

experiencing in our country. While oil is currently trading at some \$69.21 per barrel today, it was at \$147 in July of 2008, when we all remember gas prices at over \$4 a gallon. We must address our energy problems as we continue to address our economic problems. By doing so, we can ensure that while our economy recovers, we will be competitive and secure in the energy sector as well.

As such, I was pleased that my bill, H.R. 3165, the Wind Energy Research and Development Act of 2009, passed this body last week. I would like to thank my colleagues from both sides of the aisle for their support on my first piece of legislation that passed this full body. We must continue to promote energy efficiency, to drill and mine efficiency as we previously drilled for oil and mined coal. We must also enact policies that promote clean energy jobs and the deployment of renewables.

Finally, as my bill did last week, we must continue to invest in research and development to ensure that the United States is at the forefront of the energy revolution.

#### TOO MANY CRISES IN WASHINGTON

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

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, it is so good to be back on the House floor, doing the people's work. But once again, I hear the word "crisis" used constantly—energy is a crisis, the health care crisis. When will this body deal with the problems in many cases created by government in a way that the American people can have the confidence that, in fact, we view problems as something which gets solved, and it gets solved by having the private sector able to do what it does best and the public sector doing only the minimum necessary?

When I hear my colleagues talk about how we have to make insurance companies do this or that, I recognize that we still don't get it. The crises are created in Washington, and we must change to help solve problems with the American people and not make everything a crisis to justify our pet projects.

#### WE NEED HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, I spent the month of August and the first part of September traveling across my district in upstate New York, listening to my constituents in townhall meetings, tele-townhalls and one-on-one discussions in my office. I've listened to doctors, nurses, hospital administrators in order to build consensus on what my constituents want to see as part of a

health care reform bill. I learned a lot during that time, and I heard stories that would make hearts break regarding denied coverage or loss of coverage because of preexisting conditions and catastrophic illness.

I have promised my constituents that I will keep listening until we have to go to vote on this bill. However, it is crucial to America's financial health that we pass comprehensive health care reform to rid the current system of rampant waste, fraud and abuse, like the inflated costs of prescription drugs. Our economy cannot sustain the high cost of our current system, and it is clear to me that the health care reform in this country is not just the moral imperative for those who don't have health care insurance, but it's also an economic imperative for those that do have health care insurance, to ensure that those individuals can continue the coverage that they have.

#### OVER 20 PERCENT OF AMERICANS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 AND 64 ARE UNINSURED

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

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, the Joint Economic Committee heard last week some very sobering findings from the latest Census data on health coverage. The number of Americans between the ages of 18 and 64 who are without health insurance increased significantly last year to over 20 percent. More than one of every five nonelderly adults lacked health insurance in 2008. Those millions are one accident, one major illness away from financial ruin. The majority of those uninsured adults without health coverage worked full time or part time.

At the same time, the share of employment-based health insurance declined significantly to 58.5 percent in 2008. The current expensive, inefficient and indifferent system is failing us. Americans deserve better, and we deserve it now.

#### CELEBRATING THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

(Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 15th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act. I am so proud of the light that Congress shined on domestic violence 15 years ago this week, of the work that the dedicated staff and advocates have done for the past decade and a half, and of the bravery shown by victims and their families. For 15 years now, the Office on Violence Against Women has served as a safe haven for families everywhere. Through it, we have provided services and counseling during victims' darkest

hours, emergency and transitional shelter in times of need, and legal assistance to help prosecute perpetrators.

Domestic violence is a scourge in this country, one that recognizes no income brackets, no race, no age. Earlier this week, I joined my constituents in Wisconsin for the fourth annual Brides Walk. We donned wedding dresses and marched through the streets of Milwaukee, calling attention to the violent murder of Gladys Ricart. Gladys was in the process of handing her bouquet to her maid of honor 8 years ago in New York when a former lover burst into the church and killed her in her wedding dress.

Domestic violence is not a private matter. Domestic violence against a partner or a child, whether physical or mental, is not okay. On this anniversary, I urge my colleagues to recommit themselves once again to ending this injustice in our country.

#### REAL COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE REFORM IS A NECESSITY

(Ms. KILROY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KILROY. Mr. Speaker, like I've heard from many of my colleagues this afternoon, I also have been listening to constituents in my district throughout the recess and this past weekend about the issue of health care. After church services last Sunday, this is what I heard from one woman who worked for General Motors for 26 years, taking an early retirement a few years ago, thinking she was secure in her retirement: Now she's found that she has lost her investments and her 401(k) because of the GM bankruptcy, and also lost her health care.

She is a breast cancer survivor. Now she is not of the means to buy insurance. No insurance company will insure her because of this preexisting condition. Mr. Speaker, there are too many people in my district and across the country who cannot buy insurance because they are barred because of preexisting conditions. This is one of the many reasons why we need to take action on real comprehensive health care reform.

#### THE HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION WILL RESULT IN BETTER CARE WITH NO ADDITIONAL COST TO AMERICANS

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, the urgency of health care reform comes from the fact that overall, Americans are living sicker, dying younger, and paying more. Not just the poor, not just those without insurance, not just the unemployed. Overall, Americans are living sicker, dying younger, and paying more than they should or more than residents of other countries do. Just minutes ago I came from a meeting with

the heads of the American Medical Association, the American Nursing Association, and the American Hospital Association. Doctors, hospital administrators, nurses—not politicians. The clear consensus is that the health care legislation, as it is taking shape here in Congress, can be expected to result in better patient care while holding costs in check. Let me repeat, the legislation, as it is taking shape in Congress, can result in better care at no more cost for all Americans.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

#### UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FINANCIAL RELIEF ACT OF 2009

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 22) to amend chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code, to allow the United States Postal Service to pay its share of contributions for annuitants' health benefits out of the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 22

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "United States Postal Service Financial Relief Act of 2009".

#### SEC. 2. GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTIONS FOR POSTAL ANNUITANTS' HEALTH BENEFITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Clause (iii) of section 8909a(d)(3)(A) of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(iii) \$1,400,000,000, not later than September 30, 2009;"

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect as if included in the enactment of section 803(a)(1)(B) of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (Public Law 109-435; 120 Stat. 3251).

#### SEC. 3. TECHNICAL CORRECTION.

The heading for section 8909a of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking "BENEFIT" and inserting "BENEFITS".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 22, the United States Postal Service Financial Relief Act of 2009, as amended, would permit the United States Postal Service to lower its 2009 payment into the retirement health benefit fund, \$5.4 billion, reduce it to \$1.4 billion. This bill does not provide any taxpayer funds to the Postal Service. In essence, H.R. 22 is intended to provide the Postal Service with some relief from its current financial crisis by lowering the amount of its 2009 payment due. The measure has been properly vetted and amended by the House Oversight Committee, in line with calls for a more fiscally responsible government. The bill, as amended, does not score.

The bill enjoys the support of 339 Members of the House from both parties. I would like to thank Representatives McHUGH of New York and DAVIS of Illinois for introducing this bill and for their hard work and patience in navigating the bill through the House. Further, I would like to thank the House Democratic leadership and the Budget Committee for working with us to help advance the bill to the floor.

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Also I would like to thank and recognize Chairman LYNCH of Massachusetts for his leadership on the subcommittee and being a tireless advocate for the postal service and all of its employees. Unfortunately, Chairman LYNCH could not be with us today, but his statement will be in the RECORD.

Additionally, I would like to thank the gentleman from California, Congressman ISSA, for his support and strong work on this bill. Also Congressman CHAFFETZ for his work as well. I would like to recognize them because this is truly bipartisan support for this important legislation, which I think is so important.

The United States Postal Service is regularly acknowledged to be among the most trusted of the Federal agencies in part due to the positive relationship that its approximately 625,000 employees develop with local communities. The postal service is often the only Federal presence in many of the urban and rural areas throughout the United States, and it is often the face of the Federal Government.

Yet despite the best efforts of its employees, the postal service faces financial challenges unlike at any other time. Mail volumes have declined at a record pace, falling by 7 million pieces during the third quarter of fiscal year 2009, 14.3, compared to the same period last year. In fact, volume continued to fall for all types of mail: first class, standard, periodical, and also package services. The postal service ended the third quarter ending in 2009 with a loss of \$2.4 billion, its year-to-date net loss through the third quarter at \$4.7 billion.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the introduction of this bill on January 6, the first legislative day, was appropriate. This is a problem for an organization, the United States Post Office, which is, in fact, 15 times larger than General Motors. The United States Post Office is not only a constitutional obligation but, in fact, an organization which has existed for the service of the United States of America since our founding.

But since the 1970s, the United States Post Office has had a problem. The problem is our own success. Alternate efficiencies have reduced the need for the United States Post Office to deliver mail. Invoices, payments, and certainly many other emails instead of paper mails are being delivered electronically today. The United States Post Office is also suffering from a recession that we all are suffering under.

Therefore, the committee has worked on a bipartisan basis to recognize that we must reform the post office again. Having just passed the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act in 2006, we are faced with another crisis; but rather than having that crisis lead to haphazard reductions, the chairman and I have worked together with Members on both sides of the aisle, as the chairman said, 339 cosponsors, to create a soft landing for the post office.

It will not be that soft, Mr. Speaker. It will, in fact, require that they accelerate the reduction in their force. It will require that they look at all costs and services. It will require without a doubt the closing of post offices around our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, these are difficult decisions. They are both financial and they're political. They impact the communities who have for so long allowed people to go to their corner post office to maintain a postal mailbox, to do other services. These services will be further away in the future.

So for that reason, although I would have preferred a major reform, I would have preferred that we were able to do some of these hard steps, I'm supporting an alternate course, one in which we use these last 2 weeks and only these last 2 weeks of the fiscal year to move this bill with a cost, as the chairman said, of zero because there is so little time left in the year. However, we are committed on this side of the aisle and I know the chairman shares this, to work with the postal service to find ways to reduce their costs, their overhead, and many of the legacy items that today make it difficult.

Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat something the chairman said because it's noteworthy for my conservative friends. The post office's money that we are talking about today is the money they have put aside. This is the only agency that works in this way. So