

adopted by the TSA to develop its Civil Aviation Security Rules—the South Capitol Heliport continued to receive corporate commercial clients and news gathering helicopters. Yet, without explanation, beginning in October 2003, commercial operators have been altogether restricted from using the heliport, despite the fact that the heliport owners have been clear that they are willing to comply with any and all security demands.

The nation's capital has all but lost helicopter service, even for the vital security purposes our heliport has performed. Without corporate commercial clients the South Capitol Heliport cannot generate enough revenue to survive. The owner has submitted the highest level security plans, but the TSA and the Department of Homeland Security have failed to respond. At my request, the Committee on Homeland Security has added heliports specifically to the list of entities on the general aviation working group. This heliport is vital for both security and commercial helicopter operations that the District of Columbia cannot afford to lose. While we pause to recognize the importance of general aviation to the U.S. economy, I use this occasion to remind my colleagues in the Congress and the Administration to recognize the importance of general aviation to the nation's capital.

CITY OF NEWCASTLE

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2009

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the City of Newcastle, Washington, which was recently ranked seventeenth by Money Magazine on their list of "America's Best Small Towns." I'm proud to represent Newcastle, a city that affords residents a unique opportunity to live near the "hustle and bustle" of everyday life while retreating into a rural small town setting.

It is fitting that Money Magazine released its rankings the same week that Newcastle held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on a multi-year, multi-phase public works project that shows the city's true colors: leadership, patience and encouragement. Although I couldn't be at the celebration personally, I once again congratulate them on the expansion of the Coal Creek Parkway, to help alleviate the flow of traffic for its businesses and citizens.

Newcastle has grown by leaps and bounds, developing and offering new attractions and conveniences for citizens and businesses alike. Officially incorporated in 1994, Newcastle's population at the time was 7,000. 15 years later, Newcastle's population has grown to about 10,000 and the city's amenities continue to grow as well. A new YMCA will open in September, complete with swimming pools, community rooms, and gyms. A new transit center currently under construction will provide new bus shelters and improve the city's main intersection, benefiting commuters, pedestrians and bicyclists.

In true Pacific Northwest tradition, Newcastle also boasts a vast array of accessible natural resources and outdoor activities. Lake Boren Park, the city's best known location in its parks and trails system, offers walking trails, tennis and basketball courts, playground

equipment for children and is home to special events: the Fourth of July fireworks celebration and Newcastle's summer series of "Concerts in the Park." Of course, I must mention Newcastle's wonderful golf club; perhaps the city's most marketable asset as well as a terrific place for civic engagement and community fundraising. The course is truly beautiful and attracts attendees from all over the Pacific Northwest.

Newcastle is a beautiful city filled with a great mix of small town charm, big city access and natural, fantastic neighborhoods and open spaces, and is very well-deserving of this award to one of America's best small towns in the country. I look forward to continuing to support the goals and ideals of Newcastle residents and its elected leaders.

AMERICA'S AFFORDABLE HEALTH CHOICES ACT

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2009

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of real health care reform for the American people. As a member of the Committee on Ways and Means, I have been working hard to develop a bill that really makes health care better.

What stands out to me the most from my work are the stories I hear from my district in California. Neighbors like Blasa Ochoa, who lost her insurance when her employer went bankrupt, and who has been unable to get another policy because she has a pre-existing condition.

Or Denise from Lakewood who told me that doctors treat her special-needs son like a number and not a person.

The other night, I spoke to several hundred of my neighbors during a telephone town hall, and they told me about the problems with the current system: high costs, exclusions for pre-existing conditions, and the flat out inability to find a plan for those 60 and older.

I'm working so hard on this issue because I know health care reform is what my neighbors back home in California want and need.

America's Affordable Health Choices Act will fix these problems and more.

But sadly, there are still many misconceptions out there.

So let me clear some things up.

This bill will put a stop to abusive insurance company practices, so that you can get a policy no matter what your age or whether you have a pre-existing condition.

This bill will control skyrocketing health costs and make health insurance more affordable. Its strongest cost-control tool is the public health plan option.

We need a strong and stable public option because the private plans, busy seeking profits, have been unsuccessful in controlling the growth in healthcare costs. Their idea of controlling costs is denying care!

But a robust public plan, like the one in this bill, will give the private plans real competition and persuade them to change their ways. This makes health care cheaper for you.

A strong public plan will show how investing in comprehensive, high-quality care, including preventive care, will make Americans healthier and save money at the same time.

An NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll from earlier this year showed that 76 percent of American voters want a public health plan option. And I am proud to have worked on a bill that gives them just that.

But the public plan option is not the only standout provision in this bill.

This bill will protect small businesses and their employees.

This bill is going to help small businesses offer health insurance to their employees—something most small employers want, but can't afford to do right now.

Currently, small businesses pay an average of 18 percent more for health coverage than large businesses.

But with the America's Affordable Health Choices Act, small businesses will have access to the new Health Insurance Exchange, giving them the benefits of lower rates that only large businesses now enjoy. The exchange will also give small businesses more plans to choose from.

The bill also creates a new tax credit—worth up to half the cost of health insurance premiums—to assist small employers who want to offer coverage.

Finally, small businesses will be exempt from the "pay or play" requirements that will apply to large employers. Small businesses with a total payroll of \$250,000 or less—that's \$250,000 in employee payroll, and doesn't count the owner's take home pay—will be exempt from "pay or play."

Altogether, the bill makes it easier for small businesses and their employees to afford high quality care while protecting their bottom line.

I encourage my colleagues in both chambers and on both sides of the aisle to stop the bickering—and stop spreading misconceptions that are delaying this much-needed reform bill.

Americans cannot wait any longer. They're counting on us to get this done. We need to pass reform that lowers cost, promotes choice and provides care for all, no matter where they work or how large—or small—their paychecks.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2009

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Fiscal Year 2010 Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (H.R. 2996). This important bill makes timely investments to protect and preserve our country's natural resources, enhance climate change research and adaptation efforts, empower Native American communities, and support the arts. I thank Chairman OBEY, Chairman DICKS, my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, and the House leadership for their hard work on this legislation.

This legislation upholds America's leadership in environmental stewardship. It includes an 8 percent funding increase for the National Parks Service and a 6 percent increase for the National Wildlife Refuges. I am pleased that the bill includes my language for the first ever