

Statement of the Honorable John Conyers, Jr.  
for the Consideration of H.R. \_\_\_\_\_, the “Patients’ Rights Repeal  
Act,” by the Committee on Rules

Monday, July 9, 2012

Today, the Majority demonstrates just how out of touch it is with the realities faced by average Americans with this clear political stunt.

The so-called “Patients’ Rights Repeal Act,” represents the *31<sup>st</sup> time* that the House will have voted to repeal, defund or dismantle the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act since the beginning of this Congress.

When we should be focused on creating jobs, supporting the struggling middle class, and rebuilding our infrastructure, we will instead divert the attention of the House to this bit of theater.

Mr. Chairman, it is time to move on and get to work on jobs.

Having failed at its efforts to declare this law – originally pioneered by the Heritage Foundation and the presumptive Republican candidate for President, Mitt Romney – unconstitutional, the Majority now seeks to have a vote on repealing the plan entirely.

There is no question that this legislation will not be considered in the Senate, much less get signed into law, but I guess it will be good for a few t.v. commercials in the coming campaigns.

I hope that my colleagues will keep several points in mind.

**Let's start with the obvious.** This is all about theater. It is not about making law.

As the *Washington Post* put it, “When they vote to repeal the health law later this week that will make 31 House Republicans will then have had as many health-repeal votes as Baskin Robbins has ice cream flavors. As we've seen 30 times before, the health-care-repeal votes aren't going anywhere. Repeal bills passed in the House are dead-on-arrival in the Democratic-controlled Senate.”

**Second, this bill will do nothing to help American families and businesses deal with rising health care costs and the unavailability of insurance coverage.**

Apart from the more than 4 pages of polemics and distortions, this bill consists of only 17 lines repealing Affordable Care Act. There is no alternative proposal.

I hope we can now be spared any more nonsense about “repeal and replace.” This bill *only* repeals; it is utterly silent about any alternative. It is clear that there is no Republican alternative or we would have seen it by now.

And, it is important to keep in mind that this bill would repeal everything. Anyone voting for it must be prepared to defend that result.

You will have to go home and explain to your constituents why you voted to allow insurance companies to deny coverage for 17 million children with preexisting conditions.

You will have to explain why you voted to kick 6.6 million kids ages 26 and under off their families’ insurance policies.

You will have to explain to your community hospitals why they will again have to provide free care to people without insurance. To pay for the medical costs of the uninsured, medical providers pass these costs on to private insurers, which pass them on to families, increasing family premiums by, on average, about \$1,000. You can tell families paying this hidden tax why you want to impose it.

You will have to explain to the 13 million Americans who won't receive \$1.1 billion in rebates this summer from health insurance companies that have overcharged them.

You will have to explain to the 105 million Americans who will not have to face a lifetime limit on their coverage why you want to allow insurance companies to deny them coverage once they get sick.

You will have to explain to the 360,000 small employers who used the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit to help them afford health insurance for 2 million workers.

If you vote for this you had better be prepared to tell them what they will get instead, because this bill offers nothing.

**Finally, this bill even promotes the lie that repealing the Affordable Care Act won't increase the deficit.**

Why else would the authors have felt the need to add a special provision specifically overruling the Statutory Pay as You Go Act of 2010 and allowing the Chairman of the Budget Committee to certify that it meets budget rules instead of the independent and non-partisan Congressional Budget Office?

We all know that CBO's numbers show that repeal would cause a net increase in federal budget deficits of \$210 billion over the 2012 to 2021 period, so the only way to maintain the fiction that repeal does not increase the deficit is to cook the books.

The one good thing about this bill is that it will not become law. I suppose a political circus is better than doing real damage to the health care system and the health of millions of Americans.

But it nevertheless is a distraction, and it diverts us from the work we should be doing for the American people: creating jobs and making a better life for all Americans.

So let's get this over with, and perhaps then we can try to do something about the real issues that we should be addressing.