

time, five-star accredited and twice named Chamber of the Year. And as we say in Texas: "That ain't braggin' if it's true."

I want to recognize a few of our hard-working business leaders who are being celebrated this week:

Ambassador of the Year, Danny Soliz;

Volunteer of the Year, Kathy Timms; Business Person of the Year, Chris Lonngren;

Business of the Year, Bayer Crop Science; and

Entrepreneur of the Year, Shara Konechney.

Congrats to all of these folks. Congrats to my friend, Eddie McBride.

Mr. Speaker, I thank them for their leadership, and thanks to all of our small businesses. They are the heartbeat of west Texas, Mr. Speaker.

BRING FORTH TAX REFORM THAT BENEFITS THE MIDDLE CLASS

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

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, I recently sat down with Mainers who are terrified of the Republican tax plan:

In tears, a high school teacher listed the items she purchased for her students in need. Under this plan, she will no longer be able to deduct them.

A cancer survivor told me how she now writes off thousands of dollars of medical expenses every year—no more, under the tax plan.

A recent college graduate wondered how difficult it would be to achieve his career goals while paying off his student loan debt without a deduction for the interest.

A dairy farmer talked about a tax exemption that has allowed farmers to have more control over their businesses by forming co-ops. That is gone under the GOP tax scam.

In 10 years, one in five Mainers will pay more in Federal taxes under this plan. Their sacrifices and our national debt will pay for generous benefits to massive corporations, foreign investors, and the wealthiest of the wealthy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to withdraw this thinly veiled handout to the one-percenters and bring forth tax reform that will actually benefit the middle class.

HONORING CAREER OF LOURDES MELUZA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished career of Lourdes Meluza, who has recently retired after 39 years in journalism.

As a native from my homeland of Cuba and a graduate from the University of Miami—Go Canes—my alma

mater, I got to know Lourdes as she began her tenure as a writer for the Miami Herald, where she covered my first election to the Florida State House of Representatives.

In 1987, Lourdes joined Miami's Univision station, and shortly after, she became the network's D.C. correspondent, reporting to millions of Hispanics in the U.S. about important policy issues being discussed in our Nation's Capital.

For over two decades, Lourdes interviewed Presidents and Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle and heads of state. Her professionalism has earned her our respect and admiration.

Lourdes will be enjoying her well-deserved retirement in Coral Gables, in my congressional district. Lourdes told me that she never considered journalism to be a career but, rather, an adventure.

Mr. Speaker, to my esteemed amiga, I wish her all the best in her next adventure, and I look forward to seeing her in our south Florida paradise.

Godspeed, Lourdes Meluza. Felicidades, amiga.

LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD ON TAX REFORM

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

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Speaker, a \$1.5 trillion deficit, that is what the so-called fiscally conservative Republican friends of mine want to add to our Nation's already huge debt, a debt they decry for many years, a debt that, according to former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Mike Mullen, is the greatest threat to our country in the coming decades.

There is really no need of that—none. We can do tax reform that better advantages the middle class and small businesses without adding \$1.5 trillion to our debt. By simply making the tax benefits fairer among income groups, you can have growth-enhancing, deficit-neutral tax reform with zero—yes, zero—addition to our debt and deficit.

If a 25 percent tax rate is good enough for small businesses, it should be good enough for corporations.

There is no need to eliminate the AMT for wealthy Americans earning over \$250,000 or completely eliminating the estate tax. Tweak it, and you can protect every small business and farm in America with a very progressive Tax Code.

Why should wealthy Americans get to deduct more expenses than working men and women? A 25 percent deduction for expenses levels the playing field for everyone.

Make these types of changes and you can get rid of the gimmicks in the Republican bill and benefit the middle class. There is no need to add \$1.5 trillion to our debt.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR TAX REFORM

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the importance of comprehensive tax reform for our families and businesses.

It has been nearly 30 years since hardworking Americans have seen any significant changes made to our confusing Tax Code. Our current system is broken. I think we all agree on that. Taxes are too high, and our families and businesses are the ones paying the price, not to mention that nobody understands it.

Two weeks ago, I was proud to cast my vote to cut, simplify, and reform taxes, and now the ball is in the Senate's court. Thankfully, as of yesterday, legislation has passed both the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Budget Committee, and now we expect a vote in the full Senate as early as this week.

Under the Trump administration, we are growing the economy, but nothing can compare to the effect that tax reform will have on jump-starting the economy, expanding small businesses, and creating jobs.

America, it is time to go back to work. We are now closer than ever to making tax reform a reality, a new reality for families and businesses across America who deserve to keep more of their paychecks and have the opportunity to grow their businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we will uphold our important promise to deliver tax reform legislation to President Trump's desk soon.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of National Family Caregivers Month. Caregivers are our Nation's hidden heroes. They foster family stability and help those with chronic and disabling conditions avoid costly out-of-home placements. In fact, family caregivers are very often the difference between costly institutional care or staying in their home.

Family caregivers not only deserve our respect and gratitude, but also respite from the physical and emotional toll of ensuring their loved ones receive the care that they need. But if the caregivers themselves aren't taking care of their own needs, they are not going to be very effective at taking care of their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, almost 44 million Americans are providing over \$470 billion in uncompensated care each year, if we had to put a dollar figure on it. These caregivers are our grandparents, parents, spouses, siblings, children, and