

have provided the Obama administration regarding the future of our Nation's human spaceflight program; but as we debate the future of human spaceflight, we must not overlook the present.

Last week was a wildly successful one in America's space agency. On Friday, the space shuttle *Discovery* and the crew of STS-128 returned home after a very successful mission to the international space station. Last week, NASA released new and, frankly, stunning images from the recently serviced Hubble telescope. Finally, NASA completed a successful test of the ARES I first-stage rocket motor. This is another milestone of the Constellation program, our next-generation vehicle, to take us back to the Moon.

All of these were amazing accomplishments, but it was just another week at NASA. The American people have invested in space exploration for over 50 years. We continue to reap the benefits of that investment.

HEALTH CARE

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

Ms. CHU. Madam Speaker, opponents of the health care reform bill are trying to confuse and to scare the American people. They are trying to prey on fear of the unknown. Opponents claim that the average American will fare worse under this bill because health care will be rationed by some faceless bureaucrat in Washington, D.C., but they clearly have not traveled to my district in California or they would know that rationing is already happening to people of every age and background. Insurance companies are already denying coverage if you are sick, have a preexisting condition, or are not independently wealthy.

In my district, a healthy middle class father's care was rationed when he was told he could not have insurance when his wife was pregnant because he had asthma as a child. A hardworking man was told that, despite working 30 years in a factory, he wasn't wealthy enough to deserve the cancer treatment that he desperately needed.

Health care reform will prohibit the kind of rationing that my constituents struggle with every day.

HONORING GRAMMY WINNER AND COUNTRY MUSIC RECORDING ARTIST GRETCHEN WILSON

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Grammy winner and country music recording artist Gretchen Wilson as she receives the 2009 National Coalition for Literacy Leadership Award. This multi-platinum, acclaimed singer/songwriter was

one of millions of Americans who had not finished her high school education.

Gretchen left high school to pursue her music career, and has since had three number one albums. She realized, as a mother, it was important for her to lead by example and to demonstrate to her daughter just how important it is to have an education. So last year, at the age of 34, Gretchen earned her GED. She is teaming up with the Dollar General Literacy Foundation to honor GED graduates and organizations dedicated to the achievement of literacy.

I congratulate Gretchen on her hard work, on her resilience and on her many notable achievements. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing her dedication and contributions to adult education and literacy awareness.

REBUILDING THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

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

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, yesterday, both Warren Buffett and Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke said the recession is very likely over. While most Americans are still months away from experiencing any sign of recovery firsthand, we can take heart in the fact that, as a Nation, we have just managed to avoid the economic precipice we faced just 1 year ago.

Just 200 days since the passage of the stimulus bill, 30,000 construction projects have begun. Jobs of 5,000 police officers and nurses and of 135,000 teachers have been saved; and all across our great country, Americans are working to rebuild the economy. From veterans who are going to college on the GI Bill, to entrepreneurs who are developing innovative technologies for clean energy, to the work we're doing here in Congress to reform our financial regulations and to ensure that all Americans have access to quality medical care, our job has just begun.

It is still too early to celebrate success, but it is time to encourage those policies that work and to have the courage to change those that are in need of reform.

DELAY GUIDELINES FOR THE POTENTIAL RELEASE OF BTIF TERRORISTS

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

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, the administration is preparing to establish guidelines for the review and potential release of Taliban and al Qaeda terrorists held at the Bagram Theater Internment Facility, BTIF, in Afghanistan. This facility holds over 500 of the most dangerous Taliban and al Qaeda terrorists captured on the Afghan battlefield.

According to The Washington Post and The New York Times, each detainee will be given a counselor to grant rights and to review their potential release procedures. The press reports that the new guidelines were approved with a brief and limited congressional review. We know over 50 detainees released from Guantanamo Bay resumed jihad against Americans. The release of terrorists from the Bagram facility will form a clear and present danger to Americans serving in Afghanistan.

I urge Members to sign our letter to Secretary Gates, asking him to delay the release of these guidelines until Congress holds hearings and especially until all of our soldiers in Afghanistan are briefed on this potential danger.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, in America today, more than 60 percent of all bankruptcies are related to medical bills. Insurance premiums have gone up three times faster than the money people take home every year. Hundreds of thousands of Americans are denied the health care they need by insurance company bureaucrats, and millions more are holding on by the skin of their teeth to keep what insurance coverage they do have.

Yet there are still those who say that there is no problem and that nothing is wrong. I don't know who they've been listening to—maybe to the insurance company CEOs who rake in millions of dollars every year in bonuses alone or maybe to the insurance company lobbyists who have flooded Washington with millions of dollars spent on ensuring that health care reform does not happen.

Americans want progress. They want a system that delivers quality, affordable health care for them and for their families. By giving them a public option to choose from, we can keep insurance companies honest through competition, and we can provide our Nation's families with the quality health care they deserve.

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PUTTING PATIENTS AND DOCTORS IN CONTROL

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

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, last week the President and the congressional Democrats began yet another drive to enact their sweeping overhaul of American health care, H.R. 3200.

Following the President's address to Congress, I urged the President to work with Republicans to lower the cost of health care for American families and small business. Commonsense