



Dear Neighbor,

This week in DC we saw the continued failure of the GOP leadership to pass funding in normal order, the President use his office to quell free speech, chaos in vaccine policy at the CDC, and divisive resolutions. But it wasn't all bad. This week I also chaired the first meeting of the Democratic Caucus's Poverty Task Force.

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Continuing Resolution

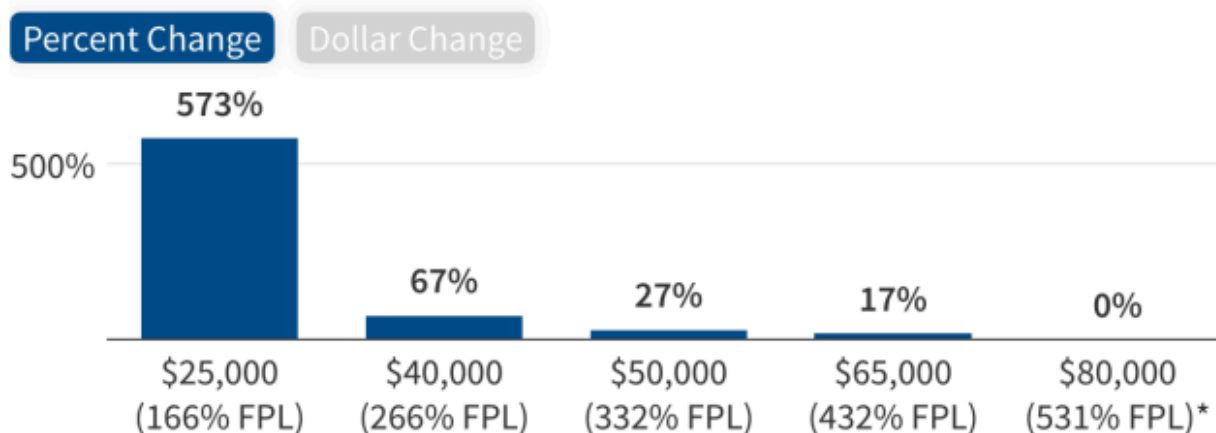
This morning, Republicans in the House advanced a bill that allows health insurance premiums for people who get coverage through the Affordable Care Act Marketplace — also known as [Get Covered NJ](#) — to [increase by 75%](#) on average.

This price-hike is even larger for lower-income folks who could see their insurance costs go up by [a staggering 573%](#).

Figure 5

Lower-Income Enrollees Would Experience the Steepest Premium Increases if Enhanced Subsidies Expire

Average Percent Change in Premium Payment for Benchmark Silver Plan if Enhanced Subsidies Expire, 45 Year Old



Note: 2024 poverty guidelines that will be in place for the 2025 plan year were used to calculate required contributions. 2024 national average benchmark silver premium for a 45-year old was used for this analysis.

*The required contribution for a 45-year old making \$80,000 is greater than the cost of the benchmark silver plan; they are ineligible for subsidies under the Inflation Reduction Act.

Source: KFF analysis

KFF

This price hike will happen because Republicans want to raise taxes on health insurance payments. If you're thinking to yourself, "Didn't they just insist on cutting trillions of dollars in taxes for extremely rich people?" Yes. [They did](#).

But after that massive, multi-trillion dollar giveaway to the very rich, they're opposing a [Democratic bill to extend tax cuts on insurance payments](#). They're so opposed to it, in fact, that they'd rather shut down the government than negotiate with Democrats on it.

I strongly support our bill, which funds the government without raising taxes on health insurance payments. I encourage the Republican Speaker of the House to bring it to the Floor for a vote.

Jimmy Kimmel/Free Speech

On Wednesday, we learned that Disney (which owns ABC) had decided [to pull Jimmy Kimmel's late night show from the air](#), at least temporarily.

They did this because the Chairman of the FCC went on a far-right podcast and threatened to use the power of the federal government to punish Disney and ABC, unless they pulled Kimmel's show.

"We can do this the easy way, or the hard way," the FCC Chairman [said](#).

Trump later went on to say that TV news networks whose reporting is critical of him should [have their broadcast licenses pulled](#).

This is a direct attack on Free Speech. It's one of the most un-American things I can imagine a president doing. Our freedom to criticize our leaders is foundational to this country. It's one of our most essential freedoms — without it, it's hard to argue we are truly free.

This episode has also shown how hollow conservative cries against so-called “cancel culture” have been. They don't care about free speech. They care about being allowed to say whatever they want, no matter how inflammatory, dishonest, outrageous, insulting, demeaning or dehumanizing it is, without any consequences.

But they want that privilege only for themselves and those who share their opinions. It is not about freedom of expression, it's about conformity to their worldview, and they're prepared to apply the expansive power of the federal government to get their way. Every Republican who has not spoken out against this, and especially those that have supported it, should be ashamed of themselves.

CDC Vaccine Advisory Panel Chaos

Today, the federal vaccine advisory panel at the CDC [voted to remove](#) a measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chickenpox) combination vaccine (commonly known as the MMRV vaccine) from the federal government's list of recommended vaccines for children.

This is a shocking reversal by the panel. But it's one you might expect, given that Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. [fired every single member of the panel](#) and then [replaced them](#) with unqualified lackeys.

Ilhan Omar Censure Vote

This week, my colleague, Congresswoman Ilhan Omar was [threatened with censure](#) and the stripping of her committees. The reasoning offered by the censure resolution was insensitive remarks about the assassination of Charlie Kirk that were attributed to her.

The resolution did not actually quote Rep. Omar, it merely alluded to things she was accused of saying during an interview. Well I actually reviewed the interview in question and discovered that the resolution was lying about what Rep. Omar said.

Luckily four Republicans saw through the nonsense and joined all Democrats in opposing the motion.

Poverty Task Force

On Tuesday, I convened the first meeting of the Democratic Caucus's Task Force on Poverty to discuss policy solutions to rising poverty throughout the United States.

Today, more than 37 million people in the United States live in poverty. This is not for a lack of resources. The United States is the wealthiest country in the world. This is a policy choice. We have an obligation as Members of Congress to pursue policy solutions that lift Americans out of poverty, and establish a floor beneath which no person, no family, no child can fall.

Targeted policies like Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, food assistance, and other programs have shown progress [in reducing poverty](#) in America. The expanded Child

Tax Credit of 2021, for example, [cut child poverty nearly in half](#) before the program was allowed to expire. After the termination of the program, [child poverty increased again](#).



Tuesday's meeting focused on several different policy proposals to combat poverty in the United States, including expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit; investing in early childhood education and adult job training; increasing the minimum wage; protecting collective bargaining rights; and promoting equitable access to poverty-reduction programs.

Trump Corruption World Tour



Donald Trump's tariffs were never about protecting American workers. This tax on hardworking Americans only creates leverage that Trump and his family can use to make more money.

When tariffs went up, American families paid billions more for electronics, cars, and everyday goods. But behind the scenes, companies close to Trump - and their billionaire CEOs - received special treatment.

Charlie Kirk Resolution

Today, the House voted on a resolution honoring the legacy of Charlie Kirk.

[As I expressed last week](#) following Charlie Kirk's horrifying assassination, my heart goes out to Mr. Kirk's family and loved ones. The loss of anyone in such a violent manner is tragic and sadly all too common. It has raised important issues including the need to address gun violence, political violence, and the manner in which all Americans relate to one another. Increasingly violent rhetoric in our politics and culture is manifesting itself in increasing political violence.



Tackling these issues will require a thoughtful and honest national conversation. The resolution voted on today called on members to honor the legacy of Charlie Kirk. I could not honestly lend my name to his legacy. Charlie Kirk had a conviction and passion for expressing his opinions and for moving them forward in the national conversation. Unfortunately, much of that legacy involved hateful rhetoric about many fellow Americans, specifically the LGBTQ community, Muslims, and other minorities, particularly Black women. For that reason, I could not vote for this resolution.

Mr. Kirk's assassination was a horrible crime against him, his family, and our nation. I pray for all three. Read my full statement [here](#).



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