

team to help get America saving again, tax-free.

ELECTION OF MEMBER TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 590) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 590

Resolved, That the following named Member be and is hereby elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE: Mr. Chandler (to rank immediately after Mr. Marshall).

(2) COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: Mr. Chandler.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ALLOWING REIMPORTATION OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS MEANS LOWER PRICES FOR AMERICANS

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, before the House voted on the Medicare bill, the public was told it would cost \$400 billion. Later, we found out that the administration knew all along it would cost \$550 billion.

Congress was misled by an administration that hid the numbers from the public and Members of Congress because of the perceived political benefits of the new law, saying that the end would justify the means.

But according to today's Chicago Tribune, "Instead of a political bonanza, the Medicare drug benefit is fast becoming an albatross around the administration's neck. Not a single new benefit has gone to a senior citizen, and the taxpayers got stuck with another \$150 billion bill.

Now the administration wants to talk about the benefit that comes with a discount card. With the way prescription drug costs have skyrocketed over the past several years, this discount card will not accomplish anything. It is like a sale at Nieman Marcus. They jack up the prices right before the sale.

In 2001, drug costs increased by 16.9 percent; in 2002, 18.4 percent; in 2003, a projected 19.5 percent, and going on to another 15 percent.

Instead of depending on a flawed Medicare bill, we must literally drive prices down by allowing reimportation, allowing us to get our drugs in Canada and in Europe where prices are cheaper.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the current status of manufacturing jobs in this country.

Last week, there was an article in the Boston Globe entitled, "What the Jobless Statistics Do Not Reveal," written by Paul E. Harrington and Andrew Sum. The article focused on the debate of when job creation will begin and why there is a huge difference in the report of job growth between two surveys, the payroll survey and the household survey.

The payroll survey is the corporate survey, which indicates a decreased loss of 620,000 jobs. However, the household survey says there is a 2.3 million increase in employment during this same period of time. Why the disparity?

Well, the household survey counts self-employed and contractors. If you are self-employed like a farmer in my district, you are not counted as being an employee under the payroll survey reports. The authors point out that the disparity is due to the fact that it has become so expensive to add new workers to payroll due to high cost of health insurance, unemployment insurance, worker compensation, payroll taxes, and it is easier and cheaper to hire and pay overtime.

If we want to stem the loss of manufacturing in the corporate sector, our legislative response is clear. We are going to have to address these issues of high cost.

□ 1015

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this House over the next 2 days is going to be debating the single most important environmental and jobs bill of the session, the reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Act. It is unfortunate that we are not going to have the opportunity to deal with a bill that is right-sized for America's needs.

The administration's own Department of Transportation has concluded that we need \$375 billion to meet America's needs over the next 6 years; yet the administration has threatened to use its first veto of any bill if we have the temerity to approve anything over \$256 billion, which will be a 10 percent cut in transportation funding over the next 6 years.

Nobody in this Chamber feels that we should be cutting our investment in the future. It is time for Members on both sides of the aisle to support the bipartisan committee leadership to at least approve the \$275 billion bill, keep the basic structure in place, and make sure that we are giving America the transportation infrastructure it needs for the future.

MEDICARE DISCOUNT DRUG CARDS

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

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, during the next 3 months, Medicare beneficiaries will begin to see real savings on the cost of their prescription drugs with the help of voluntary Medicare-approved discount drug cards.

Starting in April, Medicare beneficiaries will be notified by mail of their discount card eligibility, discount card offerings, and enrollment procedures. By June, all Medicare beneficiaries, except those who already have Medicaid drug coverage, will be able to buy a card for about \$30 and take it to their local pharmacy and receive 10 to 25 percent off of the regular cost of their drugs.

People with incomes below 135 percent of poverty who sign up for the card will be eligible for an additional \$600 of additional assistance per year to help further reduce the cost of their prescription drugs in 2004 and 2005. This low-income assistance will benefit over 12,000 Indiana Hoosiers in my district, the second district of Indiana, and almost 200,000 Hoosiers statewide.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud my colleagues who voted to support the bipartisan Medicare bill and the creation of a discount drug card program that will reduce the cost of prescriptions for our seniors and provide additional relief to low-income Medicare beneficiaries.

HONORING CESAR CHAVEZ'S BIRTHDAY

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

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, today on his birthday, we recognize the courageous leadership of Cesar Chavez, a man who inspired hope, pride, and strength and provided a voice for thousands of farm workers across California and the entire country.

My district encompasses San Jose, home to Cesar Chavez for many years. It is in San Jose that Chavez began to fulfill his dream of empowering farm workers to demand basic human rights and protections from the abuses of farm owners.

Chavez experienced employer abuses firsthand and saw it happen to thousands of farm workers from childhood through his adult years. And it was he who courageously organized his fellow workers to believe in their own dignity and power to gain equal rights, fair pay, and decent working conditions.

So on this day, I honor the memory of Cesar Chavez. I congratulate his wonderful family who still lives in San Jose. We all know that he is the symbol of inspiration to many, especially the children. May the legacy of this great leader, Cesar Chavez, live on; and may we always remember his phrase to all of us, "Si se puede."