

Last week, President Barack Obama gave an address on health care reform before a joint session of Congress. While the president's speech was long on inspiration, it was short on details.

The president had already delivered 27 speeches nationwide on health care, but he came to the Capitol last Wednesday night to deliver yet another speech to try and convince the American people of a government takeover of health care.

I must admit I was dismayed – like a growing number of Americans – over the fact that what the president said and what the Democratic leadership in Congress has already done in the form of H.R. 3200 simply do not add up.

We all remember the old saying “if it's too good to be true, it probably is.” Many of us had hoped the president would provide details of his plan; however, he failed to offer any clear specifics. The president simply continued to offer the same ideas the American people have resoundingly rejected.

The president promised a plan that would insure more people, provide better quality and would cost less money. However, missing from that equation is one basic question – how are we going to pay for all of this?

When the president said he will not sign a bill into law that adds one dime to the deficit, he failed to say: You, the American people, are going to pay for all of these changes with more taxes and drastic cuts to programs like Medicare.

Republicans want to take the president at his word; but it would help if the details – and the numbers – matched the rhetoric.

At each of my 19 town hall meetings last month, I heard from many of you in southwest Alabama who want commonsense, responsible solutions to address the rising cost of health care.

Many of us strongly object to changing our health care or health insurance in a way that gives us less control over the choices we are allowed to make, takes away our right to choose our own doctors and gives even more control to the federal government.

House Republicans have presented a plan for reform that expands access to affordable health

care and give families the freedom to choose the health care that best fits their specific needs.

In fact during his speech, the president said, "I will continue to seek common ground in the weeks ahead. If you come to me with a serious set of proposals, I will be there to listen. My door is always open."

However, on May 13, House Republican leaders wrote the president a letter which stated, "We write to you today to express our sincere desire to work with you and find common ground on the issue of health care reform....We respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss areas for potential common ground on health care reform."

Nearly four months later, that meeting has yet to take place. It is time for the president and House Democrats to start over on their health care plan and begin working with Republicans on solutions to health care reform.

Mobile Area Education Foundation Awarded \$3.6 Million Grant:

The Mobile Area Education Foundation was awarded a five-year grant of \$3.6 million by National Science Foundation in support of its Engaging Youth in Engineering (EYE) Program.

EYE is part of a comprehensive, community driven K-12 workforce and economic development initiative that addresses our region's growing demand for highly-skilled and technology-savvy workers.

EYE currently involves over 2,000 students in grades 4-9 as well as 50 math and science teachers in nine schools.

The Mobile Area Education Foundation will be working in collaboration with the Mobile County Public School System and the Colleges of Education and Engineering at the University of South Alabama.

Ultimately, this program will serve as a national model strategy for the transformation of curriculums throughout the country.

WTO Ruling Should not Affect Tanker Contest:

After decades of charges and countercharges of unfair trade practices, the World Trade Organization (WTO) recently issued a report regarding complaints that European governments have been improperly subsidizing Airbus in the large civilian aircraft market.

Of note, this is just a preliminary ruling, and it is just part of the puzzle. We expect the other shoe to drop next year when the WTO rules on similar charges against Boeing.

In addition, this ruling should have absolutely no impact on the tanker competition.

Nevertheless, some of Boeing's supporters in Congress have seized on the WTO report to try to disqualify Northrop Grumman/EADS from the tanker competition. They are trying, yet again, to deliver a sole source contract to Boeing.

But sole source contracts do not work out so well for either the warfighter or the taxpayer.

The Department of Defense wants competition so it can get the best deal. That is precisely what they should be doing—conducting a fair, evenhanded competition that brings out the best in both companies and results in a winner that provides the best value to our military.

Our side certainly isn't afraid of a competition.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.