

"We're Breaking With Our Finest Traditions: Limited Government, Personal Responsibility, And The Consent Of The Governed"

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence delivered the following speech during debate on the health care bill:

"This is truly a remarkable moment in the life of this nation. Some say we're making history. I say we're breaking history. We're breaking with our finest traditions: limited government, personal responsibility, and the consent of the governed.

"The first principle of public service in a free society is humility. The arrogance we've witnessed in this institution is breathtaking. Only in Washington, D.C. could you say you're going to spend a trillion dollars and save the taxpayers money.

"Only in Washington, D.C. could you exchange the pro-life protections enshrined in the law for thirty years for a piece of paper signed by the most pro-abortion president in American history.

"Despite overwhelming opposition, today this administration and this Congress is poised to ignore the majority of the American people. Let me say, Madam Speaker, this is not the president's house. This is not the Democrats' house. This is the peoples' house, and the American people don't want a government takeover of health care.

"Now, I know they don't like us to call it that. But when you mandate every American have government-approved insurance whether they want it or need it or not, when you create a government-run plan paid for with job-killing tax increases, when you provide public funding for abortion, that's a government takeover of health care, and the American people know it. The American people want to face our challenges in health care with more freedom, not more government. And this really is about freedom.

"The more I think about this debate, the more I think about what Ronald Reagan said in 1964. He said, then and now, it's about 'Whether we abandon the American Revolution and confess that a little intellectual elite in a far distant capitol can plan our lives better than we can plan them ourselves.'

"You know, today we gathered in the old House chamber for a time of worship and prayer. Members of Congress have been doing that for about 200 years. This chamber filled with statues of great Americans: Sam Houston, Lou Wallace, Robert Fulton, William Jennings Bryan - soldiers, heroes, heroines, of freedom's past. As I sat there I thought of that Bible verse that says, 'We're surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses.'

"Standing here tonight, I believe we are as well. And I do not mean just those that are looking in tonight from here and around the country, but by those that have gone before. Men and women who have done freedom's work in their time, who persevered, who made this the greatest nation on earth possible.

"Now it's our turn. We can reform health care without putting our country on a pathway toward socialized medicine. We can reform health care by giving the American people more choices, not more government. So I say to my Democratic colleagues: 'Stand with those who have gone before and made the hard choices to defend freedom in their time. Stand with us, stand for freedom, and the American people will stand with you.'"