fourth annual National Health Information Technology Week. Health information technology is a critical piece of health care reform.

The cost of our health care system is the main burden. As we look for ways to expand coverage to the millions of Americans who don't have it, getting costs under control is absolutely critical.

Health care information technology is one way to do that. If we can improve the quality of our IT systems and our health care system, we can improve the quality of health care for millions of Americans by getting better information to both doctors and patients more quickly.

Right now the system is woefully behind most other businesses in developing and improving IT. This House took an important step in the stimulus package passed last January by putting $19 billion towards improving health care information technology.

It's critical that that money is well spent. It is critical that we improve our health IT systems if we are going to improve the quality of our health care system for all Americans.

NEW YORK TIMES GIVES MILES OF COVERAGE TO OBAMA

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, President Obama and his agenda are in the news so much that media research groups are finding new ways to measure the coverage.

According to the Center For Media and Public Affairs, The New York Times has featured 405 stories about the Obama administration on its front page in the last 8 months. These stories total 120,000 column entries. That equals almost 2 miles of coverage devoted to President Obama and his agenda.

Not surprisingly, the New York Times featured more positive coverage of the President than any other news outlet, according to the Center For Media and Public Affairs. The national media should devote more time and a few more inches to covering the other side of the story.

AUTOMOBILE DEALERS WHO WERE FORCED TO CLOSE THEIR DOORS

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice concern over the thousands of automobile dealers who have been forced to close their doors as the industry is now reshaping. While the national conversation has shifted from the auto industry to health care, we must remember that car dealerships continue to be shuttered and thousands of hardworking Americans continue to lose their jobs.

In my State of North Carolina, 49 Chrysler and General Motors dealerships have closed, along with all of the Pontiac dealers. Thirty Cadillac dealers are slated to close and, unfortunately, the closures are continuing.

One of the dealerships is J.C. Harris Pontiac and Cadillac. This dealership is in my hometown of Wilson, North Carolina. They have been serving the community for more than 40 years. Despite the fact that they lead Cadillac dealerships statewide in sales, service and customer satisfaction, J.C. Harris is being forced to close its doors. Customers from the region will be forced to drive 120 miles round trip for sales and service.

With American taxpayers becoming investors in GM, they should expect better.

□ 1030

OFFSHORE DRILLING

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, last week, Interior Secretary Salazar stated that the Obama administration would ''move expeditiously'' on finalizing a new offshore drilling plan. While I hope this to be true, unfortunately, this administration has proposed one delay after another to block new energy production and new jobs.

In February, the administration stalled new offshore drilling with an extended 6-month comment period. Now we've learned they may wait until 2012 before implementing a new offshore drilling plan. This means the offshore drilling ban that was lifted last year by the President and by the Congress would effectively remain in place for 3 more years. With 10 percent unemployment, Mr. Speaker, Americans can't wait 3 more years to begin producing more energy and millions more jobs.

It's time to lift the de facto ban on new offshore drilling. It's time to act on the Republicans' all-of-the-above energy plan that will create green jobs, drilling jobs, wind and solar jobs, and nuclear jobs.

Let's get America to work producing more energy.

THE PROGRESS OF THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to highlight the progress that our economy has made. When President Obama took office, he faced the greatest economic crisis in a generation: home foreclosures were at a record level, banks were in crisis, and we had just lost 700,000 jobs in January 2009 alone.

Congress took action, and it is starting to work. In just 200 days since the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was signed into law, 30,000 projects have been approved, including community health center upgrades and transportation improvements; the rate of job loss has declined; the jobs of thousands of police officers, nurses, and teachers have been saved; and 95 percent of working Americans received a tax cut in their paychecks.

Moreover, employers are hiring again, consumer confidence is rising, consumer spending is increasing, and the housing market is turning around.

While we're beginning to see the end of the recession, there's still more work to be done. We must continue to build on the progress we have made in the Recovery Act to further jump-start our economy and build a new foundation for a lasting recovery.

NAS ATLANTA

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

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Naval Air Station Atlanta. Since April of 1959, NAS Atlanta, located close to my home in Marietta, Georgia, has played a critical role in providing for our Nation's defense.

Over the past 50 years, NAS Atlanta has seen its mission change from training, to fleet logistics, to housing Navy Attack Squadrons and Carrier Early Airborne Warning Squadrons. In the 1990s, the Marines joined NAS Atlanta with MAG–42 and Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 142.

Units from NAS Atlanta have been instrumental to our causes in the war on drugs and global war on terror, as well as to the relief efforts following Hurricane Katrina. NAS Atlanta and those who have served there have proven an invaluable asset to the United States.

This Saturday, NAS Atlanta's distinguished history will come to a close as the base will officially become the home of the Georgia National Guard, as mandated by the BRAC round.

To all the personnel who are and have been stationed at NAS Atlanta: thank you for a job well done and for your service to our community. You will be missed.

THE STUDENT LOAN BILL AND THE ECONOMY

(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 want to make sure that I take time to promote a bill that I think has been lost in the constant and necessary debate regarding health care reform over the past several months.

While reforming our Nation's health care system is absolutely critical, last week in Congress we passed a bipartisan piece of legislation that will