and it also marks an expansion of democracy's promise. Today we resolve that never again will American citizens be denied access to health insurance, and that one of life's most basic needs – health care – will be available to all of our people.

As I think back on my years of congressional service, I remember meetings with parents terrified at the prospect that their children with serious illnesses would not be able to obtain coverage when they reach adulthood. I remember maddening stories of families coping with illness while simultaneously fighting with insurance companies. I remember young adults unable to buy affordable insurance, often because of allergies or other minor conditions. I remember retirees not yet eligible for Medicare being quoted rates of thousands per month because of their health history.

Mr. Speaker, we have all heard these stories. They are unworthy of our country. And today we have the opportunity to bring such hardship and heartache to an end. The American people deserve a health care system that works for them – one that provides access to stable coverage, quality care, and affordable premiums and copayments. The legislation before us today will correct the failures of the American health care system without compromising its many strengths or adding to the budget deficit.

If you have coverage at work, you'll be able to keep it - but the loss of a job will no longer mean the loss of affordable coverage. And your insurance company will no longer be able to impose lifetime benefit limits; discriminate on the basis of age, gender, or pre-existing conditions; or cancel your policy if you get sick.

If you have coverage through Medicare, you'll have more benefits and lower out-of-pocket costs, including no more copayments for preventive and many diagnostic services, and a 50% discount on your brand-name prescriptions, and a progressive closing of the gap in coverage known as the "doughnut hole."

If you don't have coverage at all, you'll be able to buy it on the National Health Exchange at the same affordable group rates that big companies have always been able to negotiate for their employees. And you'll have more than one choice, so that companies will have to compete for your business instead of the other way around.

Landmark reforms—Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid—these things do not come easily. We were sent to Congress this year to do what is difficult. Despite the efforts of some shrill voices, we are on the verge of overcoming the special interests that halted reform more than a decade ago, to deliver on landmark legislation that will make a positive difference in the life of every American. It is an historical moment, an essential investment in our nation's long-term fiscal and economic well-being, and it's long overdue. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on the Affordable Health Care for America Act.

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