

that. Rather, it unleashes and unharnesses the potential of what this country can accomplish to eliminate the ravages of these diseases and the effects they impose upon humanity.

STEM-CELL RESEARCH

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

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a father, a physician and a Congressman to express my deep concern over the administration's decision to allow taxpayer dollars to incentivize the destruction of human embryos.

For the first time in our country's history, the Federal Government is going to encourage the destruction of human embryos. Newer techniques for making embryonic-like cells without destroying any embryos and advances in adult stem-cell umbilical cord blood treatments are showing that the use of embryos for stem-cell research is becoming obsolete.

Over 73 different diseases have been treated, at least experimentally, with adult or cord blood stem cells, including type I diabetes and heart disease.

Because of recent steps by our President, pro-life taxpayers are now footing the bill for the promotion of abortions overseas, doctors are in danger of being forced to perform abortions regardless of moral or religious objections, and now taxpayer funds are going to support the destruction of human embryos in the name of research.

Embryonic stem-cell research provides no guarantee of scientific advancement, but it does guarantee the innocent unborn have lost a critical battle.

STEM-CELL RESEARCH

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, we will never know how many millions of people around the world have suffered debilitating, shorter lives from Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, and a host of other illnesses and diseases as a result of President Bush's decision to severely restrict stem-cell research.

But we do know that human civilization has only progressed when its leaders had the courage to resist religious, political and economic dogma in pursuit of truth and scientific discovery. Science and medical research offers us all an opportunity to reduce human suffering and advance human potential. I believe that is God's will.

President Obama did the right thing in reversing that anti-science presidential directive, but now it is up to the Congress to reverse the existing Congressional restriction on Federal funding of stem-cell research.

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D.C. OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the Senate passed the \$410 billion omnibus spending bill last night containing some 9,000 special interest earmarks. Sadly, it included a provision that will effectively kill a popular and successful program here in our Nation's Capital that provides a ray of hope for the children it serves.

The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program provides low-income families with a voucher they can use to attend the school of their choice. For many students, this provides the opportunity to get out of dangerous and failing public schools into private schools that provide them with a safe environment and a quality education.

This program is under attack by politicians in Congress, many of whom send their own children to private schools. If school choice is good enough for their kids, why not school choice for everyone?

I urge the President, who has chosen private school for his own children, to veto this special interest, pork-laden bill and work with Congress toward meaningful education reform.

TRAGEDY IN ALABAMA

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

Mr. BRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, as many of you have heard, a tragic shooting occurred yesterday in Geneva and Coffee Counties in Alabama. Without question, this is one of the worst tragedies our State and our Nation has seen in quite some time. My thoughts and prayers are with the families of the victims, and with the entire Wiregrass community in southeast Alabama.

The details are still being confirmed, but I do know that our community owes a debt of gratitude to the local law enforcement officials who bravely put themselves in the line of fire. Without their swift actions and courage, the tragedy could have been even worse than it was yesterday.

I will be returning to my district later today to assist local leaders and law enforcement officials in any way that I can and to be with my constituents as we mourn the loss of friends and neighbors.

I ask that all of my colleagues here in the House and people watching right now from around the country keep the people of southeast Alabama in your thoughts and prayers.

ECONOMIC ENGINE DOESN'T RUN ON PORK

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

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, hardworking Americans are the eco-

nomics engine that drives this great Nation. And America's economic engine doesn't run on pork.

Even though we are in a recession, Congress continues to take hard-earned tax dollars and send them toward pork projects like tattoo removal, Mormon crickets, and studying pig manure. In fact, the omnibus bill sent to the White House last night contains nearly 8,000 earmarks, costing taxpayers more than \$11 billion.

Monday night I had a telephone town hall with my constituents back home in Georgia. One caller, Mr. John Ahern from Athens, hit the nail on the head with his question on spending: "Why aren't politicians held accountable like families and taxpayers?"

Why indeed? There are Members on both sides of the aisle that are so used to the spending of yesterday that they cannot bear the thought of tightening their belts today. How are we going to justify picking the pockets of taxpayers to literally pay for pig poop?

This bill spends too much, taxes too much, and borrows too much. I urge a veto of the ominous omnibus bill and its 8,000 earmarks. There are John Aherns all over this country who demand accountability in government. A veto would give it to them.

STEM-CELL EXECUTIVE ORDER

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I recently had the distinct honor and privilege of witnessing an historic and defining moment in our Nation's history, one that I believe will fundamentally alter the course of science and medicine in the same manner as did the discovery of the first vaccine or X-ray or other significant scientific and medical discoveries in this country.

On Monday, President Obama signed an executive order lifting the ban on the Federal funding of embryonic stem cell research. As someone who has lived with a spinal cord injury for over 28 years, I have always held onto the hope that one day I might walk again.

But this executive order is not about me or even about spinal cord injuries. It is about the millions of people living with chronic and disabling diseases, illnesses, and conditions for which this research may one day hold the promise of new treatments and cures. It is about responsible investment into sciences and technologies that will ensure our Nation's continued economic competitiveness into the 21st century.

There is still much work to be done, and I look forward to working with my congressional colleagues on this issue to ensure that responsible policies based on sound science are enacted.

This is truly an historic event.

AMERICANS NEED OBJECTIVE REPORTING

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, recently the New York Times asserted that President Obama enjoyed “remarkably high levels of optimism and confidence” among Americans. The very same day, Gallup released a poll with very similar results as the Times poll, but Gallup characterized the result as “typical of how the last several Presidents have fared at the one-month mark.” In other words, not remarkable.

Gallup also found that the number of people who disapproved of the way President Obama is doing his job had doubled in just one month, from 12 percent to 24 percent, and noted that President Obama’s disapproval rating was higher than the average of the last six Presidents.

The Times and Gallup had similar polling results, but the Times gave a very biased report and ignored the historical facts.

At least one member of the White House press corps recognizes his colleagues’ bias in favor of President Obama.

Jake Tapper, ABC’s Senior White House Correspondent, said during a recent interview that some news editors and producers are soft on the President and inclined to “root for him.”

Regarding the media’s bias, Tapper also said: “Certain networks, newspapers and magazines leaned on the scales a little bit.”

It is telling that a man who sees news coverage of the President first-hand on a daily basis would be so forthcoming about the media’s pro-Obama bias.

When it comes to the major issues we face, Americans expect the media to be referees, not cheerleaders.

COMMENDING ROBERT P. PAGE

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

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to commend Mr. Robert P. Page, an outstanding citizen and business leader from Houma, Louisiana. He is about to complete his term as president of the National Association of Insurance Agents. Mr. Page has distinguished himself throughout his career as a professional insurance agent, even serving as president of the Professional Insurance Agents of Louisiana, and he has exhibited only the highest standards of honesty, integrity and professionalism.

Despite suffering personal losses as a result of hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Gustav, Mr. Page has provided uninterrupted service to the clients of his insurance agency in Houma, going above and beyond the call of duty to assist his fellow citizens, who also suffered devastating losses as a result of the hurricanes.

Mr. Page is a tireless advocate of developing a national consensus to come up with a better mechanism to deal with natural catastrophes throughout the United States, serving as a founding member of the Professional Insurance Agents Natural Task Force. With his years of hard work and dedication,

Mr. Page has earned the respect and admiration of his many colleagues throughout the insurance industry, as well as exemplified the motto of his insurance association, “Local Agents Serving Main Street America.”

Therefore, I would like to congratulate and commend Robert P. Page of Houma, Louisiana, upon the successful completion of his term as president of the National Association of Professional Insurance Agents.

STEALTH TAX INCREASE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, somebody has to pay for this massive wasteful spending by the Federal Government.

So to obtain more revenue, the budget proposal is to cut deductions Americans now receive. The charitable giving deduction will be cut. Thus charities, not government entities, by the way, such as churches, the YMCA and groups such as that that feed the hungry and help in disasters, take care of crime victims, and help the homeless, will be struggling for funds. Now the government will get that money.

The removal of this deduction will discourage gifts by Americans. Americans are the most cheerful contributors in the world to charities, but that may now end.

The home mortgage deduction also is going to be reduced. The effect of reducing this deduction and the charitable-giving deduction will have the effect of a stealth tax increase on all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn’t make any sense to raise taxes on anyone during a recession, especially homeowners and those that give to the needy.

And that’s just the way it is.

RECOVERY ACT FIRST STEP IN REFORMING HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have supported the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. It is one of the first steps we look in our journey to strengthen and improve our country’s health care system. We can’t fix our economy without fixing health care.

The recovery plan will provide \$20 billion to speed the adoption of health information technology systems by doctors and hospitals. This will modernize our health care system, reduce medical errors, save billions of dollars and create jobs.

Recently, I visited Holzer Medical Center in my district in Gallipolis, Ohio. Doctors there showed me how health IT helps them to speed medical records from doctor to doctor and cut down on extra medical tests. That saves time and money.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that health IT investments will generate up to \$40 billion in savings for Medicare and private health insurance companies. Those savings can be passed along to American families.

I look forward to watching continued improvements at hospitals back home, like Holzer. And I look forward to continuing our work to further improve health care.

BLOCK CONGRESSIONAL PAY RAISES

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

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, Congress needs to lead by example in this time of economic uncertainty. For that reason, I was encouraged when the House decided to give up its pay raise next year. It is important to send the right message to the American people: a message that says Congress is willing to tighten its belt just like American families are doing across the country.

But we need to go even further. That’s why I hope the leadership in the House will take up my legislation, H.R. 566, blocking all future congressional pay raises until the Federal budget is balanced.

Millions of hardworking Americans only get a salary increase if they produce positive results. Congress should be no different. With our national debt about to surpass \$11 trillion and unemployment in our country surging past 8 percent, we need to hold ourselves to a higher standard. The American people expect and deserve nothing less.

My legislation to block congressional pay raises until we balance the budget offers meaningful reform. I urge Members from both sides of the aisle to support it.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,

Washington, DC, March 11, 2009.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,

The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 11, 2009, at 9:20 a.m.:

That the Senate Passed Without Amendment H.R. 1105.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,

Clerk of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair