but it is clear that our current policy has failed to end these practices.

So just how will these policy changes positively affect the Cuban people and the United States?

Remittances from the U.S. are a vital resource to millions of Cubans and to humanitarian projects in Cuba. Between $1.4 and $2 billion in remittances are transferred from the U.S. to Cuba each year, often from Cubans who immigrated to the U.S. to seek new opportunity. Cubans rely on this money to pay for food, monthly electricity bills, or for the daily expenses of life. And humanitarian projects receiving this aid provide food, clean water, essential infrastructure and education to Cubans. When the average monthly salary in Cuba is a mere $20, the significance of this transfer of money comes into full view. Limits on remittances have stifled real progress, and raising these limits from $500 to $2,000 per quarter will usher in a new wave of much needed aid to counter the Cuban government's infliction of serious harm to the well-being of its people.

Despite harsh government regulations, Cuba does have a nascent burgeoning private sector economy. I saw this firsthand last year when I visited Cuba as part of a Congressional delegation. During the trip, I participated in a roundtable with a number of Cuban female entrepreneurs to hear their concerns and discuss what can be done to support their efforts to create new business. I believe this shift in U.S.-Cuba relations will act as a healthy seed for entrepreneurial growth in Cuba. From authorizing expanded commercial sales and exports, to facilitating an expansion of travel to Cuba from the U.S., we will do more to empower the Cuban people than we have in the over 50-year embargo.

Today, Cuba imports approximately 80 percent of its food, a stunning statistic. American agriculture has long supported an opening of relations and now Cuba's economy will be bolstered and this in turn will bring enormous value to American farmers.

Even more empowering is an emboldening tool of democratization, the Internet. As we've seen in countless other countries around the world, the Internet is an individual's megaphone. It is the place for discourse. For collaboration. For free speech. For democracy! By extending telecommunications and technology services to Cuba, the Cuban people will have access to a tremendous exchange of knowledge and ideas with unparalleled power to inspire change.

These efforts by the U.S. are not exhaustive. Only our vigilance and continued assessment of our relations with Cuba will provoke lasting change for Cubans. But it is also imperative for Latin American countries to reinvigorate their ties with Cuba's civil and political leaders. Democratic Latin American countries, such as Mexico and Brazil, can send a strong signal of support to the Cuban Democratic movement by reinvigorating their relations with Cuba, just as the U.S. is doing.

I have supported a change in U.S.-Cuba policy since I was elected to Congress in 1992, and I welcome and celebrate the decision of the President to make this a reality. It's very exciting to look forward to heralding a new era of opportunity and democratic values for Cuba, a pragmatic partnership with the U.S., support from other Latin American countries, and the abandonment of oppression of the Cuban people by the U.S. embargo, as well as the Cuban government itself.

IN RECOGNITION OF H&H RESTAURANT IN MACON, GEORGIA

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize H&H Soul Food at 807 Forsyth Street in Macon, Georgia. The popular Southern restaurant has been named the ''most iconic restaurant in Georgia'' by Thrillist.com, a website that specializes in food, beverage, and entertainment.

In order to earn this honorable designation, a restaurant must have been in existence for at least 30 years, and yet still maintain its popularity among its clients. In other words, title winners not only survive the test of time, but they do so while remaining an ''icon'' in the community. H&H effectively does both.

The restaurant traces its roots all the way back to the civil rights era, when owners Inez Hill and Louise Hudson, known affectionately as Mama Hill and Mama Louise, first opened the doors in 1959. They have been serving Southern classics ever since, with crowd pleasers such as fried chicken, peach cobbler, and of course, sweet tea.

Historically, the eatery was frequented by prominent musical figures such as The Allman Brothers Band, Wet Willie, and the Molly Hatchet Band. Legend has it that The Allman Brothers Band in their early years did not have enough money to pay for the food but Mama Louise took care of them anyway. She continued to serve other Southern musicians over the years and the restaurant also became a common meeting place for influential civil rights activists, including members and officers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Adding to its list of modern celebrities and change-makers, H&H even welcomed a visit from Oprah Winfrey in 2007.

Co-Founder Inez Hill passed away that very same year, and the restaurant suffered a brief closing at the end of 2013. Nevertheless, H&H overcame adversity and recovered successfully from financial difficulty with the assistance of Macon's Moonhanger Group. The restaurant is thriving again today and continues to welcome its regular patrons as well as new guests from all over. H&H's enduring imprint on Macon's landscape bears tribute to its lasting influence and historic renown in the hearts of the people of Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the iconic H&H restaurant in Macon, Georgia for its rich history, its perseverance, and its dedication to serving the community the most delicious soul food around.

ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSED TO H.R. 30

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following letters.

JANUARY 7, 2015.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the three million members of the National Education Association, and the students they serve, we urge you to vote NO on the Save American Workers Act of 2015 (H.R. 30), scheduled for a floor vote this week. Votes associated with this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 114th Congress.

We oppose the bill because we believe it would create a disincentive for employers to provide health care coverage, negatively impacting employer-sponsored health insurance and harming families, children and educators who need coverage.

We believe that the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) shared responsibility for employers, sometimes referred to as the employer penalty, supports the overall goal of expanding quality, affordable coverage to all Americans.

We are concerned that this bill's changes to the ACA's definition of what constitutes full-time employment from ''on average at least 30 hours of service per week'' monthly to an average of 40 hours per week monthly would adversely affect overall employer-sponsored health coverage. That change would make a shift towards part-time employment much more likely. Employers could respond by cutting employees' hours to under an average of 40 per week to avoid possible shared responsibility penalties and could eliminate coverage for these employees without fear of penalties.

The result of a cut in employee hours would be substantially less employer-sponsored health coverage—and as a result, a potentially large increase in federal spending for the premium tax credits that many low- and moderate-income people will receive under health reform to help them buy coverage through a health insurance marketplace (exchange). Employers and employees would also face a complex new administrative burden as they tried to determine which employees paid on a salaried basis fell above or below the 40-hour mark; salaried school employees' exact hours of service are generally not counted the same way as hourly employees' hours, but tallying their in-school and out-of-school hours would suddenly become issues of concern to employers interested in avoiding penalties.

Additionally if employment-based coverage is reduced, an even greater number of low-income individuals and their families in the 23 states that have failed to expand Medicaid would be unable to afford to buy health coverage. In those states, childless adults whose incomes fall below 100 percent of the federal poverty line would not only be denied access to Medicaid coverage, but they would be ineligible for premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions through a health insurance marketplace. Moving the full-time definition from 30 hours to 40 hours, as this bill does, would only expand the number of people hurt by this coverage gap.

We believe H.R. 30 misses the mark by substituting ''40 hours'' for ''30 hours'' because it would do nothing to stop employers' misuse of the ACA's employer penalty provisions as a justification for cutting employees' hours of service and health coverage. Experience with this portion of the ACA shows that one of the biggest implementation challenges in the education sector consists of making sure that employers and other health plan sponsors fully understand the law's provisions related to shared responsibility for employers. For years, we have engaged with the Department of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service to ensure that regulations on shared responsibility for employers work consistently well in the education sector, and believe regulators have taken important steps in this direction.

The changes contemplated in this bill, however, would simply shift the hours-related context in which these common errors take place:

Mistakenly believing that the only way to avoid employer penalties is to cut employees' hours to under 30 a week or to under six hours a day. In fact, school calendars include so many unpaid days during the school year—for spring break, winter break, federal holidays, and other such times—that hourly employees can normally work more than 6 hours a day without ever being considered a full-time employee.

Misunderstanding how and when to use proposed regulations related to an optional hours-counting method called the look-back measurement method. It's unfortunate that some school employers wrongly blame the look-back measurement method for limiting their hours-counting options when regulations recognize four different ways that employers can calculate whether an employee is a full-timer or not.

Overestimating the potential cost of complying with the law's provisions on shared responsibility for employers. Regulations include many ways that employers can minimize or even avoid penalties, but some employers fail to factor these options into their analyses, so they exaggerate and often incorrectly state the potential for penalties.

Failing to incorporate into their decision-making the statutory and regulatory provisions that ensure that this part of the ACA establishes the possibility of a penalty on large employers rather than an ''employer mandate.'' Just like before the ACA became law, there is no federal law that requires employers to offer coverage to employees. Many large employers will not face penalties at all, or will face smaller penalties than they initially thought.

These and other ACA-implementation errors can lead to exaggerated responses that hurt students, workers, and families alike. Unfortunately, H.R. 30 would just shift the hours-related focal point for such errors.

Employers who take the time to understand the law and regulations as they currently stand can develop common sense, constructive, and consensual approaches to properly implementing the law. Again, we urge you to vote NO on Save American Workers Act of 2015.

Sincerely,

MARY KUSLER,
Director of Government Relations.

SAVE HEALTH CARE FOR WORKING FAMILIES—OPPOSE H.R. 30

The Communications Workers of America (CWA) opposes H.R. 30, the Save American Workers Act and urge you to vote against it. We believe the Act will make middle-class workers worse off by decreasing access to employer-sponsored health insurance.

Recent analysis by the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation confirms our expectations. CBO and JCT estimate that the number of people who currently receive employment-based health care coverage will be reduced by 1 million as a result of this bill. An estimated 500,000 to 1 million workers and their dependents will be pushed by employers onto Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), or subsidized coverage through the health insurance exchanges. Up to 500,000 will be left without coverage at all.

By pushing workers and their dependents from employer-sponsored plans to federal health programs, this Act will increase the federal budget deficit. The CBO estimates an increase to the budget deficit of $53.2 billion over ten years as a result in the change in definition of full-time hours as proposed in the Act. That includes $21.4 billion in new spending for exchange subsidies and outlays for Medicaid and CHIP.

The CBO and JCT assume that employers will increase wages in exchange for eliminating health coverage, but our experience at the bargaining table contradicts this theory. In this continually weak labor market, employers have sought every opportunity to cut benefits and block wage increases. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities found that changing the full-time hour definition to 40-hours would make 44% of US workers vulnerable to a reduction in hours. We believe these workers would not receive a commensurate increase in wages.

We believe Congress should help American workers and their families improve their standard of living. H.R. 30 will undermine that goal by reducing paid work hours and cutting health coverage.

The Communications Workers of America urges you to vote no on H.R. 30.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GRACE MENG

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, on January 6, 2015 I missed recorded votes #1–7 as I was attending the funeral of Governor Mario Cuomo in New York.

I would like to reflect how I would have voted if I were here and sworn into office:

On Roll Call #2 I would have voted for NANCY PELOSI for Speaker.

On Roll Call #3 I would have voted no (Motion to Table).

On Roll Call #4 I would have voted no (Previous Question).

On Roll Call #5 I would have voted yes (Motion to Commit).

On Roll Call #6 I would have voted no (Passage of House Rules Package).

On Roll Call #7 I would have voted yes (Passage of H.R. 22—Hire More Heroes Act of 2015).

THE TERRORISM RISK INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015 (H.R. 26) AND SAVE AMERICAN WORKERS ACT OF 2015 (H.R. 30)

HON. TOM PRICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House voted on the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015, H.R. 26, and today, the House will consider the Save American Worker's Act of 2015, H.R. 30.

The Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015 amends the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 to extend the Terrorism Insurance Program through December 31, 2020, and revises certain requirements of the program. It also establishes the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers (NARAB), which will have the authority to license insurance agents and brokers to operate in multiple states. The House passed this bill on December 10, 2014, by a vote of 417–7. However, because the Senate did not act on the House passed bill before the end of the 113th Congress, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program expired on December 31, 2014.

The Save American Workers Act of 2015 changes the definition of ''full time employee'' as applied to the Affordable Care Act's (Obamacare) employer mandate. This will prevent small businesses from reducing employee hours solely because they cannot afford to comply with the Obamacare mandate. The House passed this bill on September 16, 2014, by a vote of 320–102.

The Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015 increases direct spending in the budget year as well as over the ten-year budget window, bringing the Committee on Financial Services over its 302(a) allocation in the first year and over ten years, violating section 302(f) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (CBA). Additionally, the bill violates the House's ''Cut As You Go'' rule (Rule XXI, clause 10) by increasing direct spending over the relevant enforcement time periods, without being offset by direct spending cuts of equal or greater value.

The spending increases in this bill are fully offset through a surcharge on commercial property and casualty policyholders and NARAB fees, and the bill as a whole provides deficit reduction over the relevant enforcement time periods. As a result, I did not oppose a waiver of section 302(f) of the CBA and the ''Cut As You Go'' rule for consideration of this bill on this occasion.

The Save American Workers Act of 2015 also increases direct spending in the budget year and over the ten-year budget window, violating section 302(f) of the CBA and the House's ''Cut As You Go'' rule (Rule XXI, clause 10). The bill also reduces revenues over the ten-year budget window, violating section 311 of the CBA. Because the revenue loss results from a repeal of Obamacare tax increases, and the bill increases cash wages and opportunities for workers, I support granting a waiver of sections 302(f) and 311 of the CBA and the ''Cut as You Go'' rule for consideration of this bill on this occasion.

However, my lack of opposition to these waivers should not be interpreted as a willingness to support similar waivers in the future. Budget enforcement is among my top priorities for the 114th Congress. As we move into the 114th Congress and begin drafting new legislation, it is my intention to ensure compliance with the CBA and House Rules as they apply to budget enforcement and the budget resolution in effect at the time of enforcement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RICHARD M. NOLAN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 6th, 2015, I was unavoidably detained due to ongoing issues surrounding the health of my youngest daughter in Minnesota.

Had I been present and voting on Roll Call #2, I would have expressed my support for Congresswoman NANCY PELOSI of California to be Speaker of the House.

Had I been present and voting on Roll Call #3, I would have voted Nay.