

**AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009 -- (House of Representatives - January 27, 2009)**

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Members of Congress and those who are watching our deliberations today, this is an important bill. We have 7 percent of the country unemployed, and that number is going up. So in this legislation, we are trying to put funds to help people get jobs and move our economy to a stronger position.

The Committee on Energy and Commerce has three important areas where we have made a contribution to this legislation. We have investments in building out a new broadband infrastructure. This will allow rural and other underserved areas to join the global economy. This legislation also provides \$27 billion to accelerate deployment of smart grid technology, fund energy efficiency investments and establish a new loan guarantee program for renewable energy. These will provide new jobs. They will reduce our dependence on foreign oil. And they will protect our environment.

This bill contains important health provisions. The bill will help those people who lose their jobs by providing temporary health insurance. We do this in two ways. The COBRA program, which allows people to keep their insurance from their former employer, will be subsidized for those who want to hold on to that private insurance. It will also have a component to provide funds under the Medicaid program to cover the unemployed Americans who do not have COBRA coverage. Secondly, the bill would accelerate the nationwide adoption of health information technology. This investment will create high tech jobs, reduce medical errors and improve care. And thirdly, the bill will provide a temporary boost for State Medicaid programs facing surges in caseloads at the same time that the State has fewer resources in revenues. This is called the FMAP, the Federal Medicaid Assistance Program, and it would provide additional funds for States with particularly high unemployment.

In this bill, when it was reported out of committee, we had a sensible provision to allow low-income women better access to family planning services, one of the most important preventive health services we can provide. It also would allow women to stay in the workforce. Unfortunately, this provision has generated a firestorm of misinformation and unfounded criticism from the Republican members. I have spoken to President Obama about this provision. He strongly supports this cost-saving policy. He is committed, as I am, to seeing this provision become law. But we don't want this provision to become a distraction from the other legislation.

So in order to keep the spotlight focused on the important task at hand, this provision will be removed from the bill. We will get it into the law in some other legislation later in the year.

We in this bill have an important down payment on programs that lead us in the right direction.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1.