

in for critically needed care because of the extraordinary waiting lists in my part of the country, and I know that is not unique. We have got to do away with those waiting lists and deliver on the promises we have made.

Happy Veterans Day.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### NICS AND HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, every week I stand here and I talk about common-sense approaches to reducing gun violence in this country, and yet this body sees fit to chip away at existing laws. So tonight I want to talk about the effects of gun violence in terms that everybody in this body understands, dollars and cents.

Throughout America our States are experiencing extraordinary budget problems, forcing them to cut spending on many important initiatives. A great deal of these budget woes are caused by skyrocketing health care costs, and the proposed cuts for Medicaid are not going to help the situation.

Among the initiatives being neglected because of State budget crunches is the National Instant Criminal Background Check. NICS is the database used to determine whether an individual is legally allowed to purchase a gun or not. Since its inception in 1994, NICS has been a great success. More than 700,000 individuals have been denied a gun for failing a background check.

However, the NICS system is only as good as the information that is in it, and because of tight budgets, updating the NICS database has fallen off the radar for many States. But as Congress continues to weaken our gun laws, we increasingly rely on the National Instant Background Check System to assure our constituents that guns do not fall into the wrong hands. But, unfortunately, the NICS database has become dangerously incomplete.

For example, half of all States have entered less than 60 percent of their convicted felons into the NICS system. Thirteen States have failed to enter the subjects of restraining orders stemming from domestic violence into the NICS system. And, of course, in all 50 States, people who are listed on the terrorist watch list cannot get on a plane, but they can buy a gun. This defies common sense.

I have introduced H.R. 1415, legislation that will require States to enter in all NICS information as quickly as possible. My bill would also provide grants to States that do not have the resources needed to update their data-

bases. These grants will not only keep guns out of the hands of felons, but will reduce the States' out-of-control health care costs as well.

Of course, Congress will not allow funding for the Centers for Disease Control to study the economic impact of gun violence, so we have to use data from independent sources. Independent sources have shown gun violence costs our economy over \$100 billion a year, \$100 billion a year. In fact, each gun death costs our economy \$2.8 million. And much of the cost is picked up by the State and local governments.

Gun violence increases law enforcement spending. Gun violence costs the economy lost productivity. And while Congress will not let us learn the exact amount, gun violence costs our health care system billions each and every year. And since gun violence plagues so many low-income communities, victims are often uninsured. And who picks up the tab for uninsured victims of gun violence? American taxpayers. That is who.

Passage of H.R. 1415 would serve as preventive medicine for the public health care system in many States. This legislation would prevent gun violence without infringing on anyone's second amendment rights. Nobody in this body believes convicted felons should be able to own guns. In fact, H.R. 1415 passed the House by a voice vote in the 107th Congress. Unfortunately, the other body did not have time to pick the bill up. But the bill had the support of several Senators who are known for their strong support of gun rights.

We have an opportunity to reduce health care costs and save lives by improving the NICS system. Mr. Speaker, let us pass H.R. 1415, the NICS Enforcement and Improvement Act, before the end of the year. Let us give the States the help that they need.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OSBORNE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### THE REPUBLICANS' BUDGET CHOICES

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, more than 10 years have passed since the Republican Party issued its "Contract With America."

This week Congress will vote on budget cuts and sacrifices that only middle-class America is asked to bear. These budget cuts have less to do with deficit reduction than they have to do with making the richest among us more comfortable in the face of bad economic times, massive health care costs and unfunded mandates passed on to State and local governments.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, middle America is waking up to the bad news that Democrats have long known, and that is that the budget choices put forth by Republicans show that Republicans have a "Contract on America."

In the release of *The Status of Working Families* in Indiana, Indiana has had a dramatic increase in the number of persons in poverty during the past few years and has seen household incomes decline for the sixth year in a row. Job growth has been slow and wages have continued to be stagnant. The poverty rate for children in Indiana has jumped sharply in the past 3 years from 10.5 percent in 2002 to 18.5 percent in 2004. Indiana's childhood poverty rate is now greater than the Nation's, which is 17.8 percent.

Employment: From May, 2000, to January, 2002, Indiana lost 122,000 jobs due to the national economic slowdown and recession. Since September, 2003, Indiana has been on the road to recovery, but as of July, 2005, it was still 46,000 jobs below the level reached 5 years ago.

Wages: Indiana's wages have been stagnant for the past several years and have not kept pace with the average wages in the United States. By 2004, the average annual wage in Indiana had fallen to just over 88 percent of the U.S.

Incomes: Based on 2-year averages, Indiana's median household income has declined steadily since 1998 and 1999, when it was \$46,136. By 2003 to 2004, it had fallen to \$42,946.

In our rush to cut the budget on the backs of the poorest of Americans, we need, Mr. Speaker, to counteract that abusive act against middle-class and poor people and restore some economic sanity to the Nation's budget, to the United States of America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)