

I grew up in poverty, and my grandmother often relied on Social Security survivor benefits to put food on the table. I know firsthand how important initiatives like Medicare and Medicaid are to seniors and families in America. No senior should have to make the choice between putting food on the table and paying for their medication.

Our country's retirees have paid into Medicare their entire lives. That is why it is so critical that those who have worked hard get their earned benefits.

Medicaid is critical to low-income families and individuals with disabilities that depend on the program for their basic health care needs, many of whom are struggling just to get by.

I look forward to continuing to work to strengthen and protect Medicare and Medicaid to ensure that the promise of health and economic security will be there for generations to come.

THE FATHER OF FRACKING

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

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last week, Texas and America's energy industry lost a friend. George Mitchell, who many knew as the "father of fracking," passed away last week at his home in Galveston, Texas. While his death is a sad occasion, his legacy will live on as the energy industry continues to grow and prosper. Texas now stands ranked as No. 14 in the world in oil and gas production, largely due to Mr. Mitchell's innovation.

Not only was George an energy innovator, he was a community builder. He was a visionary. He developed the Woodlands Master Community when many just saw it as useless swampland. Mr. Mitchell also played an integral role in reviving what I consider a precious gem in my district: the island of Galveston. George and his wife put countless hours and resources into restoring the strand which helped keep the island a popular tourist destination and number one in Texas, for that matter.

It's important that we remember George Mitchell not only for his contribution to Texas business, but also for his zeal and tenacity to give back to the communities where he lived and worked.

I'm RANDY WEBER, and that's the way I see it from where I sit here in America.

RECOGNIZING DR. EMILY RUFFO

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

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to recognize Dr. Emily Ruffo, administrator of the Hayward Police Department's Youth and Family Services Bureau, who has been

named the California School Resource Officer Association's Law Enforcement Administrator of the Year. She'll be honored with this award today at the School Safety Conference in Anaheim.

She's been helping kids and families for years, joining the Hayward Youth and Family Services Bureau in 2011. Just this year, Dr. Ruffo was promoted to be administrator of the bureau, and her work has been a great help to Hayward and the entire 15th Congressional District.

The bureau Dr. Ruffo leads offers services to youth such as counseling to help keep kids out of trouble. For kids who have violated the law, it offers an alternative to juvenile justice to get them back on the right track. As a former prosecutor in the Alameda County District Attorney's office, I've worked closely with the Hayward Police Department and know how important this program is.

Dr. Ruffo is rightly being recognized for her commitment and care for the children and families of the East Bay. It's people like her willing to dedicate their careers to helping those at risk who are helping to provide us with a brighter future.

On behalf of the people of Hayward and the entire 15th Congressional District, I want to thank Dr. Ruffo for her service, congratulate her on her award, and wish her continued success.

REGULATING THE RABBIT

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

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, Washington bureaucrats are up to their old tricks again. They're interfering with how we run our businesses, dictating the type of health insurance we have to purchase, and stonewalling tax-exempt status based on political speech. Now they're going so far as to tell magicians how to do their magic shows.

Let me introduce you to Marty Hahne. He's an area magician from Missouri who's been doing magic shows for children in southern Missouri for over 27 years. This summer, he received a chilling letter from the Federal Government requiring him to have a license. Not for himself, but for his rabbit. The Agriculture Department is interpreting a decades-old law on animal exhibitions to now include pet bunnies used in magic shows. In order to continue conveying to children that reading is magic, he has to not only obtain a license, but also write a mandated disaster plan for his rabbit, including provisions for fire, floods, tornados, ice storms, and power failures.

This is just another example of government overreach and loss of freedoms in our country. It is time for this to stop. It is time for common sense to prevail. It's time for Big Government to leave us alone. With the track record of this current administration, that really would be like pulling a rabbit out of a hat.

CANCEL THE RECESS

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I wrote the following letter to the Under Secretary of Defense a few days ago:

Just this past Saturday, I attended a welcome home event for the 1109th TASMG, the Connecticut National Guard, who spent the last year in Afghanistan providing critical maintenance for our helicopter fleet.

Their joy at being home with family was undermined by the reality that nearly a third of the 100 returning members are dual-status technicians and, therefore, hit by furlough. After serving in a war zone away from family, it was a bitter pill for these patriots to lose 20 percent of their pay almost immediately upon their return.

I do believe that the Department of Defense can do a better job managing the furloughs. However, the real responsibility rests in this Chamber to turn off sequester. It has been 210 days since the governing Republican majority took power, and 81 legislative days that we have not taken up one measure to turn off sequester during that time. Incredibly, in 3 days, we are going on a 5-week recess, and on Friday we're going to vote for the 40th time to repeal the Affordable Care Act. I have a news flash: it's not going anywhere.

We should cancel the recess, and we should focus on making sure that these patriots are not treated so shabbily. We should make sure that the 600,000-plus civilian DOD Federal employees have their furloughs turned off.

Cancel the recess. Let's turn off sequester. Let's stand up for America's middle class.

WASHINGTON NEEDS HOOSIER COMMON SENSE

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

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, when I was back in the district this week in Indiana, Hoosier requests were pretty simple. They said: work on reforms, create more jobs, and jump-start the economy. In addition they said, We don't trust our government.

They're tired of Big Government policies that are intruding on the lives of American citizens and increasing government abuse. That's why I'm proud today to cosponsor and support bills that rein in Washington, refocus on the priorities to create jobs, and protect our citizens.

Every week we hear chilling reports about the Internal Revenue Service exercising poor judgment, intentionally going after American citizens. So I'm cosponsoring the STOP IRS Act.

While IRS employees are under investigation or forced to take administrative leaves, they continue to receive salaries funded by our taxpayer dollars. So I'm cosponsoring the Government Employee Accountability Act to freeze pay and demand accountability.