

needed to determine the true FMAP rates for the territories is presently lacking from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), this bill would direct the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to take steps to ensure that the FMAP rates for the territories are calculated in a fair and appropriate manner.

It is clear from all the evidence that the federal funding caps and the FMAP set in statute at 50% (which applies solely to the territories) have created significant health disparities between residents of the territories and their fellow citizens residing in the 50 states. Additionally, this policy has resulted in the territorial governments shouldering a disproportionately high financial liability when it comes to providing health care services to their indigent populations. Treating the territories in such fashion is as unjust in principle as it is harmful in effect.

The bill I have introduced today, along with my colleagues from the territories, is needed as Congress continues the debate over comprehensive health care reform. Based on a report released last year by the Office of Insular Affairs, within the Department of the Interior, the territories' health jurisdictions are "at the crossroads of a total breakdown." Combined with the financial state of the territorial governments, operating under decreasing revenues due to an economic downturn, the territories must bear a majority of the payment for indigent care under the current arrangements. Accordingly, eliminating the funding caps and adjusting the FMAPs for the territories are both critically important to public health in these U.S. jurisdictions.

Additionally there is a provision in this bill that extends the Medicaid program to the citizens of the Freely Associated States (FAS), which is comprised of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and the Republic of Palau (RoP). The FAS governments have special relationships with the United States, as they entered into Compacts of Free Association that have been approved by the Congress of the United States. One component of these international, federally-negotiated agreements, allows for the unrestricted entry of citizens of the FAS to the United States, including the territories, without visas. Many FAS citizens have settled in the Pacific territories of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. They also constitute a significant and growing presence in the states of Hawaii and Arkansas. This section of the bill is important as it extends federal Medicaid coverage to them and would set an FMAP for otherwise qualified services rendered by the states and territories to them at 100%. This change in law would ensure that the territorial and state governments do not shoulder the sole costs of providing care for these citizens. I believe that this provision is consistent with the intent of the Medicaid program and provides for health equity to a disenfranchised population.

This bill represents policy for which I and my colleagues from the territories—Mr. PIERLUISI of Puerto Rico, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN of the Virgin Islands, Mr. SABLAN of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Mr. FALCOMA of American Samoa—have collaborated. We are grateful for the support that we have received from Mr. SERRANO, who joins us as an original co-sponsor. Each of us and our predecessors has worked on improving the federal Medicaid

program for the territories. This bill is to serve as starting point for advancing parity in treatment for the territories, with respect to the national health care reform debate. There are other areas of federal law that need to be amended in order to improve public health in the territories and to bring full parity. These include, for example, amendments to law governing Medicare Part D and the Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI). We look forward to working with the leaders in the House of Representatives and the Senate, and the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the committees of jurisdiction in both chambers in advancing legislation addressing these issues, including the bill we have introduced today.

THE LUMBEE RECOGNITION ACT
AND THE THOMASINA E. JORDAN
INDIAN TRIBES OF VIRGINIA
FEDERAL RECOGNITION ACT OF
2009

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 2009

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I am honored to join my colleagues to once again support H.R. 31, the Lumbee Recognition Act offered by Rep. MCINTYRE and H.R. 1385, the Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Recognition Act of 2009 introduced by Rep. MORAN.

It is only fitting that these indigenous populations be officially recognized as Native peoples of this land. As we move forward as a Nation to level the playing field for all citizens, H.R. 31 and H.R. 1385 is undoubtedly a monumental step in righting these historical tragedies. I second the sentiments of our President in his remarks that Congress should intervene and recognize the Lumbee Indians as a tribal group.

Aptly extending federal distinction to the Lumbee, Chickahominy, Chickahominy—Eastern Division, Upper Mataponi, Rappahannock, Monacan and Nansemond tribes is the only way to address hundreds of years of injustice endured.

Federal recognition will dramatically transform the lives of the Native American tribes currently being considered. Our failure to extend federal recognition to them has meant years of discriminatory treatment. Countless individuals have had difficulty naming children, getting marriage licenses and even getting inducted into military service. Other communities have been disproportionately affected by interruptions and cuts in funding that are crucial to services provided by tribal programs.

It has been a long time coming, but it is high time that they are ascribed the rights and protections afforded to other citizens of our Country.

While this is a time marked by challenge for the entire Nation, it is my hope that this legislation be stalled no more and swiftly enacted into law.

I urge my colleagues to support this very important piece of legislation.

RESOURCES, REVENUE, AND RESPONSIBILITY: STRENGTHENING REVENUE AND BUDGET TRANSPARENCY THROUGH THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, as Co-Chairman of the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (commonly referred to as the Helsinki Commission), I recently returned from a meeting in Dublin, Ireland, with almost 100 parliamentarians from 30 countries where we had the opportunity to discuss responses to the global economic crisis. The meeting was organized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) and the Parliament of Ireland. All countries are grappling with difficult national problems related to the economic crisis. And indeed, we are in a crisis, and for America, this is the worst economy we've experienced since the Great Depression in the 1920s. People all across America, and in my home state of Florida, are losing their homes, their jobs, and are unable to provide for their families.

In addition to discussions on financial regulation, trade protectionism, good governance, and the social consequences of the crisis, I was pleased that we also discussed revenue transparency in the extractive industries as an integral part of creating more transparency in the global financial system overall. As legislators, we have a duty to find ways to relieve the suffering caused by the financial crisis through vital investments in health care, education, infrastructure, and job creation so that we can emerge from this crisis stronger and better than before. But part of the solution is looking at how we even got into this crisis. Transparency—or the lack of it—in the financial world is certainly one of the culprits. And as revenue dwindles, making the most of what we have becomes even more important.

The way I see it, improvements in revenue transparency, particularly when we focus on the extractive industries, are important in at least three key ways: The first is to help alleviate poverty. 3.5 billion people live in countries that are rich in oil, gas and minerals. With good governance, the exploitation of these resources can generate large revenues to foster growth and reduce poverty. Resource revenue transparency is necessary in order for citizens—the true owners of their country's natural wealth—to be able to demand greater accountability from their governments for spending that serves the public interest.

The second is to promote stable investment climates. Mandatory disclosure can help diminish the political instability caused by opaque governance. Since extractive industries are capital-intensive and dependent on long-term stability to generate returns, transparency of payments made to a government can help mitigate political and reputational risks and also allow shareholders to make better-informed assessments of opportunity costs.

The third area is to enhance energy security. Opening the extractive industries sector to greater public scrutiny is key to increasing civil society participation in government. This form