

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my good friend and colleague, Chairman RUBÉN HINOJOSA, for his work on this issue of adult illiteracy which he just spoke about.

Just like RUBÉN HINOJOSA and his district in Texas, in my State of Rhode Island where unemployment rates continue to rise, 23 percent of the adult population in my district alone lacks a high school diploma. Last June when the National Commission on Adult Literacy released its report, it served as a wake-up call for all those concerned with the quality of our adult workforce. The commission found that 80 to 90 million adults in this country have deficiencies in basic education and that our investments in adult education and training were reaching less than 3 percent of those who need it. That's why we need to ensure that our adult education and workforce training programs have the tools and resources they need to prepare our workers for the next generation of jobs in energy, in health care and in technology. We need to improve the way we deliver adult education and workforce training programs and the way we provide career paths to higher growth fields through greater involvement with business leaders, State agencies and adult education community and workforce leaders. We need to better leverage employers to provide educational programs to their employees. We need to enhance the use of technology to improve quality learning access and delivery of adult education, literacy and workplace skills services.

The Adult Education and Economic Growth Act which RUBÉN HINOJOSA and I are introducing will do all of these things in order to provide those employed and unemployed with the ability to attain the skills they need to compete in an ever-changing workplace.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

THE ADULT EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH (AEEG) ACT OF 2009

WHAT THE BILL WOULD DO

1. Will refocus the adult education and workforce skills system to make postsecondary and job training readiness a primary goal.

85 percent of GED graduates have to take at least one remedial course before they can enroll in postsecondary education. We need to do a better job preparing them for success in school and in work, rather than getting them to an arbitrary finish line that actually leaves them short of where they need to be.

2. Will give incumbent workers greater access to the workforce skills training and adult education systems.

It is too hard for people already on the job to receive workforce skills training and adult education. It's not enough to get someone into a job, we need to get them into a career. That means continued training, even after a worker is on the job.

Only 3 to 4 percent of the workers with the most limited literacy proficiencies receive basic skills training from their employers. Our bill will create greater incentives for employer involvement in the education of their employees.

3. Will ensure that federal funding formulas accurately take into account the adult education and workforce skills needs of individual states.

Federal funding formulas are outdated, and especially penalize states with a high proportion of non-native English speakers. Our legislation will ensure a fairer distribution of federal funds.

4. Will increase the use of technology in workforce skills training and adult education.

Technology has greatly increased our ability to reach workers at times and places convenient to them. By 2006, 73 percent of American adults were online, including those at the lowest literacy levels. We cannot reach all of those needing services without deploying technology to provide services outside the classroom walls.

5. Will increase access to correction education programs and provide for added accountability in the system.

Offenders with education and training are statistically less likely to commit crimes after release. There is a direct correlation between education level and recidivism: the higher the education level, the lower the recidivism rate. A decrease in recidivism reduces costs to taxpayers and keeps our communities safer.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 33 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

God of mercy and goodness, may this midday moment of prayer and dedication be received as a welcome gift by all, refreshing Your people and clarifying our purpose in serving this Nation.

Bless the work that Congress has begun this day. Rectify any defects and strengthen its integrity. Let us finish the tasks You set before us in a way that pleases You and gives glory to this Nation and Your Holy Name, both now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr.

PAULSEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PAULSEN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 951. An act to authorize the President, in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of the historic and first lunar landing by humans in 1969, to award gold medals on behalf of the United States Congress to Neil A. Armstrong, the first human to walk on the moon; Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr., the pilot of the lunar module and second person to walk on the moon; Michael Collins, the pilot of their Apollo 11 mission's command module; and, the first American to orbit the Earth, John Herschel Glenn, Jr.

S. Con. Res. 11. Concurrent resolution condemning all forms of anti-Semitism and reaffirming the support of Congress for the mandate of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, and for other purposes.

IN SUPPORT OF STATUTORY PAYGO

(Mr. WILSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. I rise today in strong support of statutory pay-as-you-go legislation, which will be taken up this week by the House. This bill demonstrates our commitment to fiscal responsibility and will restore the policy that led us from deficit spending to debt to surpluses.

We have to reduce our deficit spending. If we don't, we will not be able to invest in vitally important priorities like health care, education, and clean energy.

PAYGO is very simple: All the policies that cut taxes or reduce revenues must be paid for or offset over 5 and 10 years. All policies that expand entitlement spending must be paid for over 5 and 10 years. Discretionary spending is not subject to PAYGO, and exceptions could be made for emergencies.

This makes common sense and families live by it every day. If you spend more in one area of the family budget, you have got to cut back in other areas. It's about time that our government start living by the same rule.

DON'T TAX EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYMENT

(Mr. BOEHNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, before I came to Congress, I ran a small business. And in that small business I offered a health insurance benefit to my

employees. I offered a pension benefit to my employees. Both of these plans were as a result of a 1974 Federal law called ERISA, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, that allows employers to offer health plans to their employees and pension plans to their employees across State lines.

Over the years, employers now provide health insurance to their employees, to the total of about 132 million Americans that today get their health insurance through their employer.

But in the Democrat health care plan, I noticed this morning in an article from *The Wall Street Journal* there's a provision in there that, in their bill, after 5 years all employer plans will have to be approved by the Department of Labor and the new Health Choices Commissioner, who will set Federal standards for what is an acceptable health plan.

Now, these employers are providing these plans to their employees. They're trying to provide a benefit their employees want and need. And now the Federal Government is going to decide what your health plan is going to look like.

I would suggest that a lot of employers in America are going to look at this and decide, You know, this really isn't worth it. Under their plan, if you're an employer and you don't provide health insurance, you have to pay an 8 percent payroll tax to the Federal Government. Eight percent.

Now, most employers probably pay more than this for their health care. And so, as a result, I would think a lot of employers are just going to pay the 8 percent tax and allow their employees to be shoved into the government-run plan.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, some 23 million Americans would lose their benefits from their employers and be forced into government health care. According to the Lewin Group, 114 million Americans would be forced into the government plan.

This is not what the American people want. And if you put an 8 percent tax on payroll, guess what? Employers are going to hire less people. And most of my constituents are asking, Where are the jobs? And if you tax employment through this health care plan or you tax employment under this crazy national energy tax, you're going to create less jobs in America.

At a time when we need jobs and we need our economy going again, we don't need to be taxing employers and taxing employment, because we're going to get a lot less of it.

SUPPORT PASSAGE OF STATUTORY PAY-AS-YOU-GO

(Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act. This com-

monsense measure will help bring fiscal responsibility back to Washington. With the national debt at almost \$11.6 trillion, Congress needs to start showing some discipline.

I launched my "Do More With Less" campaign to cut inefficient spending and reduce the debt. I have been proud to support billions of cuts in the fiscal year 2010 appropriations bills. And I have called on the Treasury Secretary to use returned bailout funds to pay back what we owe.

I am also pleased to be an original cosponsor of the PAYGO bill. By requiring that Congress offset spending dollar-for-dollar, this legislation will ensure that Washington makes the tough choices it takes to get our country back on track.

PAYGO helped produce the budget surpluses of the late 1990s, and it will help us restore the balance now.

I urge my colleagues to stand with me and support passage of this bill.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

(Mr. CANTOR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, at a time when millions of Americans are losing their jobs and families are desperately seeking employment, this Congress and this administration have made job creation a secondary concern. As a result, they have squandered a golden opportunity to put people back to work.

Frankly, the American people have just had enough. They have had enough of a stimulus bill that has wasted hundreds of billions of dollars and not staved off job loss. They have had enough of the national energy tax that will impose extraordinary job-killing taxes on the people of this country. And now, Mr. Speaker, they have had enough of talk of a health care bill that not only will fail to deliver the access and quality that we need, but it will cripple small businesses by imposing an 8 percent payroll tax on them.

Mr. Speaker, the question is: Where are the jobs? Congress and this administration have been asleep for too long—and we can do better.

SUPPORT THE HEALTH CARE PLAN

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. America's health system is not working. We cannot stay with the failing system that we now have. What good is an insurance card if there's no real access to services? What good is the current system if I have a senior under Medicare, like in my district, scared that their doctors won't see them any more?

We also need a health care reform that gets past the politics and past the rhetoric that every single person is covered.

I stand here to advocate for those without a voice, for those who cannot afford to travel to Washington, D.C. I stand here to advocate for a viable public option to compete with the private sector.

I stand here to advocate for American families. And I stand for the American families who are busting at the seams, trying to make ends meet, and hoping one day they won't get sick.

I urge my colleagues to advocate for all American families and pass health care reform that is needed for all American people in this country.

WE CAN AND MUST DO BETTER

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. In the midst of the worst recession in 25 years, after months of runaway Federal spending, bailout, record deficits, and a national energy tax, now comes a government takeover of health care paid for with nearly a trillion dollars in tax increases.

Before we move on to the next big government scheme of this administration, the American people are asking, Mr. President, where are the jobs?

Make no mistake about it, the President's health care bill would do nothing to lower the cost of health care and would be a disaster for the American economy. If ObamaCare passes—according to the experts—if ObamaCare passes, you will probably lose your health insurance and you might just lose your job.

The American people know we can do better. We must do better. For the sake of our economy and reform, I implore my Democratic colleagues, say "no" to a government takeover of health care and higher taxes and say "yes" to a bipartisan majority in this Congress that is committed to fiscal discipline, reform, and putting Americans back to work.

REINSTITUTE PAYGO

(Mr. CHILDERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHILDERS. It's a privilege to come to this House floor today to express my steadfast support for pay-as-you-go legislation that is scheduled to be introduced this week. As a member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, I believe reinstating PAYGO is vital to restoring confidence with the American people that Washington and this Congress are indeed serious about reducing the Federal deficit and not continuing the reckless spending policies so often associated with Washington over the past decade.

The people of north Mississippi and the American people all understand that at some point the bills have to be paid. Going from a \$5 trillion debt at the end of the Clinton administration