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I rise today to support the rule and the health reform package we are debating today.

I am reminded of a previous time we voted on a Sunday: March 20, 2005, when our colleagues on the other side of the aisle forced an extraordinary vote to intervene in the case of Terri Schiavo.

Now, that is what a real government takeover of medicine looks like. That midnight vote was a grotesque legislative travesty. For 215 years it had been a solid principle of this country that Congress not get involved in life-and-death issues like the tragic case of Ms. Schiavo. Yet, on that Sunday, Congress broke with tradition and inserted its own judgment. On that Sunday, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle sent the message that it knew better than families, doctors, and hospital chaplains.

The health reform package we debate today is not a government takeover; it is legislation that helps real people with real problems. It gives them more choice, more control, and more access to health care. One person this will help is a woman from Pennington, New Jersey. She called me yesterday to let me know her concerns that she would lose her job because of state budget cuts in New Jersey, which would mean that she would lose her health coverage as well. She told me her worries about finding affordable coverage while she looks for a new job and tries to keep food on her table. To complicate her situation, she has a pre-existing condition. This means that even if she could afford health care, it is possible she could be denied due to her pre-existing condition.

I will vote for health reform to help middle-class Americans like her, who play by the rules and still find health coverage unreliable or totally out of reach.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this health reform package to give families and small businesses more control over their own health care.