



Hon. Pedro R. Pierluisi
One-Minute Speech
The President's Proposal on Health Care Reform
February 24, 2010

Mr. Speaker: I support health care reform. But I do not support the proposal put forward by the White House, because it treats 4.4 million Americans living in Puerto Rico and the other U.S. territories like they are second-class citizens. My loyalty to my party, and to our President, is beyond question. But my principles—and my people—come first. This proposal violates my principles and it mistreats my people.

In Puerto Rico, the federal government pays less than 25 percent of the cost of providing Medicaid services. That is a national travesty. The House took important steps to mitigate this disparity in funding. Yet, the White House proposal does not make a good faith effort to address this inequality. Moreover, the proposal excludes Puerto Rico from the exchange, but allows non-citizen residents of the states to participate. This is discrimination—and it is no way to treat one's fellow Americans.

I do not believe this proposal reflects the President's thinking. And I cannot believe my colleagues will allow it to stand. The people of Puerto Rico and the other territories fight proudly for their country. Their country should fight for them too.

