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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Democratic House Leader Jeffries on Gov't Shutdown]

CRAIG MELVIN: With us now here in the studio, House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York. Leader Jeffries, good morning to you, sir.

HOUSE MINORITY LEADER HAKEEM JEFFRIES (D-NY): Good morning.

MELVIN: First week where a lot of folks aren't going to be getting their paychecks. Hundreds of thousands of livelihoods hanging in the balance. Democrats would end this, as you know, and you could access funding levels for seven weeks and kick the can down the road. Why not?

JEFFRIES: Well, it's very unfortunate that Donald Trump and Republicans have decided to shut the government down because they're unwilling to provide health care to working-class Americans. We said we'll sit down with anyone, any time, any place, in order to reopen the government, find a bipartisan agreement that actually meets the needs of the American people. We need a spending agreement that improves the quality of life of everyday Americans that doesn't hurt everyday Americans and we also address this Republican health care crisis that is hurting people all across the country, rural America, working class America, urban America, the heartland of America and black and brown communities all throughout America.

MELVIN: So, Mr. Leader, again, the longest shutdown was during the first Trump presidency. This is what you said at the time about that particular shutdown. Here it is.

JEFFRIES [on 01/09/19]: We are willing to take what Senate Republicans have done in order to reopen the government, so that we no longer are holding 800,000 federal workers hostage.

MELVIN: Well, that's exactly what you're doing right now, hundreds of thousands are being held hostage. What's changed from then to now?

JEFFRIES: Actually, Donald Trump is the President. Republicans control the House and Senate and the presidency. They could reopen the government if they chose to. The reality is —

MELVIN: But they would have to change the rules to do that.

JEFFRIES: — well, that's correct, but — which they've done multiple times including using that particular type of process to pass their one big ugly bill which started this whole Republican health care crisis, largest cut to Medicaid in American history, rip food out of the mouths of children and they did it so they could reward their billionaire donors with massive tax breaks. What we're saying is we need a spending agreement that actually meets the needs of the American people. Working-class Americans, middle class Americans, and everyday Americans

as opposed to so what they've done throughout this year, which is to reward their billionaire donors.

MELVIN: But, again, the majority of folks certainly don't want their health care premiums to go up and I think a lot of folks are watching this and wondering, why fight this battle now? Why not reopen the government and still have these conversations and negotiate over the next few months?

JEFFRIES: Yeah. It's a really good question, but the time is now to address this health care crisis.

MELVIN: Yeah, but why now?

JEFFRIES: Well, absolutely, the enrollment period opens on November 1. Notices have started to go out indicating that premiums, co-pays, and deductible for tens of millions of Americans across the country are going to dramatically increase. You know, for example, a couple that make \$88,000 a year, currently which receives the Affordable Care Act tax credits —

MELVIN: Right

JEFFRIES: — pays insurance of about \$8,000 per year. That will triple to \$24,000 a year right now. That's what people are right now which is why we need to address it.

MELVIN: President Trump did say yesterday he wants to "fix the ACA subsidies." Is that an opening?

JEFFRIES: Well, he also mentioned that in the White House meeting that we had last Monday, unfortunately, the White House and Republican leaders have gone radio silent since then.

MELVIN: So, you guys haven't talked since last Monday?

JEFFRIES: We have not talked, but they have my number. We're willing to sit down.

MELVIN: But you recognize how ridiculous it sounds the leaders of the Democratic Party —

JEFFRIES: That's correct.

MELVIN: — the President of the United States, no one is talking about reopening the government —

JEFFRIES: That —

MELVIN: and people won't get paychecks this week?

JEFFRIES: — it makes no sense, which is why we're going to be in Washington all week.

Unfortunately, Republicans have actually canceled votes because they want to keep the government shutdown.

MELVIN: Alright. Leader Hakeem Jeffries. Mr. Leader, thank you so much.

JEFFRIES: Thank you.