

they are promising that that is coming.

But I will just say this: As someone who was involved when this bill was first passed, we will make sure there will be a legislative response if the Department of Defense does not keep faith with those who wear the uniform of this country and who have volunteered based on reliance of the fact that there would be a GI Bill benefit for them and their spouse and children.

To use FDR's words, protecting transferability "gives emphatic notice to the men and women in our Armed Forces that the American people do not intend to let them down."

SUPPORT OIL REGION NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, northwest Pennsylvania has a rich history and vibrant, diverse economy. Its winding trails, beautiful landscapes, recreational and educational opportunities, and thriving communities make Venango and Crawford Counties especially captivating places to live, to work, and to visit.

Many of these attractions are centered around one common theme, the world's first commercial oil well. Colonel Drake successfully drilled this well in 1859, triggering the first oil boom and establishing the oil region as "the valley that changed the world."

His efforts not only made northwestern Pennsylvania the energy powerhouse that it is today, but it also sparked a cultural revolution that came as a result of the booming economy.

We are tremendously proud of our history and heritage in northwest Pennsylvania. We still celebrate these communities that bloomed from Colonel Drake's innovative idea today, and Drake Well continues to have a tangible impact on the area's economy.

In 2004, Congress designated the region as a national heritage area. There are only 49 of these areas across the country that are designated as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape.

The Oil Region National Heritage Area was the Nation's 25th national heritage area, and it celebrates the birth of the petroleum industry.

The region is honored to have this important designation, but without action, it will sunset next year. That is why I introduced the Oil Region National Heritage Area Reauthorization Act.

The heritage area's coordinating entity, the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry, and Tourism, has taken a grassroots, community-driven approach to heritage, conservation, and economic development.

Through public-private partnerships, national heritage area entities support historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation, heritage tourism, and educational projects. These partnerships foster pride of place and an enduring stewardship ethic.

The Oil Region Alliance focuses on heritage development, economic development, and tourism destination marketing. All three of these areas have been successful, and, from 2005 to 2015, the ORA has been able to invest more than \$6.8 million in heritage development projects, invest more than \$6.7 million in economic development activities, and attract nearly 240,000 visitors annually. They have done an excellent job using innovative methods to stimulate the local economy, using a mixture of both Federal and private funds.

Last month, I was with my colleague Congressman MIKE KELLY at the home of the legendary investigative journalist Ida Tarbell. Born in Pennsylvania at the onset of the oil boom, Tarbell is best known for her 1904 book, "The History of the Standard Oil Company."

The ORA recently completed a full restoration of Ms. Tarbell's home, ensuring that it would be preserved for generations to come.

Congressman KELLY and I announced the Oil Region National Heritage Area Reauthorization Act at the Tarbell House as an example of why this designation is important. Our bill would extend Federal funding authorization of our heritage area through 2026.

Extending this funding is crucial for the ORA to continue its mission of preserving the Oil Region's history, stimulating the local economy, and allowing others to appreciate the beauty and the culture of Venango and Crawford Counties.

The ORA's efforts give us the ability to appreciate the rich history of northwestern Pennsylvania and understand the impact that our communities have had on American culture today. While the Tarbell home restoration is just one of the ORA's projects, they have completed countless other projects to support our communities, educate the public, and help local businesses grow and thrive.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation, which will directly impact northwestern Pennsylvanians and preserve our rich heritage for all Americans.

PAYING CONGRESSIONAL INTERNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the congressional interns who serve in our offices here in Washington, D.C., in my State of Oregon, and around the country, and to ask all my colleagues to make internship opportunities available to more qualified applicants by paying interns for their work.

Congressional internships are highly desirable. They provide students and recent graduates with valuable experience, learning firsthand how Congress and how our government works.

Many current staff members and, in fact, many Members of Congress started their careers as congressional interns and were able to use the skills they learned and the connections they made to leverage future opportunities.

The reality is, however, that most young people do not have the option of coming to work on Capitol Hill as an intern because most internships are still unpaid. Many bright and motivated people simply cannot afford to take an unpaid internship, no matter how prestigious it might be, because they need to earn money to continue paying for college or to support themselves or their families.

No one who is qualified who wants to intern on Capitol Hill should be precluded because of financial barriers.

I am proud that I offer paid internships in my office, so students and recent graduates have an opportunity to work and learn and gain experience.

But paying interns doesn't just help them. It helps us, too. My staff and I benefit greatly from having interns from all backgrounds and all walks of life working in our office. The diversity of perspectives is critical as I consider legislation and think about how to best serve my constituents who are also from diverse backgrounds and all walks of life.

Many of my colleagues understand the importance of equitable intern opportunities and, through the leadership of Representative TIM RYAN and others, are working to increase funding and cut red tape so that all our offices will be able to offer and support paid internships.

□ 1030

Capitol Hill is best served when our offices reflect the diversity of our districts and our country.

I will continue to work with my colleagues to make sure that all qualified applicants can apply for internships and serve as interns regardless of their financial situation. It helps our offices, it helps the interns, and it helps the country.

TAX REFORM 2.0

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, in the short time since we have passed historic tax relief for the American people, we have already seen tremendous results.

By putting in place pro-growth, free market policies, we have unleashed a booming economy with higher wages and more job opportunities. With over 6 million job openings, the unemployment rate at an 18-year low and small business optimism at a 34-year high, our country's economic future looks as bright as it has ever been.

And thanks to tax cuts, 90 percent of Americans have seen an increase in take-home pay, with a family of four in my district keeping about \$2,000 a year.

Now, some people call that crumbs, people, I think, that are disconnected to working families and middle-income families, people who want to raise your taxes because they think Washington knows best when it comes to spending your money. They want to prop up failed government-controlled, top-down healthcare systems that have failed.

West Texans know better than this, and they know that this is real cash in their pockets that will allow them to invest more in their future and in their family's future.

The bottom line is this: tax reform is paying off in a big way for our families all across this great land; companies are giving bonuses, increasing benefits, and hiring new employees and providing workers with new opportunities, and most importantly, we are seeing optimism, optimism spread throughout this great land.

In fact, tax reform has been so successful, that we want to keep building on it and keep the momentum going. That is why I am proud to support Tax Reform 2.0. I want to thank my friend and fellow Texan, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, KEVIN BRADY, for leading the charge.

The central point of Tax Reform 2.0 is making tax relief for lower and middle income families and small businesses permanent.

In the first round of tax reform, we cut taxes for individual and small business owners, doubled the standard deduction and doubled the child tax credit. However, under current law, these provisions and others are set to expire in 2025.

We don't need to wait until the last minute to prevent Americans' taxes from going up. We can make tax relief permanent now, and that is where Tax Reform 2.0 comes in.

According to the nonpartisan Tax Foundation, making this tax relief permanent will grow the GDP by another 2.2 percent, boost wages, and create over a million new jobs; this, on top, again, of the significant gains we have seen and experienced from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Making tax cuts permanent would also allow Americans to plan more confidently for their future, whether that is putting more money away for their kids' colleges or setting more money aside for their retirement or a rainy day fund.

A recent survey found that nearly 80 percent of Americans live paycheck to paycheck and 60 percent of Americans say they couldn't afford a \$500 emergency. Remember, the folks in my district are keeping \$2,000 a year because of the recent tax reform. Sixty percent of Americans say \$500 would put them in a real bind.

Making tax relief permanent is an essential opportunity for us, giving Americans the certainty that they de-

serve in making their financial decisions, and we in Congress can provide that certainty by delivering on Tax Reform 2.0.

Mr. Speaker, currently our economy is growing at a record pace, and we need to keep the policies in place that allow job creators and businessowners of all kinds to keep their foot on the pedal.

Our job creators are always thinking of ways they can be more innovative and competitive, and we in Congress would do well to have that same mentality. We must be proactive and constantly be revisiting our Tax Code and finding ways to improve it, to modernize it so we don't fall behind our foreign competitors.

In order to encourage and reward the risk-taking, the invention, the entrepreneurship that has characterized the great American economy, Tax Reform 2.0 also expands on expensing for start-up companies. By allowing new businesses to write off more of their initial costs, we can spur innovation and more job creation new businesses bring to this country and allow us to maintain our position as the economic envy of the world.

Mr. Speaker, the first round of tax reform reflects the timeless truth that the American people know best how to spend their hard-earned money, better than politicians, better than government bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. By cutting the amount that government takes out of people's paychecks, people have more freedom and they have more resources to invest in their families, in their community, and in our economy.

Tax Reform 2.0 would keep our economy growing and ensure America retains our entrepreneurial edge that has made us a magnet for innovation and the most prosperous, the most powerful, and the most generous country in all the world.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support Tax Reform 2.0 and I encourage my colleagues to do so.

DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS DRINKING WATER SHUTOFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the extremely serious and ongoing issue of safe drinking water in our schools.

This week in my hometown of Detroit, the Detroit Public Schools began the year without safe and clean drinking water. The superintendent chose to shut the water off to the entire school district after 16 of the schools tested positive for elevated levels of lead and copper.

What should have been an exciting first day of school was overshadowed by the fears of lead poisoning and unsanitary learning conditions.

This, unfortunately, is no surprise. We have seen this happen all over the

country, where schools put bags over their drinking fountains because they are not safe for the children to consume the water.

This is a consequence of years of neglecting our Nation's infrastructure. For years, I have spoken out against the severe funding decrease in our infrastructure and our public schools. For too long we have kicked the can down the road and ignored this critical issue of safe drinking water in America.

Deliberately not funding necessary and long overdue upgrades for our water infrastructure hurts women, children, and especially the poor and people of color.

We cannot repeat the Flint water crisis, and we must learn from our mistakes. This situation demands a sense of urgency and should be handled in a timely manner.

As adults, we are responsible for protecting our children. We are the ones who must make the right decisions. This is not a partisan issue, but a public health issue.

The Detroit Public Schools and the Detroit children, every day they work hard to face the challenges to simply obtain an excellent education.

We need to address the immediate health concerns. And we need resources to protect our children from future harm.

Every child must be tested. I appreciate and applaud the superintendent's positive response to this emergency. I urge the school district and the city to use whatever resources are immediately available to test these children for lead poisoning. We need to know how widespread this situation is. The tests will help us understand how much damage our children have been exposed to.

Children covered by Medicare are already required to receive blood lead screening tests. I will work with the city and the State to see how we can get every child in Detroit tested.

Without adequate resources and access to information, we stand to fail our children. This is unacceptable.

We also learned from Flint that professionals, not politicians, should be making health decisions. That is why I introduced H.R. 1909, the Environmental Health Workforce Act.

Only 28 States require the environmental health workforce to be credentialed. And unfortunately, Michigan is not one of those States. This legislation I am proposing will ensure every State has a credentialed workforce.

We would not go to a doctor who did not have an MD. Why would we let someone who is making decisions about our water quality and food do it without proper qualifications.

These emergencies show us that we cannot keep relying on a patchwork of quick fixes. We don't know how many children are in danger until every child is tested. We need to truly invest in long-term solutions.