“Deem and pass” is a procedure under which the House of Representatives would not have voted directly on the Senate health care reform measure. The Senate health care bill would have been deemed passed upon approval of the measure allowing debate on health care reform. I strongly opposed the use of this procedure and expressed my strong opposition to the House leadership. You will be pleased to know that at my urging and the urging of like-minded colleagues, this procedure was not employed during the health care reform debate and no vote on the procedure, known as the Slaughter Rule, was taken in the House of Representatives. I would have voted against the use of this procedure had it been considered.

Contrary to the claims of some, there was no vote taken in the House on “deem and pass” for health care reform. Those claims are false. Had it been the subject of a vote, I would have voted against it.

What the House actually considered and voted on was a procedural resolution to allow noncontroversial bills to be considered on certain days. The resolution had absolutely nothing to do with the Slaughter Rule, and it had nothing to do with the Senate version of the health care bill. Some members of the House in their floor statements said that the House should simply pretend that the vote on the resolution was a vote either to allow or not to allow the “deem and pass” Slaughter Rule to be considered, but the actual resolution had nothing to do with the Slaughter Rule. I voted for the resolution because it was appropriate for the noncontroversial bills to be allowed to be considered on the specified days.

When the Senate version of the health care bill was actually considered on the House floor, I voted against it.

I voted against health care reform because of my strong concerns about the $450 billion in Medicare funding reductions included in the legislation. The Ninth District has 31% more Medicare beneficiaries than the typical congressional district. Therefore, the damage to the Medicare program that these massive Medicare cuts will cause will be felt more severely in our region than in much of the rest of the nation. I am also concerned that the reform as enacted will increase insurance premiums for people who have private health insurance.

Having concluded that the dramatic Medicare cuts included in the new law would both decrease the quality of health care that is delivered to our region's senior citizens and result in increases in health insurance premiums for the currently insured, I voted against the measure.