

continue to do my part for the Federal funds for the Keys.

Welcome, Keys representatives, to Washington.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WALL STREET JOURNAL AWARDS HCSS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to applaud HCSS, a small business in my district in Sugar Land, Texas. HCSS was recently honored by the Wall Street Journal as one of the top 15 small business workplaces in America. In this tough economy, the company that puts employees first is the one that stands out.

I recently met with Mike Rydin, the founder and CEO of HCSS, about the success of his company, and he said, "We try to provide an environment that attracts and retains top talent and helps keep employees happy. Hiring top talent that loves coming to work allows us to provide topnotch software and service to our customers."

HCSS was one of nearly 630 private, nonprofit, or publicly held organizations across the country that were nominated for this prestigious award. According to the Wall Street Journal, they select employers that foster teamwork, flexibility, high productivity, and innovation, while also helping their employees grow personally and professionally and providing benefits that improve lives and communities.

HCSS has taken a hands-on approach to wellness for their employees that should serve as a model for private-sector solutions to our Nation's health care problems.

□ 2015

HCSS recently opened a new Sugar Land headquarters, which includes a one-third-mile, crushed-granite jogging trail, an exercise room, a game room, a gym with a basketball court, and a putting green. The company also pays fitness and wellness trainers to counsel employees on nutrition and exercise, and it offers on-site yoga and Pilates classes.

Each year, all employees are eligible to receive \$100 for each good result in an annual health screening, such as good cholesterol levels, not smoking and moderate body mass index. HCSS recently contracted with a company that will provide employees doctor consultations over the Internet right there in the HCSS offices.

A focus on employee wellness should be part of the solution to our Nation's

health care debate. Small companies need a level playing field in cost and affordability for their employees. That is why Congress should provide the same tax incentives for small companies that large corporations enjoy. Targeted tax relief would allow more companies to follow the HCSS model for health care for their employees.

As a result of the wellness programs at work at HCSS, their company-paid annual health insurance premiums fell over \$600 per employee in 2008 from 2004—\$600 per employee over a 4-year period. The company credits this to its vast wellness program and to its introduction of a high-deductible health plan, coupled with health reimbursement accounts to which the company contributes \$1,000 to \$3,000 annually for employee and dependent out-of-pocket health care expenses.

These are important examples of how health care costs can be reduced without looking to massive government programs to achieve greater coverage and lower costs. This is only one component of the debate, to be sure, but it can address many of the problems small businesses face to provide affordable health care to their employees.

Mike Rydin has future plans to build a school to train low-income people new skills so they can become more integrated parts of the communities in which they work and live.

HCSS has the kind of innovative and entrepreneurial vision to provide wellness and a comprehensive work environment that America has always relied on to find solutions to our bigger problems. I am proud of HCSS for their recognition as a top small workplace in America. This is the first Houston area company and only the second in the great State of Texas that has been recognized with this award.

Washington would do well to look at how small businesses like HCSS are achieving the results that we seek. Oftentimes, the great ideas come from the small innovators.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. ING-LIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. INGLIS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SOUDER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Maine (Ms. PINGREE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to be here on the floor tonight with a gathering of my freshman colleagues. We thought we would spend our hour talking about the very important issue of health care.

As everyone knows and as everyone sees in the newspapers pretty much every day, that is the topic on the mind of Congress and, certainly, on the mind of America. I know, for me, it's the issue I hear most about back in my district when I'm having a town hall meeting or am meeting with constituency groups—doctors, nurses, practitioners of any kind—to talk about their concerns about health care. It's the number one thing people bring up to me.

Certainly today, being from the State of Maine, the Finance Committee in the Senate—which isn't the House, but it's also going to eventually coordinate it with us—was voting out their bill. My colleague from Maine, Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE, voted in favor of the health care bill, making herself the first Republican to vote affirmatively on some of the proposals that we have before us. While she and I may differ on some of the policy issues, we all represent the State of Maine, and she spoke today about the great urgency of passing a piece of health care legislation. That is certainly of great concern to us, so I am glad we have an hour to talk a little bit about it.

There is such a range of issues to talk about. I know I want to mention a little bit about some of the concerns about insurance companies and the importance, at least for me, of voting for a plan that has a very robust public option. Before I turn it over to one of my colleagues, I just want to tell a couple of quick stories about the issues that we have been facing in the State of Maine.

Like a lot of States, we have a very small number of insurance companies. Many States find that 70, 80, sometimes more than 90 percent of their market is all taken up by one insurance company. I'm sure Representative TONKO from New York has some stories to talk about this as well and just about the issues that we have about why we need more competition in the market.

Interestingly, in Maine, our Attorney General has just entered into a very fascinating case with Anthem Insurance Company. Anthem is one of the few companies that does business in the State of Maine, and they recently asked for a rate increase. I think they asked for 18 percent. The State granted them 11 percent. They turned right around and sued the State of Maine, and said, You know, if you're not going to give us what we need, we're going to have to sue you on this. I'm just looking here through my papers.

I have some interesting information about just how much profit this particular company is making, and I will come across it in a minute here.