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House of Representatives

The House met at 8 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 3, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable EARL BLUMENAUER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 25 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 8:50 a.m.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. As we know, health care is not a luxury; it is simply a necessity. And here in the United States we already have the best doctors, the best hospitals, the best patient care in the world. What we do not have is the best access to health care. That access lies in being able to obtain quality health care at a fair price.

All families deserve to know that their health care needs will be met. We need to promote changes that make health care insurance easily accessible and affordable for all Americans. And we need to do this in a way that fixes what is broken in the system without destroying what works in the system.

What we need is real health care reform. Real health care reform means that no one should be denied coverage due to a preexisting health condition. Real health care reform means coverage should be portable and stay with you through job changes or career changes. Real health care reform means that there should be no discrimination based on age or gender. Real health care reform means expanding the health care options for all Americans by forcing insurance companies to compete for all of our business. Real health care reform means supporting effective prevention, wellness, and disease management programs. And, most importantly, real health care reform means all of these things without destroying the current health care system that over 80 percent of Americans have said they are happy with.

The Pelosi health care bill wants to raise taxes on all individuals by 2.5 percent if they do not purchase bureaucrat-approved health insurance. The Pelosi health care bill makes over $162 billion in cuts to Medicare Advantage for seniors. The Pelosi health care bill will eventually force Americans to purchase their coverage through the Federal Government with no real competition. The Pelosi health care bill makes no effort to control the skyrocketing costs of health care or insurance premiums. Instead, the Pelosi health care bill finds convoluted ways to hide health care costs in taxes on individuals, businesses, and by making timely and professional care a scarce resource.

As a mother and as a grandmother, I know that American families are worried. In the average household, it is us women who are often tasked with major and minor health care decisions. We choose our family doctors and take our kids and elderly parents to doctors' appointments. We stay home to nurse the sick children and our partners back to health. And we have seen every scrape, every cut, every blister that our family members have ever had. We know that families are in this together and we bind and look after our families.

Women know that if health care reform excludes even one member of our family, then it is unworkable. And we know the high cost of health care is the most important issue facing our Nation right now, because it is the most important issue facing our families.

Everyone deserves access to health care insurance. Everyone deserves health care treatment. And everyone deserves both at an affordable price.

The Pelosi health care bill is not the answer. We can, and indeed, we must, do better.

THE TIME FOR HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM IS NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CHU). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. I guess I couldn't disagree more with my friend from Florida in referring to health care legislation. She's just described something I certainly don't recognize.

I rise today because the time for health care insurance reform has arrived. Premiums are dramatically increasing for working families in our country. The overall costs of health care are imperiling our Federal budgets and the quality of care itself. Individuals with previous existing medical conditions are being denied medical coverage every day by health insurers in this country.

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The newly introduced bill, H.R. 3962, is a result of unprecedented participation by three House committees and more than 160 hours dedicated to open hearings, debates, and amendments. The bill and committee amendments have been available for review for more than 3 months, including on our respective Web sites, including my own. I have had more than 19,000 contacts from citizens in my district, each providing important input. I held a number of town hall meetings, including one televised nationally on C–SPAN, and I listened to the residents of the 11th District of Virginia.

I heard from my constituents that they're worried about previous existing medical conditions keeping them from obtaining medical insurance for their children. They're worried about the proposed changes to Medicare and what they might mean to them. I heard that the ever-growing cost of health insurance premiums is forcing some to choose between health care and financial ruin. They were insistent that the cost of whatever health insurance reform is adopted not add to the Federal deficit. And I heard that the potential surtax would be harmful to many families and small businesses, especially in my district.

One of the consistent themes of health insurance reform has been the outlawing of the insurance company practice of denying coverage and forcing families into financial distress as they try to afford treatment for things like childhood cancer, hypertension, asthma, diabetes, and many other conditions. Currently, 45 percent of us who are insured, who have health insurance, have such previous existing conditions. H.R. 3962 will ensure that no one can be denied coverage because of that previous existing condition.

The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, an organization dedicated to protecting the well-being of American seniors, recently expressed its support for this legislation. The bill will close the doughnut hole for Medicare part D, which currently costs many seniors thousands of dollars out of pocket each year; it will permit Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug costs for recipients; and it will eliminate required deductibles and copayments for preventative screenings for our seniors. The committee noted that H.R. 3962 protects Medicare Advantage recipients from out-of-pocket expenses.

One of the drivers of cost in the current health insurance system is the lack of interstate portability. Individuals are not permitted to purchase out-of-State insurance plans, thereby restricting competition. This bill will allow States to create regional health care choice compacts that will provide for greater choice among insurance providers and lower costs due to increased competition.

One of my primary concerns for health insurance reform was that it not add to the deficit. President Obama declared that he would not support health care reform that added one dime to the Federal debt. Over the next decade, the Congressional Budget Office has stated that H.R. 3962 will actually reduce the Federal deficit by $30 billion.

The originally proposed surtax to fund reform troubled me, frankly, and my constituents, and I worked tirelessly along with other freshmen to address that issue. Although my district has the highest median household income in the country, we have many two-income families, as both parents often work in order to afford the high cost of living in our district, child care costs, and the ever-increasing health insurance expenses. The surcharge as proposed would have imposed an undue burden on many small businesses—the economic engine of our economy.

Earlier this summer, I was among a group of freshman Members invited to meet with President Obama, and we expressed our concern on the surcharge. Subsequently, we joined with other freshman Members in a letter to Speaker PELOSI urging her to increase the income threshold. I'm pleased to say that that's been done—to $500,000 for an individual and $1 million for a family. That improved level will affect less than three-tenths of 1 percent of Americans and exempts the vast majority of small businesses.

Madam Speaker, we need health insurance reform that is affordable; that maintains the freedom to choose one's doctor and insurance plan; that ends insurance company cherry-picking; and that helps small businesses afford health insurance for their employees. Americans cannot wait any longer. The time for responsible health insurance reform is now.

AMERICA DESERVES BETTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. One of the most sad expressions that we heard in this Congress was by JOHN BOEHNER, the Republican minority leader, March 15, 2009. ''As I told my colleagues, we don't have enough votes to legislate. We are not in the majority. They,'' referring to his Republican colleagues, ''ought to get the idea out of their minds that they are legislators. But what they can be is communicators.''

Madam Speaker, that is an unfortunate misreading of the role of Members of Congress. It is much too narrow and limited, tragically so.

I spent 11 years in the minority in this Congress, and at times I must confess extraordinary frustration on some of what I thought were decidedly wrongheaded policies like the tragic consequences we are seeing played out on Wall Street and in Iraq today. But in the course of those 11 years, I never stopped looking for ways to work cooperatively to find a majority of people on both sides of the aisle to make productive change for America.

Some of my proudest moments were as a member of the minority when we were able to take small, bipartisan steps that made a huge impact. For example, the passage of my Water for the Poor Act, that was bipartisan legislation in both the House and the Senate that now enshrines in Federal policy an active effort to provide safe drinking water and sanitation around the world to save lives, while it improves the role and image of Americans abroad.

There has been described by some commentators, including some of my friends on the other side of the aisle, a ''take no prisoners'' approach. It's disturbing, as one who authored the end-of-life provisions that were hijacked and blatantly lied about to deal with what they called death panels, to see that ''take no prisoner'' approach in action. Well, we exploded that myth and I'm pleased that we do have strong, voluntary end-of-life provisions in the bill to protect the wishes of American families about how their families would be dealt with.

But one of the myths is that this ''take no prisoners'' attitude is just directed towards the Democrats because the consequence of a ''take no prisoner'' attitude might be, if they're successful, destroying our efforts at health care reform, where we have come further than any time in our history. In that case, the prisoners will be the American public that will be sentenced to continuing a process where we have millions uninsured and others who are not protected by the insurance which they are paying for.

Sadly, ''take no prisoners'' has actually affected the minority itself, because this attitude of being dismissive of a constructive role of legislation, being dismissive of the truth, actually has resulted in holding them hostage to the lowest common denominator—the TEA Party, tin-foil-hat people who have a paranoid, limited view of what America is and can be.

In the end, Madam Speaker, America deserves better. I think it will get better. But I sincerely hope that Republicans choose to stop being communicators, especially misrepresenting what we have brought before the American people, roll up their sleeves, and work with us constructively to reform America's broken health care system with costs out of control and coverage too limited.

Madam Speaker, together, we can make progress. Together, we can legislate and work on things where there is a common vision and a common goal. Together, we can make our government work better and our communities more livable and our families safer, healthier, and more economically secure.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess until 9 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 15 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 9 a.m. today.

□ 0900

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WELCH) at 9 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord, You show mercy to all, and You despise nothing You have created. Since You know us through and through, You forgive the sins of Your people, because You alone can draw goodness out of anyone or anything, at any time.

You provide Your people with time so that they may change their course of action and return to You with all their hearts, for You alone are the Lord. You alone are ever faithful, Almighty God, both now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

After consultation among the Speaker and the majority and minority leaders, and with their consent, the Chair announces that, when the two Houses meet in joint meeting to hear an address by Her Excellency Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those immediately to her left and right will be open.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House. Due to the large attendance that is anticipated, the rule regarding the privilege of the floor must be strictly enforced. Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor. The cooperation of all Members is requested.

The practice of reserving seats prior to the joint meeting by placard will not be allowed. Members may reserve their seats by physical presence only following the security sweep of the Chamber.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, October 29, 2009, the House stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 2 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

During the recess, beginning at 10:23 a.m., the following proceedings were had:

JOINT MEETING TO HEAR AN ADDRESS BY HER EXCELLENCY DR. ANGELA MERKEL, CHANCELLOR OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

The Speaker of the House presided.

The Majority Floor Services Chief, Mr. Barry Sullivan, announced the Vice President and Members of the U.S. Senate who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the Vice President taking the chair at the right of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort Her Excellency Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN);

The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON);

The gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA);

The gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO);

The gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN);

The gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER);

The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT);

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. MCMAHON);

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER);

The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR);

The gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE);

The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MCCOTTER);

The gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS);

The gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY);

The gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER);

The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN);

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON); and

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort Her Excellency Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID);

The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN);

The Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY);

The Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY);

The Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL);

The Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL);

The Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER);

The Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI);

The Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN); and

The Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE).

The Majority Floor Services Chief announced the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency Roble Olhaye, Ambassador from the Republic of Djibouti.

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for him.

The Majority Floor Services Chief announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The Members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

At 10 o'clock and 43 minutes a.m., the Majority Floor Services Chief announced Her Excellency Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and stood at the Clerk's desk.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

The SPEAKER. Members of Congress, I have the high privilege and the distinct honor of presenting to you Her Excellency Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

(The following address was delivered in German, with a simultaneous translation in English.)

Chancellor MERKEL. Madam Speaker, Mr. Vice President, distinguished Members of Congress:

Thank you for the great honor and privilege to address you today, shortly before the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. I am the second German Chancellor on whom this great honor is bestowed. Konrad Adenauer was the first when, in 1957, he addressed both Houses of Congress, albeit one after the other.

Our lives could not have been more different. In 1957, I was a small child of 3 years. I lived in Brandenburg together with my parents, a region that at the time belonged to the German Democratic Republic, the part of Germany that was not free. My father worked as a Protestant pastor. My mother, who had studied English and Latin to become a teacher, was not allowed to work in her chosen profession in the GDR. In 1957, Konrad Adenauer was already 81 years old. He had witnessed the German Empire, the first World War, the Weimar Republic and the Second World War. The National Socialists ousted him from his office as Lord Mayor of the city of Cologne. After the war, he was one of the men and women who built the free and democratic Federal Republic of Germany. There is nothing more symbolic of this Federal Republic of Germany than its constitution, the basic law, the grundgesetz. It was adopted exactly 60 years ago.

Article 1 of the basic law reads as follows, ''The dignity of man is inviolable.'' This short and simple sentence—''the dignity of man is inviolable''—was the response to the catastrophe of the Second World War, to the murder of 6 million Jews in the Holocaust, to the hatred, destruction and annihilation that Germany brought over Germany and the rest of the world.

In only a few days will mark the 9th of November. On the 9th of November, 1989, the Berlin Wall fell. The 9th of November, 1938, however, also left an indelible mark on German and European history. On this day, the National Socialists pillaged and destroyed synagogues, set fire to them and killed innumerable people. It was the beginning of what later turned into the break with civilization that was the Shoah. I cannot stand before you today without remembering the victims of that very day and of the Shoah.

There is one guest in the audience today who personally experienced the horrors of Germany under National Socialism and whom I got to know personally some time ago—Professor Fritz Stern. He was born in Breslau in 1926—then a German city, today a Polish city—and in 1938, he was able to flee with his family from the Nazis at the very last minute. In his autobiography, published in 2006 under the title ''Five Germanys I Have Known'' Fritz Stern recounts the moment he arrived in New York Harbor in 1938, reaching a haven of freedom and security.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is wonderful that history willed that Fritz Stern, then a 12-year-old boy driven out of his native Germany, and myself, originally born in the GDR, now Chancellor of today's reunited Germany, meet here today before this august assembly under the same roof. This fills me with great pride and great gratitude.

In my wildest dreams, I would not have thought this possible 20 years ago, before the fall of the wall, for at the time it was beyond my imagination to ever even travel to the United States, let alone stand here before you one day. The land of unlimited opportunity was, for me for a long time, impossible to reach. The wall, barbed wire and the order to shoot at those who tried to leave limited my access to the free world. Therefore, I had to rely on films and books, some of which were smuggled by relatives from the West to gain an impression of the United States. What did I see, and what did I read? What was it I was passionate about? I was passionate about the American Dream, the possibility for each and everyone to be successful, to actually make it in life through one's own personal effort. And like many other teenagers, I was passionate about jeans of a particular brand that you could not get in the GDR, which my aunt kindly sent me regularly from the West. I was passionate about the vast American landscapes that seemed to breathe the very spirit of freedom and independence. And immediately in 1990, my husband and I flew to America for the first time, to California. We shall never forget our first glimpse of the Pacific Ocean. It was simply gorgeous. And this, even though for me, America seemed completely out of reach until 1989.

Then on the 9th of November, 1989, the Berlin Wall fell, and this border, which had divided a nation for decades, keeping people in two different worlds, was now open. This is why, for me, today is, first and foremost, a time to say thank you. I thank all those American and Allied pilots who heard and heeded the desperate appeal of then-mayor of Berlin, Ernst Reuter, in 1948 who said, ''You, the nations of this world, cast your eyes towards the city.'' For months, these pilots flew to Berlin for the airlift, saving the citizens from starvation. Many of these soldiers risked their lives; dozens lost their lives. We shall remember and honor them forever.

I thank the 16 million Americans stationed in Germany throughout the last decades, without whose support as soldiers, diplomats and generally as facilitators, overcoming the division of Europe would simply not have been possible. Also, we would be more than pleased, not only today but also in the future, to have American soldiers in Germany. You are ambassadors of your country to Germany, just as many Americans with German roots continue to be ambassadors of my country over here in the United States of America.

I think of John F. Kennedy who won the hearts of the Berliners when, during his visit in 1961 after the wall had been built, he reached out to the desperate citizens of Berlin by saying, ''Ich bin ein Berliner.'' I think of Ronald Reagan who, far earlier than most, clearly saw the sign of the times and, standing in front of the Brandenburg Gate already in 1987, called out, ''Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.'' This appeal shall remain forever in my heart.

I thank George Herbert Walker Bush for the trust he placed in Germany and then Chancellor Helmut Kohl, offering something of immeasurable value to us Germans already in May 1989: ''Partnership in leadership.'' What a generous offer, 40 years after the end of the Second World War. It was actually only last Saturday that we met again in Berlin, incidentally together with Mikhail Gorbachev. And to him, too, we owe a debt of gratitude.

Ladies and gentlemen, to put it in just one sentence, I know—we Germans know how much we owe to you, our American friends, and we shall never—I, personally—shall never, ever forget this.

The common quest for freedom released incredible forces all over Europe: the trade union Solidarnosc in Poland, the reformers around Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia, the first opening of the Iron Curtain in Hungary, and the demonstrations in the GDR every Monday. Where there used to be a dark wall, a door suddenly opened, and we all walked through it out into the streets, into the churches, across borders. Each and everyone was suddenly given a chance to build something new, to help shape things, to dare a new beginning.

I, too, saw a new beginning. I left my work as a physicist in the Academy of Science in East Berlin behind me and went into politics because I was finally able to do something to make a difference because I had gained the impression, Now things can be changed. Now you can do something. Ladies and gentlemen, 20 years have gone by since we were given this incredible gift of freedom, but still, nothing keeps me more involved, nothing spurs me on as much, nothing fills me with stronger positive feelings than the force of freedom.

Whoever has been so positively surprised in his or her lifetime holds many things to be possible. Or, to borrow the words of Bill Clinton when he was in Berlin in 1994, ''Nothing will stop us. All things are possible.'' Yes, everything is possible. It is possible for a woman like myself to be here today. It is possible for a man like Arnold Vaatz, a dissident in Dresden during GDR times who spent time in prison because of this, to be here present today, a Member of the German Bundestag, the German Parliament and a member of my delegation. Yes, everything is possible. Also in our century, the 21st century, the age of globalization.

Back home in Germany, just as here in America, many people are afraid of globalization. We don't simply pass over this fact and these fears. We do see the difficulties. And yet it is up to us to convince people that globalization is the great global opportunity for each and every continent, for it forces all of us to work together with others. The alternative to globalization would mean shutting ourselves off against others. But instead of being a viable alternative, this would

only lead into isolation and misery. Thinking in terms of alliances, thinking in terms of partnerships, however, this will take us into a good future.

Ladies and gentlemen, America and Europe have certainly had their share of disagreements. Some may sometimes consider the other to be too hesitant or too fearful or, from the opposite perspective, too headstrong and too pushy. And yet I am deeply convinced that Europe will not find a better partner than America, nor will America find a better partner than Europe. For what brings Europeans and Americans together and keeps them together is not only a common history, what brings Europeans and Americans together and keeps them there are not only shared interests but common global challenges which exist among all regions of the world. This alone would not be sufficient to forge this very special partnership between Europe and America and to make it last. There is more to it. What brings Europeans and Americans together and keeps them close is a common basis of shared values. It is a common idea of the individual, and its inalienable dignity. It is a common understanding of freedom and responsibility. This is what we stand up for in this unique trans-Atlantic partnership and in this community of shared values that is NATO.

Thus, partnership and leadership is filled with life, ladies and gentlemen. It was this basis of values that ended the Cold War, and it is this basis of values which enables us now to stand the test of our times, and we need to stand this test of our time. Germany is united. Europe is united. That is something that we've been able to do.

Now today's generation needs to prove that it is able to meet the challenges of the 21st century and that, in a sense, we are able to tear down walls of today. What does this mean? Well, it means create freedom and security. It means create prosperity and justice, and it means protecting our planet. And here again, America and Europe are called upon in a very special way to do that, even after the end of the Cold War. Therefore, what is important is to see to it that we tear down walls in the minds of people, walls that separate different concepts of life that make it difficult time and again for us to understand each other all over the world. This is why the ability to show tolerance towards others is so important.

For us, our way of life is the best possible way, but others do not necessarily feel that way or think that way. There are different solutions to create a peaceful coexistence and tolerance; and showing tolerance means showing respect for the history, the tradition, the religion and the cultural identity of others. But let there be no misunderstanding; tolerance does not mean anything goes. There must be zero tolerance towards all those who show no respect for the inalienable rights of the individual and who violate human rights, and zero tolerance needs to be shown when there is a risk of weapons of mass destruction falling, for example, into the hands of Iran and threatening our security.

Iran needs to be aware of this. Iran knows our offer, but Iran also knows where we draw a line. A nuclear bomb in the hands of an Iranian president who denies the Holocaust, threatens Israel and denies Israel the right to exist is not acceptable. The security of the State of Israel is for me nonnegotiable, now and forever. Incidentally, not only Israel is threatened but the whole of the free world. Whoever threatens Israel also threatens us. This is where the free world meets this threat head-on; if necessary, through tough economic sanctions. And this is why we, in Germany, will do everything we can in order to lend our support to the Middle East peace process, with the aim of establishing a two-state solution, a Jewish State of Israel and a Palestinian state living peacefully side by side.

We also stand up against the threat of international terrorism. We are aware of the fact that no country, no matter how strong, can do this alone. We all need partners. We are only strong if we are joined by others in a community of partners. Since we share then-President George W. Bush's views after the attacks of 9/11 that we had to prevent Afghanistan from ever harboring such a threat to the world again, Germany has been present there on the ground since 2002, with the third-largest troop contingent. We want to make the concept of an integrated or networked security successful. This means that civil and military commitment are inextricably linked.

The international community's mission in Afghanistan is, without any doubt, a tough one. It demands a lot from all of us, and it now needs to be transferred to the next phase as soon as the new Afghan Government is in office. Our objective must be a strategy for transfer of responsibility which we intend to develop together during a joint U.N. conference at the beginning of next year. We will be successful if we, as we have done up to now, continue to travel this road together every step of the way. Germany stands ready to shoulder its responsibility.

There is no doubt that NATO is and remains the crucial cornerstone of our common security. The security concept is continuously further developed and adapted to meet the challenges of the day, but its foundation and its clear compass for peace and freedom remain unchanged. We Europeans, I am convinced, may contribute even more in the future, for we Europeans are currently working on giving a new contractual basis to our European Union. The last signature has just been put on this document. This will make the European Union stronger and more capable of action, thereby turning it into a strong and reliable partner for the United States. We can build stable partnerships on this sound basis, first and foremost, with Russia, China and India. For, ladies and gentlemen, the world we live in today is both freer and more integrated than ever before.

The fall of the Berlin Wall, the technological revolution and information and communication technology, and the rise of China, India, and other countries to become dynamic economies, all of this has changed the world of the 21st century into something completely different from what we knew in the 20th century. This is a good thing, for freedom is the very essence of our economy and our society. Man can only be creative when he's free, but what is also clear is that freedom does not stand alone. It is the freedom in responsibility and freedom to show and shoulder responsibility. For this, the world needs an underlying order. The near collapse of the international financial markets has shown what happens when there is none, when there is no underpinning order. If there is one lesson the world has learned from the financial crisis of last year, it is that a globalized economy needs a global order and a global framework of rules. Without global rules on transparency and supervision, we will not gain more freedom but rather risk the abuse of freedom and, thus, risk instability.

In a way, this is a second wall that needs to fall, a wall standing in the way of a truly global economic order, a wall made up of regional and exclusively national thinking. The G–20 is key to this cooperation among the most important industrialized countries and emerging economies. Here, too, cooperation between the Americans and the Europeans is a crucial cornerstone. It is not an exclusive but an inclusive cooperation. The G–20 have shown that they are capable of action, and we need to resist the pressure of those who almost led the nations of this planet to the abyss. The long and short of it is that international economic policy needs to be more sustainable because this crisis was also the result of a way of thinking that was too short term. As a consequence, millions of people all over the world may lose their jobs and are threatened by poverty and hunger.

To achieve prosperity and justice, we have to do everything to prevent such a crisis in the future. This also means not giving in to the temptation of protectionism. This is why the Doha negotiations and the framework of WTO are so important. The success of the Doha Round would send a very important message of openness for global trade, particularly in the current crisis. And just as much, the Transatlantic Economic Council can fulfill an important task in preventing the race for subsidies and giving incentives to reduce barriers to trade between Europe and America. Please, do let us jointly work for a global economic order that is in the interest of both America and Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen, global challenges can only be met by comprehensive international cooperation. This is also true for the third great task we need to stand up to in the 21st century, the wall that seemingly separates the present from the future. This wall bars from view the needs of future generations. It prevents us from doing what is urgently necessary to preserve the basis of our very life and our climate. We can already see now where this wasteful attitude towards our future leads: icebergs are melting in the Arctic; in Africa, people become refugees because their environment has been destroyed; the global sea level is rising.

I am delighted to note that President Obama and you, in your daily work, consider the protection of our climate to be a very important task. We all know that we have no time to lose. We need an agreement at the climate conference in Copenhagen in December. We need an agreement on one objective: global warming must not exceed 2 degrees Celsius. To achieve this, we need the readiness of all countries to exact internationally binding obligations. We cannot afford missing the objectives in climate protection that science tells us have to be met. This would not only be irresponsible from an environmental point of view, it would also be technologically shortsighted, for the development of new technologies in the field of energy offers great opportunities for growth and innovative jobs.

No doubt about it, in December the world will look to us, to the Europeans and to the Americans. And it is true, there can be no agreement without China and India. But I am convinced once we, in Europe and America, show ourselves ready to adopt binding agreements, that we will also be able to persuade China and India to join in. Then in Copenhagen, we shall be able to overcome this wall separating the present and the future in the interest of our children and grandchildren and in the interest of sustainable development all over the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am convinced that just as we found the strength in the 20th century to bring about the fall of the wall made of concrete and barbed wire, we shall now show that necessary strength to overcome the walls of the 21st century, walls in our minds, walls of shortsighted self-interest, walls between the present and the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, my confidence is nurtured and comes from a very important source, a very special sound, the sound of the Liberty Bell in Schöneberg Town Hall in Berlin. Since 1950, the bell, cast after the original American Liberty Bell, hangs there in the belfry. A gift from American citizens, it is a symbol of the promise of freedom, a promise that has been fulfilled. On the 3rd of October, 1990, the Liberty Bell rang again, signaling the unification of Germany, the greatest moment of joy for the German people. On the 13th of September, 2001, it tolled out again, 2 days after 9/11, the greatest day of mourning for the American people.

(Spoken in English:)

The freedom bell in Berlin is, like the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, a symbol which reminds us that freedom does not come about by itself. It must be struggled for and then defended anew every day of our lives. In this endeavor, Germany and Europe will also in the future remain strong and dependable partners for America. That, I promise you. Thank you very much.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

At 11 o'clock and 20 minutes a.m., Her Excellency Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, accompanied by the committee of escort, retired from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Majority Floor Services Chief escorted the invited guests from the Chamber in the following order:

The Members of the President's Cabinet;

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps.

JOINT MEETING DISSOLVED

The SPEAKER. The purpose of the joint meeting having been completed, the Chair declares the joint meeting of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 23 minutes a.m.), the joint meeting of the two Houses was dissolved.

The Members of the Senate retired to their Chamber.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The House will continue in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR of Arizona) at noon.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS HAD DURING RECESS

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings held during the recess be printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 3949, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 398, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 866, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

VETERANS' SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE AND SERVICEMEMBERS PROTECTION ACT OF 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3949, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3949, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 382, nays 2, not voting 48, as follows:

[Roll No. 835]

YEAS—382

Aderholt
Adler (NJ)
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Arcuri
Austria
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boccieri
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bright
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Cao
Capito
Capps
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cassidy
Castle
Castor (FL)
Chaffetz
Chandler
Childers
Chu
Clarke
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cohen
Conaway
Connolly (VA)
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Dahlkemper
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Dreier
Driehaus
Duncan
Edwards (MD)
Edwards (TX)
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Filner
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Giffords
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Graves
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Guthrie
Hall (TX)
Halvorson
Hare
Harman
Harper
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heinrich
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Honda
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kilroy
Kind
King (IA)

King (NY)
Kirk
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kissell
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Kosmas
Kratovil
Kucinich
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee (CA)
Lee (NY)
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maffei
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey (CO)
Markey (MA)
Marshall
Massa
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McClintock
McCollum
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McMahon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meek (FL)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Minnick
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy (NY)
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Myrick
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nye
Oberstar
Obey
Olson
Olver
Ortiz
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Pence
Perlmutter
Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Polis (CO)
Pomeroy
Posey
Price (NC)
Putnam
Quigley
Radanovich
Rangel
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schauer
Schiff
Schmidt
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Souder
Space
Stark
Stearns
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Taylor
Teague
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Visclosky
Walden
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (AK)

NAYS—2

Flake
Paul

NOT VOTING—48

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Andrews
Barrett (SC)
Brady (PA)
Brown, Corrine
Capuano
Carney
Clay
Cole
Conyers
Crenshaw
Davis (AL)
Davis (TN)
Deal (GA)
Fattah
Gerlach
Gordon (TN)
Granger
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hinchey
Hoekstra
Holt
Johnson (IL)
Kingston
Lipinski
Maloney
McCaul
Meeks (NY)
Moran (KS)
Murphy, Patrick
Nunes
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Price (GA)
Rahall
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sires
Speier
Spratt
Stupak
Towns
Velázquez
Wamp
Young (FL)

□ 1228

Messrs. BROUN of Georgia, SNYDER and MURPHY of New York changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained on Tuesday, November 3, and consequently missed rollcall vote No. 835 on H.R. 3949, the Veterans' Small Business Assistance and Servicemembers Protection Act of 2009. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on H.R. 3949.

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, had I been present for the vote to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3949 as amended I would have voted "yea."

RECOGNIZING 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF BERLIN AIRLIFT'S SUCCESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 398, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 398.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 367, nays 0, not voting 65, as follows:

[Roll No. 836]

YEAS—367

Aderholt
Adler (NJ)
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Arcuri
Austria
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bartlett
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Boccieri
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bright
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Campbell
Cao
Capito
Capps
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson (IN)
Cassidy
Castle
Castor (FL)
Chaffetz
Chandler
Childers
Chu
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cohen
Conaway
Connolly (VA)
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Dahlkemper
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Driehaus
Duncan
Edwards (MD)
Edwards (TX)
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Fattah
Filner
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Giffords
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Graves
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Guthrie
Hall (TX)
Halvorson
Hare
Harman
Harper
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heinrich
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Honda
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis
Inslee
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kilroy
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kirk
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kissell
Klein (FL)
Kosmas
Kratovil
Kucinich
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee (CA)
Lee (NY)
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maffei
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey (CO)
Markey (MA)
Marshall
Massa
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McMahon
McNerney
Meek (FL)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Minnick
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy (NY)
Murphy, Tim
Myrick
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nye
Oberstar
Olson
Olver
Ortiz
Pastor (AZ)
Paul
Paulsen
Perlmutter
Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Polis (CO)
Pomeroy
Posey
Price (NC)
Putnam
Quigley
Radanovich
Rangel
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sestak
Shadegg
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Souder
Space
Speier
Stark
Stearns
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Taylor
Teague
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Visclosky
Walden
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—65

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Andrews
Barrett (SC)
Barton (TX)
Blunt
Boehner
Brady (PA)
Brown, Corrine
Camp
Cantor
Capuano
Carney
Carter
Cole
Conyers
Crenshaw
Davis (AL)
Davis (TN)
Deal (GA)
Dreier
Farr
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Gerlach
Goodlatte
Gordon (TN)
Granger
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hinchey
Hoekstra
Holt
Israel
Johnson (IL)
Kingston
Kline (MN)
Lipinski
Maloney
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McCotter
McMorris Rodgers
Meeks (NY)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Nunes
Obey
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pence
Price (GA)
Rahall
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Schauer
Sessions
Sires

Spratt
Stupak
Towns
Velázquez
Wamp
Young (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1235

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 836, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 836, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 836, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. DREIER, Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 836, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on H. Res. 398, Recognizing the 60th Anniversary of Berlin Airlift's Success.

NATIONAL VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 866, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 866.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 389, nays 0, not voting 43, as follows:

[Roll No. 837]

YEAS—389

Aderholt
Adler (NJ)
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boccieri
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bright
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Cao
Capito
Capps
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cassidy
Castle
Castor (FL)
Chaffetz
Chandler
Childers
Chu
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cohen
Conaway
Connolly (VA)
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Dahlkemper
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Dreier
Driehaus
Duncan
Edwards (MD)
Edwards (TX)
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Giffords
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Graves
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Guthrie
Hall (TX)
Halvorson
Hare
Harman
Harper
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heinrich
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Honda
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kilroy
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kirk
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kissell
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Kosmas
Kratovil
Kucinich
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee (CA)
Lee (NY)
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maffei
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey (CO)
Markey (MA)
Marshall
Massa
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McClintock
McCollum
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McMahon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meek (FL)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Minnick
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy (NY)
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Myrick
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nye
Oberstar
Obey
Olson
Olver
Ortiz
Pastor (AZ)
Paul
Paulsen
Pence
Perlmutter
Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Polis (CO)
Pomeroy
Posey
Price (NC)
Putnam
Quigley
Radanovich
Rahall
Rangel
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schauer
Schiff
Schmidt
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Souder
Space
Speier
Stark
Stearns
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Taylor
Teague
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Visclosky
Walden
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—43

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Andrews
Austria
Barrett (SC)
Brady (PA)
Brown, Corrine
Capuano
Carney
Cole
Conyers
Crenshaw
Davis (AL)
Davis (TN)
Deal (GA)
Gerlach
Gordon (TN)
Granger
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hinchey
Hoekstra
Holt
Johnson (IL)
Kingston
Lipinski
Maloney
McCaul
Meeks (NY)
Murphy, Patrick
Nunes
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Price (GA)
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sires
Spratt
Stupak
Towns
Velázquez
Wamp

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1243

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, today, November 3, 2009, I missed a series of three votes. I missed rollcall votes Nos. 835, 836, and 837.

I request that the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD reflect that had I been present and voting, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall vote No. 835: "yea" (On agreeing to H.R. 3949).

Rollcall vote No. 836: "yea" (On agreeing to H. Res. 398).

Rollcall vote No. 837: "yea" (On agreeing to H. Res. 866).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, November 2 and Tuesday, November 3, I was unable to cast my vote on six suspension bills due to a need to cast my vote in the election in Pennsylvania.

Had I been present, I would like the RECORD to reflect that I would have voted:

"Yea" on rollcall vote 832, "yea" on rollcall vote 833, "yea" on rollcall vote 834, "yea" on rollcall vote 835, "yea" on rollcall vote 836, "yea" on rollcall vote 837.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 3691

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 3691.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of national health care reform. The 29th

District in Texas, which I represent, has one of the highest numbers of uninsured individuals in our country, where nearly 40 percent of the residents are uninsured.

Last week, the melded House version of the health care bill was reintroduced as H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act. H.R. 3962 creates a national health care exchange in which individuals and small businesses can purchase health insurance plans for themselves and employees. Our goal is to build on the system of employer-based health care coverage that 60 percent of Americans currently enjoy and allow those who have employer-based insurance to keep that coverage.

If enacted, H.R. 3962 will provide insurance coverage to 230,000 currently uninsured residents in our district and improve the employer-based coverage for 217,000 residents. Under this legislation, 177,000 households would qualify for affordability credits to purchase health insurance.

In our district, 16,600 small businesses would be able to obtain health insurance for their employees, and 14,600 small businesses will qualify for tax credits to help them offset the cost of obtaining health care. That's why we need national health care reform.

□ 1245

GIVING AMERICANS THE RIGHT KIND OF HEALTH CARE

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

Ms. JENKINS. As a woman in the sandwich generation, I've spent numerous hours making health care decisions for my two teenagers, as well as two aging parents who have both suffered from cancer and other medical emergencies. From monitoring vaccines, to paying hospital and prescription costs, to reviewing insurance coverage, I understand the concerns folks have with their health care system.

That is why I am glad Republicans have solutions: solutions to provide access to care, regardless of preexisting conditions; solutions to cover the uninsured; solutions for tort reform to reduce the cost of defensive medicine.

Democrats have other ideas. The Pelosi health care plan will force folks off their current health care coverage, lead to longer waiting lines, increase premiums, higher taxes, fewer options, and will further bankrupt our Nation.

Please, let's give Americans the right kind of health care reform.

MOURNING THE LOSS OF WILLARD V. OLIVER

(Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I rise to mourn the loss of Willard V. Oliver, one of the last surviving Navajo Code Talkers. The Code Talkers saved the lives of countless Americans in World War II and the Korean War by using Dine to communicate sensitive military intelligence without risk of interception by the enemy. Mr. Oliver spent more than 2 years fighting his way across the South Pacific as one of those esteemed marines.

Willard Oliver passed away on October 14th after a life marked by heroic service to his people and to his country.

In speaking of his service, Mr. Oliver said, ''I am proud to be a Code Talker, and I know we counted for something great.''

Today, I am proud to honor him and all Navajo Code Talkers for their bravery and sacrifice on behalf of this country. His and their contributions to our great Nation must never be forgotten.

DOING HEALTH CARE REFORM THE RIGHT WAY

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

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, the American people want health care reform, but they want the right kind of reform. They want to know that we are not going to raise taxes on job creators when the economy is just coming out of a recession. They want to know that we are not going to change the health care that they have now. They want to know that Medicare will be there for them.

As a mother of three, I can remember nights when one of our children would have a cold and I would put my ear to their chest to hear the rattle or to hear if they were developing croup. And that is what we have been doing with this health care reform. The Republicans have been putting their ears to the chest of the American people to find out what they want. And what they want, they want reform the right way, not a $1 trillion plan that will lead to uncertainty and that will have certain people lose their health care.

We need to do health care reform, but we need to do it the right way.

PAYING FOR VALUE IN HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I am proud that this House has finally showed the courage to tackle one of the most important issues in our country, the rising cost of health care. I want to recognize that this piece of legislation takes a huge step forward in addressing the issue of paying for value in our health care system.

The current payment system rewards volume and quantity of care, rather than quality of care. We spend hundreds of billions of dollars every year on procedures that do not improve patients' health. We need to change the incentive system. We need doctors and hospitals to work together to coordinate care.

In my district in southern Minnesota, the Mayo Clinic has created just such a culture, where doctors coordinate with each other and look for the best quality results. There are other institutions around the country doing the same thing. These organizations all do it a little differently, but the one thing they have in common is a culture of patient-centered care based on high quality and low cost.

These cultures can be replicated in every hospital in the country, and the way we get there is by changing the incentive system. I am very proud that the provisions in this bill to address value and geographic disparity in Medicaid are there. We have a chance to reform American health care and provide good-quality, high-outcome health care for all Americans.

COMMONSENSE IDEAS REGARDING HEALTH CARE

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

Mrs. BIGGERT. It seems like all we hear in Washington about health care today is ''public option'' and ''government-run program,'' so I thought it was interesting in a recent questionnaire, 47 percent of my constituents most want Congress to focus on reducing costs. Only 10.5 percent are most concerned with the public option, and I would be willing to bet that these numbers are similar all over the country.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we should get back to the health care issue most important to Americans: reducing costs. Let's support commonsense changes, like medical malpractice reform and association health plans. We should also focus on eliminating the waste, fraud, and abuse that is so rampant in our medical system. With the money these reforms save, we will be able to expand coverage and be sure no one is denied health care coverage because of a preexisting condition or because they can't afford premiums.

These are simple, tested, commonsense ideas that don't take 1,999 pages to explain. Let's give the American people what they want, Mr. Speaker.

PUTTING PATIENTS FIRST

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

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, this House of Representatives is the people's voice, and we are about to deliver exactly what they have been asking for: reforms in our health care system, reforms that were asked of us by our people back home in our districts. Ideas, great ideas come from our people, including closing the doughnut hole in

Medicare part D, reforming medical malpractice to make sure it is affordable for every practitioner and their patients, and to negotiate finally for deeper discounts from prescription drug companies.

We are also going to eliminate the antitrust exemption that the Wall Street-run health insurance corporations have been benefiting from for several decades. We are also going to begin to look at purchasing health care policies across State lines.

This is what the people want: They want private doctors and private hospitals. They want to be in charge of their health care again.

We are going to put patients first in this House of Representatives.

HEALTH CARE AND SENIORS

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, many seniors from my area of south Florida are concerned about the $1 trillion Pelosi bill. The Pelosi bill is poised to hurt seniors by endangering their Medicare benefits. Seniors, after decades and decades of hard work and sacrifice, deserve nothing less than the best quality health care that we can provide. Any health care reform legislation must not endanger this solemn promise.

According to CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, the Pelosi plan will cut Medicare benefits by $162 billion. The Pelosi bill will force seniors to pay up to 20 percent more for their Medicare prescription drug coverage. It will also inflict massive cuts on a popular program, Medicare Advantage, that will force many seniors out of their current coverage. So not only do we take away benefits from our seniors, but we will make them pay more for what little they are left with.

This is not what seniors deserve. Seniors deserve to have their Medicare benefits protected. Whatever shape health care reform takes, this Chamber must never forget our pledge to our seniors.

WELCOMING AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES TO WASHINGTON

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

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome the many American Indians and Alaska Natives who are here in Washington to address the needs of Indian Country. For the first time, leaders from the 564 federally recognized tribes will interact directly with the President and Cabinet members in the first annual White House Tribal Nations Conference.

President Obama, the administration officials, and many Members of Congress are engaging tribal leaders in an unprecedented conversation to hear firsthand about the needs and opportunities facing Indian communities and families.

Tribal leaders are also here to commemorate the historic opening today of the Embassy of Tribal Nations' permanent home in our Nation's Capital for their family of sovereign tribal governments.

Migwetch—thank you—as we would say in Minnesota. Thank you to all the tribes who are here to participate and work on Indian issues together.

DOING HEALTH CARE REFORM THE RIGHT WAY

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

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, when I am at home in the district, I am not getting questions about health care. I am getting questions about jobs. People are saying, what are you doing to help create jobs?

Unemployment nationally is at a 26-year high. In my district, it is between 11 and 15 percent, and small business people say to me all the time, new taxes on businesses that can't afford health coverage is not going to help. We all know that leads to fewer jobs and lower wages for workers.

Health care reform is important, but the country can't afford it under the proposed bill. Half of the tax dollars collected by the health care bill's new surtax are from small business. It is terrible for innovation and kills ingenuity, which made America great.

It is the American people that keep this country growing, and they want health reform done the right way, that lowers cost and is affordable.

PROTECTING INNOCENT AMERICANS FROM EXECUTION

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced H.R. 3986, the Effective Death Penalty Appeals Act, to protect innocent Americans from execution. Under current law, a death row inmate can be stranded in a procedural no-man's land condemned to die, even if there is compelling new evidence of innocence.

Justice Stevens recently wrote that the law as it stands is arguably unconstitutional. It is also wrong. My bill would empower Federal courts to entertain and grant habeas corpus petitions for death row inmates who present new evidence that demonstrates probable innocence.

This bill will help us discern the innocent from the guilty when the stakes are highest. I look forward to broad support for this bill.

I will also say that health care, this new proposal, H.R. 3986, is fabulous reform to this problem.

PROPOSED HEALTH CARE REFORM WILL HURT WOMEN

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

Ms. FALLIN. Mr. Speaker, for many women and their families, higher health care costs means the difference between receiving care or going without it. Unfortunately, the Pelosi health care bill raises taxes on health care and empowers the Federal Government and bureaucrats to decide what kind of health care families and women will have versus empowering people to make their own personal decisions. It also undermines a woman's ability to make the best decisions for her family.

According to a report, studies have shown that more than 52 percent of women have foregone necessary care because of the cost. They have foregone care from filling prescription drugs, skipping a medical test, or even failing to see a doctor when they needed medical help.

We know when the Federal Government takes over care, whether it is a bureaucratic system or a socialized system, that it also leads to rationing of care. This bill increases taxes while also causing higher insurance premiums and will hurt women and children and their families. But House Republicans support reasonable health care reform that lowers costs and will ensure access to care for all Americans.

NO LONGER BEING FOOLED BY THE PARTY OF NO

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, one of the scariest themes of Halloween has been the continuation of myths about our health care legislation that is being made by opponents of reform. These TEA-bagger myths have been debunked time and time again, yet some in this Congress continue to perpetuate them. Why? Because they have no alternative plan of their own.

If they had a comprehensive plan that would actually address our Nation's health care crisis, it would have been put forward, or maybe they would have enacted it during the years that they ran Congress and the White House. But when you don't have a plan, you have nothing else to talk about.

We all know we cannot continue the status quo: Americans with health insurance today, never knowing if it will be there when they need it; millions of Americans today without any coverage; all the while, costs keep climbing and insurance companies keep getting richer.

So what do some folks do? They distort our plan and use scare tactics and try to fool the American people. But the American people support our plan, which ensures that we all have access

to quality, affordable health care, and they won't be fooled anymore by the Party of No.

□ 1300

HIGHLIGHTING THREE CONCERNS ABOUT THE HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL: ABORTION, SENIORS, AND THE CONSCIENCE CLAUSE

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

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk today about some of the concerns I have with the current health care bill, specifically abortion, our seniors, and the conscience clause for medical professionals.

As this bill is drafted, it opens the door to the public funding of abortion. A majority of Americans are opposed to funding abortions. For decades the Federal funding of abortion has been prohibited by the Hyde amendment. Some will argue the Capps amendment does the same thing, but it does not. It allows for plans, specifically the public option, to have abortion coverage paid for with our tax dollars.

This bill also cuts more than $500 billion from Medicare, putting our Nation's seniors' health at risk. Almost $170 billion will be cut from the Medicare Advantage program alone. This will adversely affect 17,000 seniors in my district.

And, finally, it appears to erode the conscience clause protections for our medical professionals. No health care provider should ever have to choose between his or her morals, faith, and his or her job.

Health care reform should be about protecting lives, not jeopardizing them.

WE MUST MAKE HEALTH CARE A RIGHT, NOT A PRIVILEGE

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, we are at a historic moment in our Nation's history.

After a half century of debate, the time has come to make health care a reality for every single American. We must make health care a right and not a privilege. People are dying without health care. This week we must say, No more. No more.

People are losing their homes because they are without health insurance. This week we say, No more.

The American people cannot wait a moment longer. Every day that we wait, 14,000 Americans lose their health insurance.

We have a good bill before us. We have resolved our differences. We have been struck in the paralysis of analysis, and this must end and end now. Now is the time to act. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., once said, ''Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.''

We must not perpetuate this injustice. The spirit of history is upon us. We have been called to lead. Now is the time for the Congress to act.

THE HEALTH CARE DEBATE: A GOVERNMENT-CENTERED PLAN VERSUS A PATIENT-CENTERED, TAXPAYER-FRIENDLY PLAN

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, the American people, especially women, are listening and watching; and they are paying close attention to how we define problems, how we address problems, and how we as a body get around to solving problems that they're concerned about. And I think they're really learning so very much.

They are learning that we have a philosophical difference in how we choose to address these problems. Some of my colleagues want to see this played out in the health care debate where they would choose to have a government-centered plan, and then there are those of us that would like to have a patient-centered, taxpayer-friendly way to address this.

And we do have lots of ideas. We, as Republicans, have brought forward so many ideas and so many bills that would do just that, to address the health care and medical concerns of our constituents.

What they want is more affordable cost, ease of access, making certain that we address access to affordable insurance for those that have preexisting and existing conditions. And we can do that and be friendly to the American taxpayer.

THE HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL AND THE INPUT FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, the House Democrats have held over 3,000 public events, town halls, forums for people to give us their ideas on health care. I'm sure my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have held countless more events. I personally have held 28 events in my district in Colorado, town halls, telephone town halls, Congress on Your Corners. The input from the American people has made this bill a better bill.

This bill before us, the John Dingell bill, costs over $100 billion less than the initial House bill. It reduces our deficit by over $30 billion over 10 years. Yes, we need to do more to reduce our deficit, but this bill is an important start. That's something I heard from my constituents, and we're acting upon it by incorporating that into this bill.

Other suggestions from my constituents included making sure that we have interstate competition. There are provisions for that in the bill. Tort reform, President Obama challenged us to do that. We have put tort reform in this bill. The bill is better for small businesses.

The input from millions of Americans across the ideological spectrum has made this bill better. And I would like to thank the American people for helping to write the Democratic health care reform bill.

THE HEALTH CARE BILL IS A CRUEL HOAX

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I come from Macomb County, Michigan. That county is also known as the home of the Reagan Democrats. It is certainly a proud heartland not only of Michigan but the heartland of America, I think. And as a mother and as a grandmother, I am incredibly concerned about the enormous amount of debt that this administration, through a number of bills and now especially this health care bill, is placing on future generations.

One of the most disingenuous claims that have been made over and over again, Mr. Speaker, is if you like your current health care plan, you can keep it.

Well, here's a headline in my local paper just the other day: ''Employers Ready to Dump Health Care.'' ''Under the House bill, paying an 8 percent penalty is cheaper than providing coverage.'' This was a survey that was done by our Macomb County Chamber of Commerce, and what they found is that an overwhelming majority of local companies stated they would drop their existing employee insurance coverage or avoid offering future health care benefits if this bill that the House is considering today passes.

This bill is a very cruel hoax. That is the reality. A business decision that is going to be made will dump these people out on the public plan.

HEALTH CARE REFORM: HOW IT WILL BENEFIT WOMEN

(Ms. CHU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CHU. Women of America, Republicans want you to believe that our health care reform bill is poison, that doing nothing is better for the Nation. But it is the status quo that is poison.

Today, women are forced to settle for less health care at a higher price. We pay as much as 50 percent more than men, a practice of discrimination that is legal in 38 States. But this bill prohibits insurance companies from charging women more for the same coverage.

Today, women are turned away from buying insurance due to so-called preexisting conditions such as domestic

violence, pregnancy, and C-sections. But this bill makes it illegal to deny coverage due to any preexisting condition, including breast cancer.

Today fewer than half of America's women can get health insurance through work because they stay at home, work at small businesses, or work part time. But through this bill, every woman can buy coverage through the exchange that will cover maternity and preventative care.

This is why women in America need this health care reform bill and why I strongly support this legislation.

THE MAJORITY'S TRILLION DOLLAR HEALTH CARE PLAN

(Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, as the House prepares to address the latest proposal by the majority to have the government take over our health care system, I want to say that there are many things wrong with this trillion dollar health care plan.

It's bad for our economic health. It's a prescription for larger deficits, higher taxes, more job losses.

But worst of all is what it does to women, families, seniors, and small businesses. Women make two-thirds of the health care decisions in our country. As mothers, wives, and daughters, we work to protect the family members around us. In fact, the vast majority of America's health care professionals are women, 90 percent of the nurses; and almost a third are doctors. If PELOSI's health care proposal becomes law, women will no longer be able to make those responsible decisions for their families. Government bureaucrats will.

There's no doubt that we need changes in our health care system. But let's not take away power from moms and turn it over to the government and call that reform.

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of health insurance reform for many reasons but especially for how it helps the 50 million Americans living in rural areas.

There are three main problems people in rural America face when it comes to the current health care system: lack of choice of affordable health insurance, lack of access to health care providers, and certainly a lack of access to quality health care and preventative care.

Our health insurance reform bill, H.R. 3962, addresses all of these issues and more for rural Americans.

Fifteen percent of people living in rural areas live in poverty, and one in five uninsured Americans lives in rural areas. This bill will extend coverage, and the public option will give choice to Americans living in rural areas. This bill will make coverage affordable. It will invest in our health care infrastructure by training thousands of new doctors, nurses, and other health care providers and will put them on the ground where they're needed, especially in our rural areas.

Finally, this bill gives all Americans free access to preventative care and encourages and rewards high-quality care. It is what we need in rural America and across the country.

REJECT THE PELOSI HEALTH CARE PLAN AND START OVER ON RESPONSIBLE HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, for months millions of concerned citizens voiced their strong opposition to a government takeover of health care. Yet last week Speaker PELOSI unveiled her latest plan for a government takeover of health care.

The Pelosi health care plan does nothing to control the rising costs of health care. But struggling businesses that can't afford to provide health insurance coverage to their employees face higher taxes.

According to an economic model developed by President Obama's chief economic adviser, an estimated 5.5 million jobs could be lost as a result of the taxes included in the Pelosi health care plan.

At a time when several States are struggling with double-digit unemployment, pushing policies that will raise taxes and increase job losses is the wrong direction to take our country.

It's time for Congress to reject the Pelosi health care plan and start over on responsible health care reform.

THE HEALTH CARE BILL

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Democrats are going to deliver on what American families and businesses have been asking for when it comes to their health: one, meaningful, secure, and stable insurance; two, improved Medicare for our seniors; and, three, vital consumer protections.

For families with health insurance, health reform will provide coverage you can count on. All Americans will have affordable options even if you change your job or if your employer does not even offer health insurance. Under the revised health bill, families will not have to worry about insurance companies canceling their coverage because someone in their family gets sick or is diagnosed with cancer or another illness. Health insurance companies will no longer be able to bar you from insurance just because you've had cancer that is in remission or you're recovering from a heart ailment. We will ensure that our neighbors are not forced to go bankrupt after a serious illness strikes. What is insurance for after all? It must be meaningful.

American families have been doing everything right in paying their premiums and copays even as those costs have risen astronomically. Our health care bill says that, in return, families must have coverage that is meaningful, stable, and secure.

WHAT WSJ HAS TO SAY ABOUT THE PELOSI HEALTH BILL: ''THE WORST BILL EVER''

(Mrs. LUMMIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, I lament hearing that people who attend TEA parties are somehow uninformed or misinformed Americans. They're hard-working Americans who are informed and have taken the time to become informed, and they know what's in this bill.

But if you think that they have been misled into thinking that this bill is an extreme bill by those of us who are in the Republican Party, listen to what the Wall Street Journal says. Go to wsj.com.

They call this ''the worst bill ever.'' ''Epic new spending and taxes, pricier insurance, rationed care, dishonest accounting: the Pelosi health bill has it all.''

And it concludes by saying: ''Critics will say we are exaggerating, but we believe it is no stretch to say that Mrs. PELOSI's handiwork ranks with the Smoot-Hawley tariff as among the worst bills Congress has ever seriously contemplated.''

This is not TEA Party extremists; this is the Wall Street Journal.

A NEW HEALTH CARE BILL

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

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, finding a uniquely American solution to ensuring that all Americans have access to meaningful, affordable health coverage has been an unfulfilled goal for decades. Action now is both a moral and economic imperative for our Nation.

Health care legislation before the House builds on the hard work done by three health care committees over many months and responds to feedback from the American people. It builds on America's public-private system. And it is paid for.

The legislation meets the goals of health reform: enhanced protection for those with health coverage; new, affordable choices for individuals and small businesses; strengthened Medicare for our seniors; improved delivery

of care with better health outcomes for all Americans; and the containment of rapidly rising costs of health care.

The status quo is unaffordable and unsustainable. Passing health care reform benefits all of us: families, seniors, businesses, and the Nation. I look forward to voting for this historic legislation and meeting the goals of health care reform for all Americans. Now is the time to act.

□ 1315

HEALTH CARE

(Ms. GRANGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, on September 12, taxpayers sent an unequivocal message to lawmakers that smaller government, limited regulation, responsible spending, and keeping government out of people's lives are principles that too many in Washington need to be reminded of.

Hundreds of Texans took to the streets of Washington, D.C., to protest Big Government and the devastating policies the Obama administration and this Congress are pursuing. Their voices were heard and we had better not forget what they say.

Now we need everyone's voice more than ever as we are asked to pass a $1.2 trillion government takeover of our health care system. Through town hall meetings and the thousands of e-mails and letters we receive each week, my constituents have been clear: They don't like this bill.

It's now Congress's responsibility to listen to our districts and respond, representing the constituents who sent us here. They're speaking loud and clear—and they expect a response.

HEALTH CARE

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

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, for the past 6 months I have talked with my constituents in southern Nevada about the need for health care reform that lowers cost, improves access, increases choice, and strengthens Medicare. I have solicited input from my constituents by sending them health care surveys, encouraging them to share their health care stories, and holding Congress on the Corner.

From roundtable discussions with doctors, providers, and small business owners, to town halls, I have listened to the concerns Nevadans have about our current health care system as well as the proposed reforms. One thing is clear: The status quo just is unacceptable.

The legislation introduced in the House last week requires a comprehensive examination, and I will continue to carefully review all aspects of the bill. But I'm pleased that the legislation includes important provisions that will help Nevada's seniors, young adults, women, and small businesses.

From ending discrimination based on preexisting conditions to strengthening Medicare by reducing waste and closing the doughnut hole, there are a number of very positive aspects of this bill which I strongly support. It's time to give them a serious look.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, the American people have said that the number one thing they're concerned about with regard to health care is the cost of health care. The Speaker's 1,990-page government takeover of health care raises the cost of insurance for American families and it will add to our already exploding debt.

The cost of the Speaker's bill is now at $1.3 trillion and counting. It's a debt that will be paid for by our kids and our grandkids. And, to make matters worse, it will increase taxes, impose job-killing mandates, and cut seniors' Medicare benefits.

There's a better way. Republicans have outlined a plan to lower cost and expand access at a price our Nation can afford. This includes letting families buy health insurance across State lines; allowing small businesses to pool and offer health insurance to their employees at much lower cost, just like big businesses and unions can today; giving States the tools to create innovative reforms that lower costs; and ending junk lawsuits that contribute to higher health care costs.

Given all that's at stake, the American people deserve to see the Republicans' smart, fiscally responsible plans debated here on the House floor side-by-side with the Speaker's 1,990-page bill.

I hope we will see that debate and vote as soon as possible.

HEALTH REFORM AND THE AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA ACT

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

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I can't stand here today and tell you that this legislation will solve every health care problem we face as a Nation, but I can tell you this. There's 460,000 Nevadans that have no health insurance at all. In my district alone, this bill will provide coverage for 163,000 of my fellow Nevadans.

It's not just the uninsured that will benefit. In Las Vegas, more than 200,000 households will receive credits to make insurance more affordable and over 16,000 small businesses will be provided with a tax credit to make it easier for them to provide coverage to their employees.

The bill improves coverage for seniors by closing the doughnut hole, eliminating copays for preventive services, and extending the solvency of the Medicare program for another 5 years. It eliminates preexisting conditions as a reason to deny coverage. It lifts the lifetime limits. I have 10-year-old children who are juvenile diabetics in my office that have already exceeded their lifetime caps. This bill eliminates that.

The current health care system is unsustainable.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. PENCE. The American people want health care reform that lowers the cost of health insurance rather than increasing the cost of government, but it looks like that's exactly what they're getting in the Pelosi health care bill.

Here are the numbers: 1,990 pages; $1.2 trillion in the Pelosi plan in new Federal spending over the next 10 years; $729.5 billion in new tax increases. It's just extraordinary.

Within the confines of the bill, 43 entitlement programs are created or expanded; 111 additional offices, bureaus, commissions, programs, and bureaucracies; and this legislation uses the mandatory legal language—the word ''shall''—3,425 times. And this isn't a government takeover of health care? Give me a break.

The Pelosi health care plan is a freight train of big government, higher taxes, and mandates—and it must be opposed. The American people deserve a better plan.

You can go to healthcare.gop.gov and start getting the details of a plan that will lower the cost of health insurance instead of growing the size of government.

WHERE IS THE REPUBLICAN HEALTH REFORM BILL?

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it will be interesting to go to that Web site and find what is the so-called Republican beginning of a proposal, because 139 days ago the Republican leadership promised to introduce their own health reform bill and yet we are still waiting.

Since the mysterious Republican plan hasn't been introduced, the American people can't really see what's in it. It's all being written behind closed doors. What little we do know of what they are planning should bring a smile to the faces of insurance company CEOs.

Their leader, Mr. BOEHNER, admitted the other day that their collection of bills does not end discrimination based

on preexisting conditions. Nowhere in their collection of bills do they help more Americans afford health care. Nowhere in their collection of bills do they end discrimination from insurance companies' practice of dropping coverage if you get sick.

Four months ago, Democrats made public our health care reform proposal by posting it online for anyone to see. Since then, there have been multiple committee hearings during which the Republicans had ample opportunity to debate the bill and offer amendments.

Republicans won't even let the public see their bill. What are they hiding? Will they include Representative BROUN's proposal to privatize Medicare? How about dismantling the entire Medicare system?

Americans deserve to know.

HEALTH CARE

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. This bill is a disaster for American families—it allows bureaucrats to make important medical decisions instead of doctors and patients.

As a wife, mother, and caregiver to my late husband, I—like 85 percent of women in America—am the primary care decision-maker in my home. I was for him as well as for my children. We need a health care system that provides quality, affordable health care so that we can have peace of mind in knowing our families are well taken care of.

Unfortunately, the bill that we will have before us later this week is one that empowers government bureaucrats and undermines a woman's ability to make the best health care choices for her and her family.

The bill creates 111 new Federal bureaucracies and 43 new entitlement programs. Instead of reforming health care, this bill expands government. Health insurance premiums will rise, taxes will increase, and seniors will lose many Medicare benefits.

When the Democrats wrote this health care bill, they not only left Republicans out of the process, but they left out consumers.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, Clara Peller demands health care reform now. Twenty-five years ago, nobody knew who Clara Peller was, but she soon became famous because she was the one in those Wendy's ads who introduced the famous phrase, ''Where's the beef?'' And for our friends on the Republican side of the aisle, that's the question we would all like to know: ''Where's the bill?''

If you're hearing so much conversation about the Democratic health care bill, there's a very good reason for that. There is no Republican bill, despite promises month after month after month to reveal what that bill would contain. There's no CBO score of the Republican bill.

So how do we know that there's a bill that's going to affect Americans? Well, we know that bill will be mostly about preserving the status quo. And I would like my friends to tell my constituent, Hannah Rodriguez, who has a cleft palate and has been waiting years for her parents to save up the money for her corrective medical procedure because it's considered cosmetic surgery under her current policy, why she should wait longer for health care reform.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SULLIVAN. Last week, my colleagues on the other side unveiled the latest version of their plan for government-controlled health care that, according to CBO, will cost $1.2 trillion. Simply put, that's $2.2 million of taxpayer money for every single word in this bill.

This 2,000-page bill creates 111 new government programs and is full of tax increases and government mandates.

This bill is bad for patients, bad for doctors, bad for seniors, bad for small businesses, and terrible for our economy.

This bill will raise taxes on the American people, cut Medicare for seniors by half a trillion dollars, add to the already out-of-control Federal deficit, and will leave personal medical decisions to bureaucrats in Washington instead of families.

Mr. Speaker, there's another way. We believe health care reform begins by bringing all stakeholders—patients, doctors, citizens and hospitals—to the table where everyone has equal input. Our plan will lower cost, increase access, and improve the quality of care your family will receive.

HEALTH CARE

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, in America, if you get overcharged on a telephone or cable bill, you have recourse to get your money back. If a mechanic does an unnecessary repair, there are agencies that can help you. On the government level, we work to defend consumers and guard against markets being too concentrated. That was one of the goals when I chaired the Consumer Protection Committee in the California State assembly.

And yet when it comes to health care, strong consumer protections just don't exist and Americans are suffering because no one is looking out for them. That's why the Consumers Union, which Americans trust for information on major purchases, calls our health care system a ''consumer crisis'' and endorses our efforts to reform the system.

Once the bill's provisions take effect, no insurance company can deny or drop your coverage. Every insurance company would have to provide a minimum set of benefits, including prescription drugs, hospital care, and mental health. This reform will give Americans the reliability and security they deserve.

□ 1330

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, Politico reported last week that the Democrat health care reform legislation has more pages than War and Peace, and nearly five times as many words as the Torah, costing over $2 million per word.

The Republican Conference reports that over 100 new Federal bureaucracies are created in the bill. The Wall Street Journal Opinion Page stated that ''the bill may be the worst piece of post-New Deal legislation ever introduced.''

America deserves better, and the American people demand more from their leaders on something that is so important to every American family. There is a better way to maintain care for those with health insurance, while decreasing the number of uninsured Americans.

We should start with some commonsense reform, such as prohibiting insurers from excluding preexisting conditions, allowing insurers to offer plans across State lines, enacting tort reform, and allowing small businesses to pool together to purchase health plans for their employees.

Mr. Speaker, it is not too late for us to work together to craft responsible legislation and decrease costs.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, we are in the final days here in the House debating health care reform that will lower costs for families and businesses and give people more choice. We are closer than ever to delivering what people have been clamoring for: access to lifesaving health care.

And last night we learned a little more about this mythical Republican alternative. We learned that the Republicans are going to potentially propose some collection of bullet points that deliver the status quo for people who have a preexisting condition, for people who are under the threat of losing their coverage if they get sick. And

for the millions of Americans who will not be able to afford health care insurance, this Republican plan says sorry, you are out of luck.

This Republican plan that exists somewhere out in the ether today might be good for a fantasy movie, but it is not offering anything for those of us that live in the real world. Because here in the real world, people get sick and live paycheck by paycheck and can't afford the current status quo.

Let's give people real reform, not fantasy reform that leaves people right where they started.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, during the August work period, I had the privilege of visiting many of the plants and factories in my district. At one plant, a worker approached me and said he didn't understand what we were doing here in Congress. He said he had to have a job that put a roof over his family and food on the table. He is worried about health care, but the first two took priority.

People back home get it. They ask very direct questions about health care. How are we going to pay for it? Will it cost more than I pay now? Will I have the same coverage and doctor? Will it cost more jobs? How much more in taxes will I pay?

The Congressional Budget Office scores Speaker PELOSI's bill at over $1 trillion. New taxes on small businesses and individuals will run over $729 billion.

Being close to the Canadian border, I have been approached by Canadian doctors who are now practicing in Ohio. They can't understand why the Democrats are taking this course. They tell me this same thing: Why do you think we came to the United States?

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, reforming health care insurance is the focus of this Congress this fall. And what does health insurance reform mean for middle-income Americans? It means an insurance company can no longer decide to deny you coverage or jack up your rates because of a preexisting condition. It means it will be against the law for insurance companies to drop your coverage when you get sick. It means that insurance companies will no longer be able to place an arbitrary cap on the amount of coverage you have in a given year or in a lifetime. It means there will be a yearly limit on how much you can be charged for out-of-pocket expenses because no one should go broke if they get sick.

What this means for middle-income Americans is they will no longer be ground between the roulette wheel of health or sickness and the machinations of the insurance industry. What health insurance means is that millions of Americans who are insured today will have more security and stability.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, the Pelosi health care bill hits States when they are hurting the most by mandating a $34 billion expansion of Medicaid. I served in State government and have helped write budgets, and I know firsthand this expansion creates a serious problem for Kentucky's already stretched resources and will leave fewer dollars available for our schools and universities.

Last week, Dr. James Ramsey, president of the University of Louisville and a renowned professor of public finance, predicted the next budget period in Kentucky will be ''a bloodbath'' and said a high price will be paid for inadequate funding of all State programs.

Phil Bredesen, the Democratic Governor of Tennessee and a health care expert, said he is most concerned with the financial impact on the States, and he said ''this is the mother of all unfunded mandates.''

There are many reforms that will make health care more affordable and accessible without giving huge debts to our children. Forcing State governments to look to our schools and universities for the money to meet this mandate is not acceptable. Our children deserve better.

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 rise today to urge my colleagues to support the revised Affordable American Health Care Act. We need comprehensive health care reform for people like Mary in my district.

When her husband retired from his job, they both lost their health insurance. They had COBRA for 18 months, but it ran out. Mary had to look for alternative coverage. Unfortunately, she has a preexisting condition. Mary, Mr. Speaker, has rheumatoid arthritis. She suffers and has had countless rejections from one insurance company to another and it has been very difficult for her.

Under the revised Affordable Health Care for America Act, Mary and other Americans would not suffer from preexisting conditions. Finally, as early as next year, they would receive fair health care that they deserve.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3962.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3962 is almost 2,000 pages long. In a bill that long, you expect lots of things to be opposed to, and I am. Here is a short, partial list of some of the things I am against.

I am against 5.5 million people losing their jobs. I am against 114 million people losing their private health insurance as a result of this legislation. I am against a new entitlement that creates $1 trillion in new spending that we can't afford. I am against stripping $500 billion out of Medicare funding that would otherwise go to Medicare. I am against $729.5 billion in new taxes over the next 10 years on Americans.

Mr. Speaker, there is one thing I am for, and that is for starting over. Scrap this monstrosity. Let's start over with real health care reform, not this health care takeover.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, even though insurance companies make money not providing health care, the so-called reform bill gives so much power and money to the insurance companies that we are giving far too much for the few benefits which the bill may confer.

The insurance companies get at least another 26 million new customers. They will receive at least another $50 billion in new revenue. They will be able to raise premiums 25 percent even though in each of the last four consecutive years the industry raised premiums by double digits.

As long as there are for-profit insurance companies, there will be no effective way to protect consumers against ever-escalating premiums, copays, and deductibles unless the insurance companies know that people at the State level will always have a choice to reject the insurance companies and establish a single payer, not-for-profit system.

That is why the Kucinich amendment should be put back in the health bill, not just to protect the rights of States to pursue single payer, but to protect the rights of consumers to be free of the economic death grip of the insurance companies.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE CUTS

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, President Obama promised Americans that under his health care reform bill they would be able to keep the coverage they currently have. Unfortunately, the Pelosi

health care bill we will consider later this week effectively eliminates the popular Medicare Advantage health plans that millions of seniors rely on for medical, vision, and dental care.

In my district, nearly 30,000 seniors are enrolled in one of these plans. The average enrollee saves $800, they have a lower hospitalization rate, and they report greater satisfaction with their plan. The Congressional Budget Office maintains that these cuts could ''lead many plans to limit the benefits they offer, raise their premiums, or withdraw from the program.''

There are a total of $500 billion in cuts to various Medicare programs. I don't think seniors would call reducing their benefits health care reform. I don't think seniors would call cutting home health care, cutting hospice care, cutting nursing home care health care reform. We don't need to destroy Medicare Advantage to reform health care.

This week, Republicans will offer a simpler, better proposal which offers real health care reform without taking benefits away from our Nation's seniors.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, Prime Minister Angela Merkel was in this Hall just a few hours ago. She represents a country where they have had health care security for 126 years. Americans have been waiting for 100 years; and when the Republicans took over the last time, they knocked out Mrs. Clinton's plan and they bragged about it. And for 12 years, they made not one single proposal that they would bring to the floor for a vote. They want the status quo. They like what is going on. And if folks back home like what is going on, stick with them, because they are never going to change anything.

What they say about this is, Not so fast. One hundred years is too fast? Well, they say, But we have something we're just about to bring out here on Thursday. Not so fast, right. Wait until the last minute after all of the debate, and then say, Not so fast. The American people want it done now.

WHO WROTE THIS BILL?

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, we should pay special attention to the sections drafted under the supervision of the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

Chairman CHARLIE RANGEL supervised the drafting of 70 pages of this bill, pages 296 through 366. This is the same Congressman under investigation by the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct on five separate counts: using official resources to raise money; problems with apartment leases; undisclosed ownership in Dominican Republic Yacht Club; compliance with the storage rules of the House; and problems with his financial disclosure and income tax.

This bill raises your taxes, but ethics is investigating whether RANGEL paid his. Leaders may respond with two spins: Chairman RANGEL had nothing to do with writing this bill, or, he has no ethics problems.

A 2,000-page bill and a coming manager's amendment that will be a chamber of horrors of special deals, supervised by a Congressman under five separate ethics investigations, that is what we will vote on this week.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Affordable Health Care for America Act. This bill lives up to its name. Most importantly from my perspective, this bill does justice to the 4.4 million American citizens living in Puerto Rico and the other U.S. territories. Too often in the past, the territories have been treated as an afterthought in important legislation. Thanks to the efforts of leadership, that is not the case with this bill.

While the legislation is not perfect, it constitutes a giant step forward. The bill addresses the unprincipled funding disparities that the territories have always faced under Medicaid. It also provides funding to enable Americans of modest means residing in the territories to purchase subsidized coverage through the health insurance exchange. It makes my constituents eligible for the worthy consumer protections established in the bill.

I hope the Senate will follow the House's lead, and I will continue to work with our allies in that Chamber to ensure that their bill treats American citizens in the territories in a fair and just manner.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, if you get dressed in the dark, you are probably going to make some poor clothing choices that will open you to ridicule. Well, the same rule applies when you write bills in the dark.

President Obama said last year that the health care reform negotiations would air on C–SPAN. That way, he said, Americans could see who was fighting for them and who is siding with the special interests.

Based on the President's very own formula, we must assume that the Democrat-only, closed-door dealmaking on health care must have put the special interests at the forefront. It appears certain that one of those special interests at the table behind the closed doors was the trial attorneys. Maybe that is why the negotiations were secret. They can claim attorney-client confidentiality.

But those trial attorneys must have charged by the hour, because the Democrats gave them quite the payoff in this legislation. This bill will override States' malpractice reform laws and it will prevent States from capping attorneys' fees or damage rewards.

Isn't it ironic that it was President Obama who warned us that this would happen.

□ 1345

REPUBLICAN PARTY IS ON THE WRONG SIDE

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans controlled this Chamber from 1993 until 2006, they controlled the Presidency until 2008; and now, 11 months into a national health care debate, they are just figuring out that we have a health care crisis in this country. How long will it take them to shake the grip of the insurance industry before they even come up with a realistic plan?

Let's look at what our friends on the other side of the aisle are going to vote against. They're going to vote against us increasing the age to 27 where kids can stay on their parents' insurance. They're going to vote against citizens of the United States not being denied health care coverage because of a preexisting condition. They're going to vote against us saying that no one in America will ever go bankrupt again because of a health care catastrophe in their family. That's what they are going to vote against.

It's very simple: once again the Republican Party is going to be on the wrong side of the vote, on the wrong side of health care reform, and on the wrong side of history.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3962 states in section 1 that the legislation builds on what's broken in today's health care system and repairs at the same time. I agree that improvements need to be made in the existing health care system, but placing individuals under one umbrella doesn't build on what's working or repair what's not.

The bill includes a government-run public option that cuts Medicare and Medicare Advantage programs and raises taxes on middle class families. In addition, the bill does not protect the interests of small business, nor

does it adequately address defensive medicine. And in the midst of States struggling with financial constraints, it will burden them with more unfunded mandates from the Federal Government.

This latest proposal may be a different name, but even with a new name, the legislation remains a government takeover of health care.

FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYERS TAX CREDIT

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

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Mr. Speaker, last week, we received news of our first GDP growth we've had in a year. Our GDP increased by 3.5 percent last quarter, which was better than expected. This is welcome news and shows that our economy is finally moving in the right direction.

We still have a long road ahead to reach economic recovery. We must continue to help our families and communities find immediate relief. That's why I support an extension of the First-Time Homebuyers Tax Credit. This $8,000 tax credit has helped produce more than 130 sales in Erie County in my district alone, and many more throughout western Pennsylvania.

I hope to see this tax credit extended so we can continue to give a boost to the housing market and help more Americans reach the dream of homeownership.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern about the consequences and costs of the majority party's proposed government takeover of health care.

Despite the lack of bipartisanship and the absence of the transparency promised by Speaker PELOSI, the House is poised to vote this week on a bill that will give control of one-sixth of our economy to the Federal Government. Sadly, the $1.3 trillion price tag is not the only cost of this risky proposal. The bill also saddles Americans with 111 new boards, offices, commissions and programs, all of which will be required to implement Speaker PELOSI's takeover.

Further, this bill imposes hundreds of billions of dollars in new taxes on small businesses, individuals who cannot afford health coverage, and employers who cannot afford to provide coverage that meets Federal bureaucrats' standards.

Mr. Speaker, these costs are far too much to ask the American people to bear. It is time to press the reset button and come together to create a health care proposal that meets the needs of every American and saves our economy from additional burdens we cannot afford.

WE ARE GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION

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

Mr. TERRY. It is about the spending. People back home are asking me, How much is enough for you? Another $1.2 trillion bill in this national takeover of our health care. I think this is the third $1 trillion bill of this year at a time when we have almost a $2 trillion deficit this year.

Now, we can't raise enough tax dollars, we can't cut Medicare enough from our seniors to cover this cost. Everyone but the best Kool-Aid drinkers around know this bill is going to add to our national debt. Soon—and maybe by next year at the rate that this Congress is spending—our national debt will equal the size of our GDP, which is what the economists say is the tipping point that is going to drag our economy down. What does this mean? It means that my children and your children are going to pay this off with fewer opportunities than we have today.

We are going in the wrong direction for the dream for our children in America.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, we've heard lots of stories today, and it has touched our hearts. We know there are people out there suffering because we've got some major problems with our health care system. We know that there are uninsured people because the costs are just too high, they're priced out of the market, or they've got a preexisting condition. We know that, for example, there is not interstate competition that goes on that boosts up the cost, along with the fact that we have excessive litigation in our society.

We could have fixed these issues so that everybody could be covered. The Republicans were willing to do it, but we were frozen out of this whole system because the Democrats didn't want to reform the system; they wanted to transform our current health care system into a government-run, bureaucratic Federal program.

And they are doing that at the expense of seniors, where $400 billion is being taken out of their Medicare funds at the expense of small business and, yes, at the expense of all those people who are currently insured who will be thrown into this government-run system which will be inferior to the ones they have now in the private sector.

This is a travesty. We should have worked together on this, but the Democrats wouldn't do it.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my serious concerns about the health care bill that's being rushed to the floor. This 2,000-plus-page bill has hundreds of new pages that no one yet has had a chance to read, much less understand.

There are over 110 new Federal programs and bureaucracies, each with its own new costly mandates. This bill taxes you if you have health insurance, it taxes you if you cannot afford to have health insurance, and it taxes you if you are a small business and you cannot afford to give health insurance to all of your employees. It has over $730 billion in new job-killing taxes.

What Americans need today more than anything else is new jobs, but this bill will result in the loss of another 5.5 million jobs. Congress can't even figure out how to make its own workweek, much less change the whole health care system. Let's use a little common sense around here for a change.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. OLVER. We often hear that America has the best health care system in the world; but the cold, hard facts don't agree. Between 1997 and 2002, when researchers compared preventable deaths from diabetes, cancer and heart disease, among others, in 19 industrialized countries, the United States placed last, dead last. 75,000 lives could have been saved had the United States achieved just the average preventable death rate of its counterparts. Since 2002, another 75,000 deaths could have been prevented.

The Affordable Health Care for America Act will reduce preventable deaths. H.R. 3962 completely bans preexisting condition exclusions by 2013 and ends copays and deductibles for preventive care under Medicare and Medicaid. And H.R. 3962 will train many more primary care providers and pay them better for their service.

Our current health care system is failing us. We need health reform now.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, everyone in America understands the need for health care reform, and so do I. Unfortunately, the new $1.2 trillion, 2,000-

page bill, H.R. 3962, still cuts Medicare by one-half trillion dollars to our seniors and creates a new entitlement program.

The bill provides disincentives to States and punishes them if they impose caps on noneconomic damages or limits contingency fees to trial lawyers in medical liability cases. This takes us backwards, not forwards.

There is a job-crushing employer mandate and tax increases on small businesses in the form of surtaxes on income. This is a job killer, make no mistake.

There is a medical device tax that punishes innovation and imperils manufacturing jobs at companies like B. Braun and Olympus in my congressional district. In fact, many of them refer to this tax as the death tax. When is enough enough?

LET US GO FORWARD; LET US NOT GO BACKWARD

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

Mr. MCCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, we do not live on a government-run globe; we live in a people-powered world. The massive, radical change that is presented by the health care bill brought forward by this majority constitutes the policies of the past.

Within the communications revolution in the globalized marketplace, one thing is certain: human beings, at a greater extent than at any other time in history, are now able to control more of their lives and their own decisions. True health care reform must not resist these times; they must meld with these times. We need patient-centered wellness through transparency, technology, and a humane and compassionate understanding and help for our fellow citizens. This bill will not do it.

Fundamentally, this bill will bury the American people beneath Big Government at the very time they have a greater chance of empowering themselves and making their own decisions. Let us go forward; let us not go backward.

REPUBLICANS HAVE A BILL

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, we heard a good friend across the aisle just a little bit ago say, Hey, where is the Republican bill? You don't have one scored by CBO? Well, I'm sure he didn't know, but some of us have bills, we have many bills. I've been trying for 2½ months to get a score from CBO, but I've been shut out. I haven't been able to get a score. And it is a bill that will give coverage to everyone; it will make sure seniors have complete coverage like they've never had before; it would be a savings for people.

But the Democrats have a bill. They cut a deal with pharmaceuticals, forcing people with HSA to buy prescriptions instead of over the counter, cut a deal with some insurance companies so they will have liability limitations, cut a deal where States will be bribed to eliminate caps on attorneys' fees and caps on damages, cut a deal with unions. It appears that there's not adequate requirements for identification, then it's a deal for illegals, and also for abortion.

This is not the bill we should be supporting. Let's get a new bill. We've got it.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, they say the definition of insanity is trying the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result, which perfectly describes the House Democrats' health care reform bill.

For months now, I have been trying to explain in every forum possible how this bill is taking the worst parts of the universal health programs in Tennessee and Massachusetts and combining them into one monstrosity of a program. Unfortunately, passing theory that sounds good but has failed is more important to our Democratic colleagues than actually getting reforms that work.

This is why it matters: the reforms being proposed will decrease access, decrease quality and increase cost of care for the vast majority of Americans. I can say this unequivocally as a physician and as a Tennessee resident who has experienced TennCare firsthand. Small businesses that are dealing with the worst recession in years will have to lay off workers and cut back on wages to deal with these new mandates. Individuals who are scrimping and saving to get by will see their taxes and costs increase.

Some good will come of this bill, but the bad results that we know from experience will happen should be reason enough to scrap this bill and try to agree on a bipartisan bill that will work.

□ 1400

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, one of the most troubling realities of the Nancy Pelosi health care bill is a new tax on medical devices. The so-called wheelchair tax imposes a new 2.5 percent tax increase at the very time American families don't need and don't want a tax increase.

Yes, the Pelosi bill includes a new 2.5 percent excise tax on the sale of medical devices in the United States. It will cover everything from bandages to prosthetics, from glucose monitors to crutches, from hearing aids to pacemakers, and even thermometers to syringes.

Weren't we told that there wouldn't be even one dime—not one dime—of a tax increase for those earning less than $250,000 a year?

This bill adds a tax increase that will hit each and every American. It will affect jobs in this country, and it will affect your ability to buy the very things that you need for your children, for your parents, for your own families.

Think about all of the medical devices that you use within your family.

H.R. 3962—THE AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA ACT

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose Speaker PELOSI's government takeover of health care.

This bill, which weighs in at nearly 2,000 pages and at more than 20 pounds, will raise taxes on individuals and small businesses, cut health care for seniors, raise health care premiums, ration care, and give Federal bureaucrats more power over decisions that should be made by our constituents and by their doctors. The bill raises taxes by $730 billion, and it costs nearly $1.3 trillion. We literally cannot afford this government takeover of health care. There is a better way.

We should, instead, be lowering health care costs by enacting medical liability reform, strengthening association health plans, allowing the purchase of health insurance across State lines, and eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse in Federal health care programs.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose Speaker PELOSI's health care bill.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, as we continue to discuss the health care bill, this monstrous health care bill, one thing is clear: American families simply cannot afford this attempt at a government takeover of health care.

The proposed plan is the wrong prescription for our country. This monstrous piece of legislation is a prescription for tax increases and for job loss, but most importantly and unfortunately, with the government's dictating health care terms and choices, we're going to see a lower standard of care for our families.

By forcing this mammoth overhaul on hardworking Americans, this majority is hoping to create a health care system that increases taxes on small businesses, that reduces benefits for

seniors, and that piles insurmountable debt upon our children.

Republicans have offered a more responsible, incremental approach to improve our health care system in a way that controls costs and that provides the quality of care that Americans deserve.

Despite months of town hall meetings at which millions of Americans voiced their opposition to a government takeover of health care, the majority still doesn't get it. The American people deserve more. They want more.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, as we enter now an historic moment in our country's progress towards creating a fair, a more just, and a better economy for ourselves and for our children, I want to offer for the record a quote—a fee quote—from a business in my district with 60 employees which underlines why we need to move forward. This is one of the good guys. He employs 60 people with good wages and benefits, and for 2010, he has been told that his health insurance premiums are going up 32 percent.

We have heard for months now about how we're moving too fast and about how we've got to take our time, but the fact of the matter is that it is time to act so we can have an economy that can address creating new jobs without taking on enormous new benefit costs, which is the reality today, particularly for small businesses and for the self-employed.

If you care about growing this economy, if you care about giving the risk-takers of America the opportunity to go out and to pursue their dreams, we have got to create a stable marketplace, which H.R. 3692 will do with a national health insurance purchasing exchange.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, the Pelosi health care plan raises premiums, raises taxes, cuts Medicare, and costs over $1 trillion. If you need more reasons to be concerned about it, there are 1,990 pages that will give you all kinds of excuses.

The good news is they're about 20 votes short. The bad news is it's time to make a deal in Washington. So, if you're a swing Democrat and if you need a road or a bridge or a new building or a Federal earmark in your district, walk down the hall, see the Speaker, put your vote on the bargaining block, and you, too, can be won over in terms of government-sponsored health care.

This is no way to run a republic. There are alternatives—targeted, market-oriented reforms that will not raise taxes and that will not cut Medicare.

SELF-DEFENSE IS NOT A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 867, which opposes the enforcement and further consideration of the Goldstone Report.

I have been to Gaza. I have seen the desolation and poverty in which the people of Gaza survive. I have also been to Israel. I have seen Sderot, which is where civilians have been hammered relentlessly by rockets from Gaza. I have seen the fortified recreation center there, complete with bomb shelters—the only place children feel safe to play.

This decades-old battle is complex, and it deserves to be examined, but what we cannot do is turn the victims into the perpetrators. We cannot forget history. For 8 years, Hamas has continuously fired thousands of rockets at innocent Israeli civilians. Israel finally struck back, defending itself against an opportunistic enemy.

I am grateful to Chairman BERMAN for his leadership on this issue.

Note: Self-defense is not a crime against humanity, and we must not let a deeply flawed report destroy progress made in the peace process.

H.R. 2607—THE SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH FAIRNESS BILL

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this week, the House is going to vote on the Democrats' latest plan for Pelosi's government-run health insurance. The bill is 2,000 pages long, weighs 20 pounds, and costs more than $1 trillion. With over 400,000 words in it, that comes out to $2.5 million a word. The bill creates 111 new bureaucracies which will decide what kind of government-approved health care is best for your family and you.

Speaker PELOSI wants America to believe this is the only way to reform health care, but I know there is a better solution. That's why I introduced the Small Business Health Fairness bill. My bill, H.R. 2607, allows small businesses to band together to purchase health insurance so they can enjoy the same bargaining power that large corporations and labor unions have at the purchasing table.

We know that buying in bulk reduces the price tag, and health care is no different. Government-forced health care is not the way to solve the problem.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, in our efforts to reform our Nation's health care system, it seems like a lot of different solutions have arisen, and now we know what the insurance companies' solution is. It's the 32 percent solution.

You heard my colleague Mr. COURTNEY talk about one of his constituents. I'd like to read you a little bit of a letter from one of mine—a letter from Gregg Wagner, a Realtor in Louisville:

''Today, I received my annual premium increase. My new premium with Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield increased 32 percent. I have an individual policy with a $2,500 deductible. It is interesting to note that Anthem did not spend one penny on me in the last year. Nothing. This has followed 15–25 percent increases in the last 8 years. This is one of the reasons that 30 percent of Realtors in the United States do not have health insurance.''

Mr. Wagner, the Realtors are not alone. Millions of Americans face this unsustainable health insurance system where, if they can get coverage, it's pricing itself beyond their reach. We need change. We need competition and choice. That's what the Affordable Health Care for America Act does.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, if you were to write a reform of the health care system for America, you wouldn't have the Pelosi bill. If you were to write the health care bill for liberal San Francisco, you'd have the Pelosi bill.

Why?

It would cost too much. It would tax too much. It would be heavy on government. It would be wild on bureaucracy. It would contain 3,425 separate uses of the word ''mandate.'' 3,425 times the government is going to tell you what to do. 3,425 times we're giving power to the Federal Government to get between you and your government.

In America, it makes no sense. It may make sense in liberal San Francisco, but in my district, it doesn't. For the rest of the United States, it doesn't. Let's save America from this fate. Let's save the American system.

HEALTH REFORM

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, as this House, this Congress, takes up the debate during this historic opportunity

to address and to fix our Nation's health care crisis by passing universal health care, I'd like to take a minute to talk about a family from Rhode Island.

Barbara, from Cranston, is a devoted mother of two remarkable boys, one of whom has hemophilia. A 3-month supply of his life-sustaining medication costs $60,000, never mind the costs of doctor visits or of hospitalizations. She came to my office to advocate for her son, casting little attention to her own condition—multiple sclerosis. Despite her challenges, she knows she is one of the lucky ones because she has insurance coverage, but without health care reform, she is forever held hostage by insurance companies' annual and lifetime caps and by barriers on preexisting conditions.

There are countless families like Barbara's who are struggling to afford to keep the coverage that they have or who are struggling to afford to get coverage in the first place.

It is time to pass health insurance reform. The bill before us is fundamentally going to change the system in America from health care's being a privilege for only those who can afford it to its being a right for everyone. We need to act now.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, as we debate this great debate, with regard to one thing, we're not keeping our eye on the ball. This is about people.

In 1965, I was in northern Europe, working for a group that was laying a pipeline across northern Europe. I got my nose broken and I got sent to the doctor. They had government-run, Pelosi-style health care. I stood in line for 2½ hours to reach the doctor. I went into a nurse's room and told her my name. She passed it through another window to a doctor. I walked in the doctor's office.

He said, What's wrong with you?

I said, I think my nose is broken.

He grabbed it and wiggled it. It started to bleed. He said, It's broken. Go through that door.

I walked through that door. They handed me a prescription, and I walked out. Everybody who stood in line for 2½ hours got the same style of health care.

Americans want relationships with their doctors—with their doctors. That's not the health care Americans want, but that's the Pelosi health care plan, and that's the future of health care in America if we go forward with this government-run, Pelosi-style health care. This is something Americans should stand up against.

□ 1415

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, it's hard to reform health care. You have got to take on some of those powerful special interests in America. Perhaps that's why it's been 139 days since the Republican leadership announced they would have an alternative, but they don't have one yet.

Perhaps it's because at the heart of this is the insurance industry. Most people don't know, but the Republicans do know very well.

The health insurance industry is exempt from antitrust law. They do not have to play by the same rules as any other American business. They can and do collude to jack up rates. They can and do collude to divide markets and exclude competition.

They can do anything they want, and it's legal. They are outside the antitrust law of the United States of America. The Democratic bill will repeal this unfair antitrust exemption, bring real competition to this industry for the first time since the 1940s. The Republicans don't want to touch that with a 100-foot pole or maybe a $10,000 contribution.

IMPACT ON PHYSICIAN-OWNED HOSPITALS

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3962, the Pelosi health care bill, would have a significant impact on the Texas economy and existing physician-owned hospitals and the quality of health care in my home State of Texas.

Texas leads the Nation with 50 physician-owned hospitals. But under this bill, these hospitals will be prohibited from adding beds or otherwise increasing capacity. Medicare payments to any new doctor-owned hospitals would be prohibited.

According to a January 2009 study by Health Economics' Study Group, physician-owned hospitals employ over 22,000 Texans and have a net economic impact of $2.3 billion on the Texas economy. The Pelosi health care bill will have a significant impact on the economy and, more importantly, the quality of care that these hospitals provide our communities.

It's wrong to pay for government health care by punishing these providers.

HEALTH CARE

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, 90 percent of the children of America, at some point in their lifetime, certain populations of the children will be on food stamps.

I am very proud of Speaker PELOSI. This is not Pelosi health care; this is America's health care. This is the input of Americans from all around the Nation. Ninety-six percent of Americans will be covered by this health care, and no woman will be denied insurance because of a preexisting condition such as pregnancy.

What an outrage. I have been working on the physician-owned hospitals issue now for almost 4 years. We are engaged in providing opportunities for physician-owned hospitals to expand, to be able to provide services for general acute care services in this bill.

I know we are going to be victorious. I know that the hospitals need to be covered. I know that we are not going to lose jobs.

This is a bill that serves all of America. I am glad that my colleague had the opportunity to be in European-style health care. That is not what it is, but it is going to allow people in America to live, and not the 18,000 that die every year because they do not have health insurance.

Pass health reform now.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about the majority's move to overhaul our health care system this week.

From what I can see, Mr. Speaker, the version of health care reform that this majority is bringing forward is a horrible, horrible step. The bill is something unseen before; it's a trillion-dollar attempt to overhaul the system we know with one that we don't.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans will stand united against this bill. Mr. Speaker, we will do so because, one, the American people have spoken out, and they see that this is an extreme attempt to try to address what's really wrong with our system, and it doesn't match what the mainstream commonsense American wants.

Number two, Mr. Speaker, contrary to the suggestions on the other side, we do have a better way. We will be offering our Republican plan. That plan will reduce health care costs. It is well documented. The majority is unconcerned about reducing costs for the people who have insurance in this country.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, The Wall Street Journal ran an editorial on the Speaker's health care bill entitled ''The Worst Bill Ever,'' an understatement, to say the least.

To quote The Wall Street Journal: ''Mrs. Pelosi's handiwork ranks with

the Smoot-Hawley tariff and FDR's National Industrial Recovery Act as among the worst bills Congress has ever seriously contemplated.'' Let's make no mistake, the Democrats' government takeover of the health care industry is an attempt to finish what FDR and the Progressives could not, a cradle-to-grave omnipotent government. It will extend the recession just as surely as FDR's programs prolonged the Great Depression.

The middle class and small businesses will bear the brunt of government's takeover of 16 percent of our economy to the tune of almost $730 billion in new taxes and an additional $1.2 trillion in new spending. One thing is for sure, Mr. Speaker, America is getting sick, sick of this Congress' government-knows-best attitude.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. LEE of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LEE of New York. Mr. Speaker, let's look at the numbers on the Democratic health care bill being rammed through Congress this week.

At almost 2,000 pages, this new bill creates 111 new offices, commissions, programs and bureaucracies. It creates more than 3,400 new duties for bureaucrats in Washington. It also will eliminate millions of jobs in the private sector and an unprecedented expansion of the Federal bureaucracy.

Instead of listening to what Americans want and working on meaningful reform, the Democratic leadership came up with a bill that will cost taxpayers more than $1.2 trillion and do nothing to make health care more affordable in this country. This is on top of the $9 trillion deficit we are expected to have over the next decade in this country.

Controlling costs should be our number one priority for this administration. Unfortunately, my colleagues from across the aisle continue to ignore meaningful, medical liability reform, which this year alone could save over $11 billion. We should be listening to what the American public wants and is demanding: real tangible methods of reform.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Speaker introduced her so-called health reform bill that will cost over $1.2 trillion and will be paid for by massive taxes on small business and cuts to Medicare.

With unemployment at 10 percent and small businesses throughout the country struggling to survive, it is irresponsible to pass legislation that will place a higher tax burden on small businesses. President Obama has pledged to let the Bush tax cuts expire. So small businesses can expect at least two tax hits in 2 years.

A radio journalist from back home asked me this morning if measures are being taken in Congress to alleviate unemployment. My reply was, no, unfortunately there is a kind of war on free enterprise going on in Washington right now. Until that war is ended, unemployment will not drop. We should be encouraging job growth and not destroying jobs with bills like this so-called health reform.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, the reviews are starting to come in on House Speaker NANCY PELOSI's health care reform proposal, and those reviews are pretty serious.

In my home State, the Richmond Times Dispatch calls the bill grotesque; but perhaps the best description that I have seen, the most accurate description I have seen, is in The Wall Street Journal, that wrote an editorial on Sunday calling this legislation the worst bill ever.

How could anyone conclude otherwise? This 1,990-page runaway train of more than 400,000 words, creating more than 53 new government agencies and programs, is not the change that the American people asked for. This bill is going to raise the cost of health care to the overwhelming majority of Americans. It's going to make our health care system more complicated than it already is, more costly than it already is.

There are simple reforms that we could adopt if we would pay attention to what the American people want.

DEMOCRATS' HEALTH CARE BILL

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

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of all South Carolinians who will be harmed by the Democrats' $1.3 trillion proposed health care bill, H.R. 3962.

The majority's health care bill will increase the health care costs, use taxpayers' dollars to pay for abortions and create bigger government in the form of 111 new bureaucrats. Worse yet, in the First District of South Carolina, this bill would increase taxes for 8,700 small businesses, cut benefits for over 11,000 seniors and burden South Carolinian veterans with a debt that they will never be able to repay.

Republicans have focused on the concerns of the American people and have created a strong Republican alternative that advocates smaller government and increases health care coverage while decreasing costs. The Democrats in Congress must listen to the people and work with us to create a health care plan that South Carolinians and all American families want and need.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, in my district, I am often asked do I think health care reform will pass this session. My answer is always, I certainly hope so. The status quo should be unacceptable to everyone.

However, Speaker PELOSI's reform proposal is not the right reform. Our overriding principle should be first ''do no harm.'' Unfortunately, in my humble opinion, Speaker PELOSI's proposal will do significant harm.

Just two examples: The Speaker's proposal seeks to cut funding from Medicare by over $400 billion, making access to quality health care more difficult for our Nation's senior citizens. Second, it raises taxes on small businesses, making it more difficult for employers to cover their employees with health insurance.

There is a better way. The Republican alternative is about lowering the cost of health care for all Americans, about ensuring the portability of health insurance, and ending the denial of health insurance due to preexisting conditions. Remember, first do no harm.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, the Pelosi health care bill raises taxes, especially on small businesses. Small businesses will be hit with up to an 8 percent surcharge for those who cannot afford health insurance.

Mr. Speaker, the Pelosi health care bill cuts Medicare and reduces benefits to seniors. The 10 million seniors who now enjoy coverage under the Medicare Advantage program will lose that coverage.

Mr. Speaker, the Pelosi health care plan will add to the government's long-term deficit problems. It plants the seeds for a number of entitlement programs that will never in the long run be paid for but will add to the Nation's debt. Mr. Speaker, the Pelosi health care bill is 1,990 pages, a government takeover of the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the Pelosi health care plan. Let's mend our current health care system. Let's not end it.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, with the new health care bill that spends $1 trillion and creates over 100 new bureaucracies and projects, I believe all the focus is in the wrong place.

The bill still raises taxes on small business, hitting many with a 5.4 percent surtax when they are struggling in a tough economy. The bill imposes a new tax on medical devices, which will increase costs for patients by adding costs on hearing aids, bandages, and wheelchairs. This will also result in lost jobs for medical technology companies that employ over 20,000 people in my State of Minnesota.

The bill will hurt seniors with $500 billion of cuts to Medicare, including eliminating Medicare Advantage programs for over 19,000 seniors in my district. Mr. Speaker, we shouldn't ram through a 2,000-page bill on the backs of small businesses and seniors.

There is a better way. We should be working on commonsense reforms that will actually lower premiums for families, individuals, and small businesses.

GOLDSTONE REPORT

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

Mr. MCMAHON. Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of House Resolution 687, which condemns the United Nations Human Rights Council-passed Resolution 9/L.1 and the fact-finding mission which led to the Goldstone Report. The lopsidedly anti-Israel Goldstone Report blatantly ignored so much of what came before Operation Cast Lead.

Palestinian troops, including Hamas, have been responsible for launching more than 10,000 rockets and mortars at Israeli cities. In November 2008 alone, over 120 rockets and mortars were fired at Israeli cities, injuring hundreds of people. Furthermore, Israel did all it could to avoid causing civilian casualties and Hamas did all it could to cause them. Goldstone's mission failed because this simple truth was never acknowledged, confirmed or written.

Israel is our fellow democracy, our true and tried ally. Supporting it is essential to the stability of the Middle East.

Any democracy that chooses to treat Israel as a suspect state to impose on Israel false accusations and daunting deadlines for a peace agreement should know that its actions ultimately do damage to the shared values that all democracies espouse.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Congress of the United States to stand against the Goldstone Report.

□ 1430

THE TALE OF TWO LAWS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker:

It came on two pages,
It has withstood the ages;
The word ''shall,'' is only 10 times mentioned,
But enough to get one's attention.
No taxes did this law raise,
To this day it continues to create much praise;
Two great religions does it claim,
The ''Law of the Ten Commandments'' is its name.
A current writing, 1,990 pages long,
Has a socialist philosophy that is all wrong;
Difficult for the people to understand,
And troubling what big government doth demand.
Over 3,445 ''shalls'' it does loudly shout,
New massive taxes does it proudly tout;
Written in secret by the bureaucrats,
For exclusive use of the taxacrats.
The Congressional bill called ''Health Care Reform,''
Is illusionary, the authors are still ill-informed;
Government ought not take over America's health biz,
And that's just the way it is.

PROVIDING HEALTH CARE TO ALL AMERICANS

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

Mr. ENGEL. Well, as President Ronald Reagan used to say, there you go again. The same crowd that opposed Medicare and Medicaid in the 1960s, who told us that that would bring socialized medicine to the United States, are now opposing health care for all, saying once again it will bring socialized medicine and all kinds of ills.

We have 46 million or 47 million Americans that don't have health coverage, and that will grow to 50 million, 60 million, and 70 million, so people that have coverage now will lose their coverage if we do nothing.

So this Democratic majority is going to do something. We are going to pass a comprehensive health care bill that will ensure that virtually all Americans will have health care. We are going to pass a bill that will make sure that the insurance companies can't refuse to cover you because they say you have a preexisting condition. We are going to make it so the insurance companies don't continue to collude amongst themselves to keep health care premiums high. We are going to make it so that we have affordable health care for all for the American people.

The American people should reject the lies and scares and fear tactics. We are going to have health care for all, and it is going to be good for the American people.

DOING BETTER ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, a couple of minutes ago there was a Member on the Democratic side who I sensed had a twinkle in his eye when he was trying to make the assertion that there were no Republican alternatives to this bill, because anybody that has been around this place knows that that is a joke. There are 50 Republican bills and 100 amendments that were offered by Republicans, so the notion that the GOP is showing up late is complete nonsense, and I think the twinkle in the eye is witness to that.

But here is the part that is no joke. The part that is no joke is that this bill, Mr. Speaker, creates 111 new bureaucracies that Speaker PELOSI is going to foist on our constituents.

We all know what it is like to get the constituent panic call when they can't navigate through some labyrinthian bureaucracy, and now there is going to be 111 new offices, departments, commissions and so forth that our constituents are going to have to deal with. They are ill-equipped to deal with an aggressive Federal Government that is going to take over one-sixth of the economy.

We can do better. Let's vote against this bill.

A BETTER WAY TO REFORM HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, there are so many different reasons why the American people are opposing the ''Pelosi Government Takeover of Your Health Care'' bill: 111 different offices, bureaus, commissions, and programs to get between you and your doctor, preventing you from getting the health care you need when you need it; 3,425 uses of the word ''shall,'' to ensure that bureaucrats take away your choices and drive up your health care costs; $150 billion cut from the Medicare Advantage program, endangering seniors who rely upon the program.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me give you 1 trillion more reasons to oppose this plan: a minimum $1 trillion cost, on a country that is already going bankrupt. We have had our first $1 trillion deficit. Under President Obama, we will triple—triple—the national debt in just the next 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot improve a nation's health care by bankrupting it, its families, and its children. This must be rejected.

PROVIDING HEALTH CARE THAT AMERICANS DESERVE

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

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, the American people continue to reject the notion that when it comes to health care, government knows best. Except this Congress and this Speaker of the House reject that. They say government can do whatever it darn well pleases. So we are presented with a 1,990-page bill that redefines health care and one-sixth of our economy.

Hundreds of millions of Americans will be forced out of their current plans. Medicare cuts will mean fewer benefits to seniors. Bureaucrats will restrict health care services. Taxpayers will fund abortion. Illegal immigrants will receive taxpayer-funded benefits. Federal and State taxes will go up as a result, and furthermore, the cost to health care will continue to rise.

There is a better way, a different plan than the Pelosi health care bill. That is what I will support. It will control the cost of health care by capping medical malpractice lawsuits and help individuals get the type of health care that they truly deserve.

IN SUPPORT OF THE AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA ACT

(Ms. TSONGAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Affordable Health Care for America Act. This bill represents tireless negotiation, compromise, and input from Americans all across the country. We have been trying to reform our health care system since Harry Truman's Presidency, so this bill by no means represents brand new ideas; rather, it has been a work in progress for decades.

Attempts to reform our health care system in the past have failed because of false claims that this is socialized medicine. And, of course, these are the same arguments that the bill's opponents are making today. But it won't work this time because the American people are tired of unaffordable premiums, of unfairly losing coverage, and the fine print that prevents them from getting the care they need. It gives the power back to the patient by creating a more transparent, more competitive health insurance market.

In a country as wealthy as ours, no one should have to face losing their life or seriously compromising their health because they cannot access, cannot afford, or have been denied health care coverage.

REFORMING HEALTH CARE IN AN UNDERSTANDABLE WAY

(Mrs. EMERSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, before we debate the 1,990-page health care bill that my colleagues and I are all trying to read this week, let me share with you how this bill defines a checkup, known in this legislation as a ''primary care service.'' I will quote from page 1,056.

''The term 'primary care services' means evaluation and management services, without regard to the specialty of the physician furnishing the services, that are procedure codes (for services covered under title XVIII) for services in the category designated Evaluation and Management in the Health Care Common Procedure Coding System (established by the Secretary under section 1848(c)(5) as of December 31, 2009, and as subsequently modified by the Secretary).''

Now, that is a checkup. And all that section of the bill really says is we are going to define it in the future.

If I have time, Mr. Speaker, I try to read every bill, and as this legislation goes, it is pretty darn complicated. But what we need to accomplish is very simple: We need to lower the costs of health care in order to improve access to the system. It doesn't take 1,990 pages. We could do it in 19 pages. And we ought to do it in terms that the American public can understand.

DEMAND FEDERAL FUNDING FOR ABORTION BE BANNED IN ANY HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the administration and congressional Democrats are currently wheeling and dealing behind closed doors attempting a government takeover of our Nation's health care system. Additionally, the Democrat scheme provides a back door to allow for the government funding of abortion.

Since 1976, Federal funds have been barred from being used for abortions, and Democrats are refusing to continue this policy. Some of my colleagues will tell you their plan doesn't fund abortion, yet, on page 171, section 303 states that at least one plan participating through the new government-run exchange must cover abortion services. In addition, the bill contains explicit language saying ''nothing in this act shall be construed as preventing'' the public option from paying for all elective abortions.

The public option will be a Federal program using Federal funds. The American taxpayers will be forced to send part of their hard-earned dollars to Washington every year to end the life of an unborn child.

I call on my colleagues in this House to demand that Federal funding for abortion is banned in any and all forms of health care funding.

STRENGTHENING HEALTH CARE SYSTEM THE RIGHT WAY

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

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, isn't it ironic that as many Americans are celebrating the freedom to choose by casting votes across America on this election day, the House will begin consideration of a bill that threatens the freedom to choose their own health care plans.

The Pelosi bill will allow government takeover, raises taxes on hardworking Americans and small businesses, and get this, takes away half a trillion dollars worth of health care from our seniors. It includes a tax on wheelchairs, hearing aids, and pacemakers.

This is not the right solution to improve our health care system. What we need is real improvement, and that is let's lower the costs; real medical malpractice reform; lower the risk pools by allowing small businesses to band together; allow people to purchase insurance across State lines; allow States to create high-risk pools that lower the cost and provide coverage for uninsured and underinsured.

We must work together to get this done for the good of Americans across this country.

HEALTH CARE AND THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, when we come to real health reform, we need to take cost out, not add it, as this monstrosity of a bill does. There is consensus in the House for real reform that would reengineer the Center for Medicare Services to bring it into this century, provide real private market reform, and end junk lawsuits once and for all against our doctors.

But Speaker PELOSI permits none of this, squelching over 45 real health care reform bills that have been introduced. Instead, the Pelosi bill is based on a job-killing $800 billion tax on small businesses that the Obama administration says will cost 5 million jobs, cuts senior benefits by half a trillion dollars doing so-called reform on the backs of seniors, and creates 111 new government agencies. That is not reform.

Let's stop this bill, go back to square one, and give the American people what they are demanding, which is the protection of their health freedom and real reform today.

TAKING AWAY FREEDOM TO CHOOSE YOUR HEALTH CARE PLAN

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

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, freedom to choose your own health care plan is what is at stake here. The drumbeat for entitlement, for government control of health care, for a health choice commissioner who will decide himself

essential benefits, for setting a precedent that will devolve into a rationing of medicine through politics, this is driven by an appetite for a government-run economy that is blind to the consequences.

One of those consequences is a $1.3 trillion cost in this bill. Another is the job-killing mandates and the cuts to senior Medicare plans, including a gutting of Medicare Advantage that is in this bill. The cost of the tax increases on business. How high can we stack these taxes? We have one of the highest corporate tax rates in the world. We will see the consequence in higher unemployment.

Should health care be nationalized, medical rationing is inevitable, and we will see the adverse effects on economic growth and opportunity, unfortunately, that will be left.

ENACT STUPAK-PITTS AMENDMENT ON HEALTH CARE BILL

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, each year, Planned Parenthood kills more than 300,000 children by abortion, yet yesterday another Planned Parenthood director resigned over abortion. Abby Johnson, director of a clinic in College Station, Texas, said she had a change of heart while watching an ultrasound of an actual abortion in real-time.

Self-described as ''extremely pro-choice'' but now pro-life, she said she knew it was time to quit in September when she watched an unborn child ''crumble'' as the baby was vacuumed, dismembered, and destroyed.

Many, including and especially self-described extremely pro-choice Americans like Abby Johnson, are beginning to recognize the ultra-ugly truth about abortion—it kills babies and wounds their mothers. Thus, we must protect both victims of abortion by enacting the Stupak-Pitts amendment to the health care bill.

I appeal to the Democrat leadership, make the Stupak amendment in order, and, please, no phony compromises, because there is nothing benign or compassionate about abortion.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUMMINGS). Members should heed the gavel.

□ 1445

QUALITY HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICANS

(Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of quality, affordable health care for all Americans. And finally we are actually going to get it done for the American people.

For 139 days my friends on the other side of the aisle have promised health care reform, and now we think they have a bill but we haven't really seen it, and it's not real reform. So let's talk about what we're going to do for the American people and not just what is wrong and saying ''no.''

We're going to end discrimination for preexisting medical conditions. If you have experienced domestic violence or you've had an underlying condition, you will be able to get health care for yourself and your family. You won't be able to be dropped because you're sick. You won't have copays and deductibles for preventative care. This is what health care reform really means for the American people.

And it's going to be affordable. It will provide credits for folks if your income doesn't quite get up there or you work for a small employer and the employer can't quite afford health care.

We want to make sure that all the American people have the ability to achieve quality, affordable health care.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I have reviewed this bill, and it is a jobs killer.

Before I came to Congress, I was a small business person. I know what is to start small businesses and to run them, and I know how difficult it is to sustain those jobs.

This Congress, the Democrat majority, rather than trying to find ways to help the people who are struggling with unemployment right now and to help small businesses create jobs, is finding a way to hinder them by penalizing employers who can't afford to provide health insurance for their employees.

If we want to make sure they have access to health insurance, let's find ways to allow association health plans, to allow people to buy health insurance across State lines to get costs down, to pass tort reform, and do other meaningful things that make access more practicable.

But first and foremost, let's don't kill jobs in an economy that's already struggling with 10 percent unemployment. And that's what this bill does.

It's time for this Congress to get out of the way, to stop job-killing and start trying to help small businesses create new jobs.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, someone with a lot of time on his hands, or more likely somebody with a pretty good search engine, found that the 2,000-page Pelosi health care bill uses the word ''shall'' more than 3,000 times. Now, that's an average of more than 1.5 times per page.

It seems about the only page where the word ''shall'' is not used is the page that states that Members of Congress ''may'' enroll in the government-run insurance option. No ''shall'' here, just ''may.'' In other words, what's good for the country isn't necessarily good for Congress.

I'd encourage anyone who is watching or listening out there to call the Speaker and ask her why. If this government-run insurance option is so good, why aren't Members of Congress required to enroll in it as well?

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we're the people's House. The other body is called the House of Lords, but we are here to represent the people who sent us here.

I quote a great speech from Governor John Connally of Texas when he was first elected Governor back in 1963. I served in the Texas Senate. I was in the crowd as he was speaking to a group of school board trustees, telling them to run their own schools, to make their own decisions, not the Nation, not the State, but they should make the decisions. They're there just like you're here.

He told a story about ancient mariners that were adrift, shipwrecked off the coast of South America. Unknown to them, their raft had drifted into the fresh waters of the mouth of the Amazon River. They prayed for help.

Ship ahoy, rang out their cry. There came a voice from the waters far, Drop your buckets where you are.

Don't vote to dim the lives of future generations, of future taxpayers. This bill is a generation killer; the victims are our grandchildren.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. Speaker, health reform is a moral and national imperative.

As a physician, my experience in treating uninsured patients at public hospitals teaches me that empowering patients is the best way to lower costs and improve patients' health. Patients are the best guardians of health care dollars. Real reform empowers patients to make wise decisions for their wallets and their health.

Unfortunately, this bill introduced last week empowers government, not patients. And this 2,000-page bill, and this is half of it, a trillion dollars, is concentrating power in Washington,

taking it away from States and citizens. For example, it creates 111 boards, bureaucracies, and commissions and has $730 billion in taxes.

This government-centered plan won't work. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office says that it increases the cost to patients and taxpayers.

The patient-centered alternative offered by Republicans will save patients money, save taxpayers money, and expand access to quality care.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, later this week we will be voting on legislation that dramatically revamps our Nation's health care system. The 1,990-page, $1.055 trillion Democratic health care proposal is a measure that raises individual and business taxes and reduces funding for Medicare.

The bill, if signed into law, will be harmful to New Jersey's taxpayers, senior citizens, and businesses. And as such, I will be voting against Speaker PELOSI's health care bill.

Instead, I will be supporting a fiscally responsible alternative that includes medical liability reform, small business insurance pooling, and letting families and businesses buy insurance across State lines, ideas that have strong bipartisan support but are absent from the Democratic plan.

The Republican alternative is the only health care reform measure that improves what is working in our health care system and fixes what is broken in a fiscally responsible manner without raising taxes or increasing our ever-growing debt and deficit.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, as we're up here discussing this, there are folks in the Democratic caucus trying to better understand the support that exists for this bill.

This bill is not Speaker PELOSI's bill, and it's not the Democrats' bill. Mr. Speaker, this is America's bill. We are the only industrialized Nation in the world that doesn't have a plan to take care of health care for its citizens. America is catching up to the 21st century to where other countries have been in the 20th.

In my community our emergency room at our public hospital is about to close because they're so far in debt because they have so many people that don't have insurance and can't afford to pay. They take them, but they can't afford to pay it with the property taxes that are ever-rising.

This bill will help keep emergency rooms and trauma centers open. It will say to people that have preexisting conditions in America, and that's people give or take my age and older, 60 and up, in that area, and even younger people can get insurance, that there won't be a limit on the amount of moneys that you had before. And it will say to the insurance companies they don't make the rules, the people make the rules. And we will have insurance that's affordable and available and save our country economically and save individuals as well.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, my friend from Tennessee has just described this as America's bill, not the Pelosi health care plan.

It is, in fact, Americans who are going to have to shoulder the burden if, God forbid, it becomes public law.

The American people, when they think about health care reform, are not thinking about taxpayer funding of abortion on demand. They're not thinking about a $500 billion cut in Medicare. They're thinking about greater transparency. These are the kinds of concerns that rank-and-file Democrats have joined with Republicans in raising.

The American people want many of the things my friend from Tennessee has just advocated. They want us to deal with preexisting conditions. They want us to ensure that there's an opportunity for children, young people up to the age of 25, to continue to be on their parents' plan. They want people to buy insurance across State lines. They want us to bring about a step-by-step approach. That's exactly what the American people want. That's exactly what our alternative does. That's what this House should do.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, 85 percent of the American public are happy with the insurance they have; 80 percent of them know that it costs too much. But all of them understand that when you try to do what the Democrats are talking about doing and adding a trillion dollars of expense, they understand we can't afford it.

I have 30 grandchildren. I'm concerned about passing this cost on to my children and my grandchildren.

This is a bill that we start paying for now, that the taxes start paying for it now, and it doesn't even start covering people for 4 years.

What's the rush? Why don't we do something that's good? Why don't we have a Republican solution for improving and portability for American health care?

We support tort reform that curbs frivolous lawsuits. We support allowing negotiating across State lines and group purchasing power, which will lower the cost of insurance. We support choice of coverage without the government forcing people into government-run health care.

I strongly oppose the Democrat big-spending health care bill.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, Washington is attempting to take over our health care system, roughly 16 percent of the economy.

In the shadow of an approximately $12 trillion national debt, I am deeply concerned about the financial direction our country is taking. Our annual deficit set an all-time record this year of $1.4 trillion, three times the previous record. Our future obligations are over $50 trillion, and we have no plan to pay any of it back. This is unsustainable.

While people in my State of Colorado and all over the country are struggling, the Federal Government has the audacity to propose raising taxes by another $730 billion for health care. Besides higher taxes, the health care plan is largely paid for, if you can call it that, by raiding Medicare, another entitlement program that is nearly insolvent.

If Congress were a publicly traded company, it would be looking at huge civil and criminal penalties for shoddy bookkeeping.

HEALTH CARE

(Ms. SUTTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, over the course of this last year, I've had many meetings with constituents and heard their views about health care reform. Among those with whom I met were Dash and Cathy Sokol of Lorain, Ohio. Dash is 56; his wife, 53. In February of 2007 Dash was diagnosed with prostate cancer. And as he fought that cancer, Cathy was diagnosed with breast cancer.

The Sokols have health insurance coverage through his job at the steel mill; but as both were receiving treatment, the costs nonetheless began to add up. Their out-of-pocket spending became overwhelming, and they're now using their pension funds to pay for the medical bills instead of having funds for retirement.

Cathy told me how guilty she feels about all of that and that their family has to pay out of this because their insurance coverage isn't adequate. And there are a lot of Americans who need better health care insurance.

When the Sokols came to my office, they brought stacks and stacks of invoices, explanations of benefits. They talked about how they're trying to pay their bills, and they are doing it, slowly but sure. But he worries and he lives

in fear that his job will go away at the mill and he won't be able to get coverage. That's why we need health care reform.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, health care reform should be focused on lowering the cost of health care and health insurance. Yet Democrats are pushing a bill that would increase costs by having the government take over our Nation's health care system.

Under the Democrat bill, seniors will be forced to pay more for fewer Medicare benefits. Families will pay more out of their pockets for health care, and it will be more expensive for small businesses to offer health benefits.

On top of these higher individual premiums and prices, the Democrat bill increases government spending by over $1 trillion in the first decade.

We need to lower costs and give families and individuals more choices, not increase costs and restrict choices through a government takeover.

One of the clear ways to reduce costs is to end lawsuit abuse. Frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care for everyone. Yet on this issue Democrats are on the side of lawsuits.

Mr. Speaker, legislation that increases spending over a trillion dollars while increasing the costs paid by seniors and families is legislation that I cannot support.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, Americans hate being told what to do. It's just part of our collective DNA. We like freedom. We like the ability to choose. We like the ability to make decisions on our own. And what most Americans find troubling about this bill is it's 2,000 pages of the government getting between them and their family and their doctor.

Mr. Speaker, you're probably familiar with the old line: for most Americans when they're traveling down the highway and they see the sign that says 55, for most Americans that's not the limit; that's the challenge. That's just the way we look at things. And here we have this bill that's now going to tell us how we as individuals and as families and small business owners are going to get our health care. That's what Americans find troubling. That's why they're opposed to that. And that's why we need real reform and not this 2,000-page takeover of health care in our country.

□ 1500

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, millions of Americans are concerned with spending; and the spending contained in this bill and the more than 3,000 references to the word ''shall'' concerns Americans, especially as it relates to their tax dollars. This tax on medical devices, in my reading of the bill, looks like the sicker you are, the greater the tax you will pay. That is a huge concern to me.

When I look at the challenges that we face with needing to streamline government, with needing to first streamline Medicare and Medicaid and find this fraud that's out there first before we go about depending on the money that we find, we can make a lot of progress, rather than implementing 111 new agencies, commissions and bureaucracies in general. Mr. Speaker, we owe Americans better than this; and we can do better.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BARTLETT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday a member of the Mennonite Amish community called my office very concerned that if this bill passes, they're going to be fined because of their religious conviction. The members of this community do not buy health care insurance, and they don't cost the taxpayer anything. This community takes care of all of their health care needs. There is a conscience clause on page 300 of the bill. I read that. It's not clear to me whether they'd be protected or not.

But one thing is very clear to me: that those who wrote this bill didn't communicate with this community. This is a big community. We know there are problems. We know there are issues. This is just one more reason to reject this bill, start over and get it right because clearly they didn't get it right here.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, the majority of my constituents believe the United States has the world's best delivery of health care services. I concur. These same constituents are not averse to reform, but they fear the Pelosi health care plan will leave the gate wide open for the introduction of an overwhelming governmental involvement. I believe that fear is well founded.

Our health care system, Mr. Speaker, may well need some adjusting, some fine-tuning. What it does not need is a major overhaul. The Pelosi plan is, indeed, a major overhaul and should be rejected.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. PUTNAM. Well, the verdict is in. The Speaker's health care bill accounts for nearly 2,000 pages and $1.055 trillion. It raises $730 billion in new taxes. Businesses who cannot afford to cover their employees and individuals who cannot afford insurance would face $167 billion in new taxes, and $500 billion in new taxes would be on the backs of mostly small businesses. The bill would slash Medicare and Medicaid services to home health care providers, to nursing homes, to hospitals, to doctors, and it would impose a $5 billion unfunded mandate on our States in the form of a new Medicaid burden at a time when our States can ill-afford it. The State of Florida alone would have a price tag of $5 billion.

This bill is bad for the consumer. It's bad for patients. It's bad for our health care professionals. It is an expensive, unfunded burden on our States, and it is a stripping of freedom that is uncalled for in this era.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, during such tough economic times, I find it incredible that the majority party insists on passing a health care bill that could destroy small businesses, the very backbone of our American economy. But that is exactly what this proposed legislation is going to do. It would institute a surtax of 5.4 percent on high-income earners, and over half of this tax is going to be paid by small businesses. The surtax would push the highest marginal tax rate to 45 percent of income, a rate we haven't seen since 1986. It requires small companies to provide a health plan that meets government standards. If a business can't afford it, the government will charge yet another tax of up to 8 percent.

It is destructive for American small businesses; it's dangerous for American taxpayers; and it's a disaster for the American people. And now we learn—no amendments to the bill. Shame on you, NANCY PELOSI. Americans deserve better.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, if I were talking to America, I would say, This is NANCY PELOSI's answer to health care. It's going to cost $2.25 million per word, and we don't even have the manager's amendment yet, which is probably going to add another 600 or 700 pages to this. This is going to cut Medicare and Medicare Advantage by about, oh, $460 or $470 billion. Seniors are really going to feel it. It's going to end up rationing health care, maybe for everybody, but certainly for seniors. The taxes are going to go through the roof, and nobody's read this turkey. Nobody. They'll tell you they have. We've got a reading room right now; we're going to go through it. But even when we read this, we still don't have the manager's amendment.

We don't need this rush to judgment. We need to get it right. We need to take our time and get a real bill that's going to help the American people, not something that's going to cost an arm and a leg.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, we need the facts about this massive 2,000-page prescription for government-run health care. Financial experts at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and other independent analyses have found that the Democrat plan for government-run health care will not only fail to reduce skyrocketing health care costs, it will actually increase them. Now with a vote looming on one of the most important bills to come through this Chamber in our Nation's history, I'm urging Speaker PELOSI to allow time for a proper analysis on how her bill will affect us in the long term instead of keeping Congress and the American people in the dark on the impact of government-run health care.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, health care reform is important, but it shouldn't come at the expense of the public's number one concern: the gut-punch of joblessness. The massive plans now under consideration threaten to disrupt one-sixth of our economy through tax hikes and punishing regulations. This is all in the service of a health care bill that is a budgetary train wreck. This bill forces drastic changes on a deeply divided public. It promises radical government intrusion in every sector of health care. It will have the effect of breaking the President's promise that you can keep what you have. It will not bend the cost curve down. It will burden the States with huge new mandates. It will send insurance premiums through the roof. It cuts Medicare, seriously threatening popular Medicare Advantage plans; it allows for government funding of abortion; and there is no real liability reform.

We need health care reform, but we can do better than this. We must do better than this.

TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I returned yesterday from a 4-day visit to Afghanistan to meet with the troops and our military leaders as part of a bipartisan congressional delegation. It's clear to me that our soldiers are performing at a high level in a challenging environment. Their dedication and spirit is strong as they work to prevent al Qaeda from regaining a foothold. It's also clear that we need to increase the number of troops there to help them succeed. I believe firmly that this is the best means of protecting the United States and our people from terrorist attacks. There is no question that the Taliban is a destabilizing force with ties to al Qaeda. The Taliban is a threat to the national security of America. We need to provide the resources to our troops to ensure that their counterinsurgency strategy is successful. The new troop level should be determined by whatever is needed to accomplish the mission. Congress should give strong consideration to our military leaders in answering this question.

Let me close by saying that I'm very proud of all the men and women serving in Afghanistan. They are highly skilled, motivated, and I am confident that with the additional troops, they can achieve their mission. They are genuine heroes.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BAIRD. My colleagues, I have enjoyed the comments by my friends from the other side of the aisle. I just would rise today to point out one thing. The largest expansion of an entitlement program in the history of the United States of America since our creation happened under the watch of the Republican majority. It happened on a piece of legislation that we had less than 30 hours to read, there were no amendments allowed, and it increased the debt per decade by more than $750 billion. The amount of Federal borrowing from foreign countries doubled under the watch of many of my colleagues here.

Now I am pleased that they're concerned about fiscal responsibility. Speaker PELOSI has pledged that the bill will be available online, plus the manager's amendment, for 72 hours. We had less than 30 on the Medicare bill. We are at least trying to pay for this legislation. We will not, with this legislation, increase the debt $750 billion, as did the Medicare prescription drug bill, passed by the former majority party.

Americans need health care reform. My friends on the other side of the aisle had 12 years to try to do something constructive, and they failed.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. AUSTRIA. Mr. Speaker, this week marks a defining moment for this Congress and our Nation, with an $11.9 trillion national debt that continues to grow as government encroaches into every aspect of our lives. We're about to vote on a nearly 2,000-page bill. We've heard all the details of this bill. It will increase the health care premiums for millions of Americans who are happy with their current coverage. It will cost nearly $1 trillion, placing even more debt on our children and grandchildren. It will force businesses, large and small, to provide health care for their employees or pay fines to the government. It would unbelievably cut $170 billion from the Medicare Advantage Program to pay for this bill, putting nearly 10 million seniors enrolled in Medicare Advantage at risk of losing their health care coverage. In Ohio, there are nearly 500,000 seniors on Medicare Advantage and nearly 30,000 of them are in my district alone.

Mr. Speaker, we all agree that our health care system can and should be improved. Unfortunately, Members of Congress are not listening to the American people, that more government is not the answer.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, before the Federal Government got heavily into health care in the mid-sixties, medical care was cheap and affordable for almost everyone. Doctors even commonly made house calls. We took what was a very minor problem for very few people and turned it into a major problem for everyone.

The people want medical care that is less expensive and less bureaucratic. The bill that we will apparently vote on later this week is 1,990 pages of bureaucratic gobbledygook. It will make health care even more expensive and even more bureaucratic. As Senator JOE LIEBERMAN said on Face the Nation, this bill ''will actually hurt the economic recovery and our long-term financial situation.''

The pattern seems to be that the Federal Government makes a problem

so bad that the only solution people can see is for the government to take it all over. But a famous man once wrote that there is a simple solution to every human problem, one that is neat, plausible and wrong. This bill is the socialist approach, and all it will do over the long haul is make a bad situation even worse.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. REHBERG. Supporters of Speaker PELOSI's 2,000-page government takeover of health care are fast to cite opinion polls in their favor and dismiss anyone who objects if they have legitimate concerns. However, they are much slower to demonstrate the coverage of their convictions by holding public town hall meetings. Americans have a right to be heard, so I have hosted 17 town hall meetings in Montana since August. This weekend in Billings, more than 500 people came to voice their concerns. They weren't there at the request of the insurance industry. Out in rural America, people are speaking out against this bill. I heard them loud and clear at my listening sessions. It is time for the rest of Congress to listen, too. Our authority comes from the people, and we must not ignore them.

□ 1515

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, there are people all across this country who are very worried that Congress is about to do something that will do great harm to the quality of their lives and will change America forever. They want us to do something to bring down the cost of health insurance. They want us to do something to make it easier for the uninsured and the hard to insure to get coverage. But, they want no part of a 1,990-page bill with 111 new Federal programs and offices, with new taxes, with Medicare cuts, all at a cost of more than $1 trillion.

The Democratic majority may be able to twist enough arms to ram this monstrosity through the House, I don't know. But they are leaving the American people behind. This is no way to deal with an issue as important as health care. This bill must be stopped so real, commonsense reform can begin.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring the voices of my constituents in Virginia's First District to the House floor. Here are the words of some of my constituents.

Elizabeth from Williamsburg said, ''Please consider small business owners when evaluating the health care proposals. My business ends up with an 8 percent profit margin, so an 8 percent of payroll contribution penalty rate would be significant.''

John from Newport News says, ''Over the 20 years I managed health care plans for corporations, managing cost increases was paramount not only for my employer, but also for my employees. I know how hard I worked at managing health care expense and have zero confidence that the government can handle the job. The bottom line is that more government involvement in our health care system is not the answer.''

Sandra from Seaford said, ''I am not in favor of a government-run health care bill. I want to choose my own health insurance. I am opposed to passing a health care bill for the sake of passing a bill. I am opposed to a health care bill that will cost trillions of dollars over the next 10 years, and I am not in favor of being penalized because I do not take part in a government health care bill.''

Mr. Speaker, they have said it better than I could.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see you in the Chair again, and I think you are getting the short straw in your caucus when we give these 1-minute speeches.

It is always nice, Mr. Speaker, when the veil lifts and you finally get to understand something. I have been puzzled since 2007 when the Democrats became the majority party in the House of Representatives, when gas prices went from $2.22 to $4.14 over the summer. I was puzzled why they passed such meaningful legislation as National Train Day and so forth and so on.

But two that caught my eye was the bill honoring cats and dogs and then the Monkey Safety Act. I thought they were chastened in this Congress, as we saw the unemployment rate go from this level to this level, and if I had a bigger chart, it could keep on going up.

But again, there is sort of a theme. While people are losing their jobs in America, they again passed the Monkey Safety Act and the Shark Conservation Act. I am thinking to myself, What's their fascination with animals? And it wasn't until I read Speaker PELOSI's government takeover of health care bill, if you go over to page 1,255, it makes veterinary students eligible for up to $283 million in Federal scholarship and student loan forgiveness.

What's with the animals?

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair asks all Members to heed the gavel.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, we do need health reform in this country, but not this plan. We need a plan that uses common sense to fix what is broken and keep what is good. Eighty-five percent of Americans have health insurance, and 85 percent of those people are satisfied with what they have.

President Obama has said over and over that no one will lose their insurance if they are happy with it. And just a couple of weeks ago he said that seniors on Medicare Advantage will have to go on regular Medicare, and that means 38,000 seniors in my district will lose their current Medicare plan.

I have many small business owners who have come up to me and said they will be forced to abandon their current plans and go on the public option, not because they want to but because, if they don't, it will hurt their businesses.

Finally, on page 94, it will prohibit families and businesses from changing plans unless the plan has been approved by the health czar. That is not freedom. This is not the plan that America wants. Let's vote this bill down.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, in South America there is a tenacious parasitic plant that attaches itself to trees. As it climbs to the top of the tree canopy seeking the light, the plant thrives. But eventually, in the end, it kills the tree.

That is what an unfunded mandate by the Federal Government does to States. Putting more people onto Medicaid arguably is a good thing that takes people off the roles of the uninsured. But the Pelosi health care bill will cost all of the States an added $34 billion in new burdens.

My Pennsylvania colleagues and I warned our Governor back when we thought people at 133 percent of the poverty level would be eligible for Medicaid. That would have cost the State $2.2 billion over 10 years. Now we are looking at those at 150 percent of poverty level. That will add 15 million to the Medicaid program nationwide.

Tennessee Democratic Governor Phil Bredesen called it ''the mother of all unfunded mandates.''

We may soon be saying our prayers for many of our States, when a program intended to help poor women,

children, and the disabled turns out to be the death knell for a number of State budgets.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when the Democrats finally unveil their manager's amendment later this week, we will have 72 hours to look at it and decide whether we want to vote for it. But one thing we know for sure, it will cost at least $1 trillion; more than we are spending today on health care, more than we are spending in the Federal budget. One trillion dollars over 10 years.

As I look around the gallery, Mr. Speaker, I see many folks about my age, but I also see some constituents who are young, just getting started. Do they want to spend an average of $10,000 a person right now if this bill becomes law? I think not.

Republicans have a better idea. We will unveil our Republican leadership alternative later today or tomorrow. It will actually save money. And by the way, it will cover preexisting conditions. And by the way, it won't have all of the mandates. And by the way, it won't have the health choices administrator telling us what is good for us rather than our doctor telling us what is good for us.

Vote against the Democratic plan and vote for the Republican alternative.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, if there is one common denominator in Congress this year, it is the substitution of government for the individual. With the stimulus, the multiple bailouts, cap-and-tax, and now health care, instead of you making the decision, the government makes it for you.

We have seen time after time, when you substitute a government-run program for individual choice, the cost goes up and the quality goes down. When it comes to health care, there is nothing more important than quality and choice. Given the choice, I will always place my faith in the individual, not in the government, and this time is no different.

The American economy is the world's largest. It is three times larger than the Japanese, our closest competitor. It is larger than the economies of Japan, China, Germany, and Great Britain combined. We got there through innovation, choice, competition, and individual initiative and responsibility, not government control and management. Let's keep it that way.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, when I graduated from medical school at the Medical College of Georgia, I swore to do no harm. Mr. Speaker, the Pelosi health care insurance bill will destroy America. It will destroy the quality of care for everyone. It will destroy jobs. In fact, experts tell us 5.5 million people will lose their jobs. It will destroy private insurance. In fact, it is estimated 114 million people will be forced off their private insurance under a government policy.

Mr. Speaker, it is going to destroy our economy and cost over $1 trillion. It will destroy our States' budgets, and it is going to destroy our own home budgets for everyone through higher taxes and through higher private insurance premiums. It will destroy our children's and grandchildren's future.

Mr. Speaker, we the people in America must demand that we destroy the Pelosi health care insurance bill.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, the amazing thing with this whole insurance health care reform debate is we could fix health care. We could do it in this country. It is not that complicated. We could make it so we could buy health care across State lines. We could make it competitive and bring down prices and make sure that everybody has access to health care. But the health care problems in this country that are fixable are like a leaky faucet in somebody's house. This Congress could fix that leaky faucet, but we're not going to do that. The Pelosi health care bill says, let's burn down the house. Let's just burn it down. Forget about fixing it. Let's tear it down and we will replace it with some monstrosity that will not resemble a house like what we had prior to it.

We don't need to burn down the house. We need to fix that leaky faucet. We could fix health care in this country. We could make health care affordable, accessible, and cheap. We don't need to burn down the house, which is what the Pelosi health care bill does.

The Republicans will have a much better alternative to this which is being unveiled today. That is what we need to vote for.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, ''The reforms I am proposing will not apply to those who are here illegally.'' These words were spoken by the President on September 9 right at this podium. He pointed out that he was proposing to insure 30 million, not the 47 million that we hear today.

Was the difference between the two the fact that the President committed not to provide benefits to illegals in this country?

The sad fact about the situation is that the proposal that PELOSI has given us is one that does not guarantee to the American people that those illegally in the country will get benefits in this country even though they are violating our law. Why has PELOSI abandoned the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements program, the SAVE Act, is because she wants to include that 17 million that are here illegally.

The commitment the President has made at this podium should be kept by this House, both sides of the aisle. So stand by the SAVE Act. It is a system that works. It is functional. It has been the standard. Why abandon it now?

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, this may be the most important vote, the most important debate we will ever engage in as Members of Congress. We are at a turning point in this country. Under this liberal Congress, this liberal President, Congress has moved to take over so many aspects of American life, there is not much left.

The one piece they really want control over is our health care. From cradle to grave, the government will decide what procedures you get, how much the doctor will be paid, and when the doctor can do it. That puts the doctor in control of our health care system.

At a time of record debt and deficit, with a deficit over a trillion and a half dollars, with a national debt over $12 trillion, The Wall Street Journal editorial—and if you don't read anything else, I would encourage people to read yesterday's Wall Street Journal editorial which points out in an analysis you can document, they have carefully researched PELOSI's health care bill which she unwrapped last Thursday, may well be the worst piece of post-New Deal legislation ever introduced. In a rational political world, this 1,900-page runaway train would have been derailed months ago.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. INGLIS. Mr. Speaker, lacking a collaborative process, we unfortunately must simply oppose the Pelosi health

care bill. This bill has within it a public option to which Members of Congress aren't subject. It has a comingling of taxpayer funds for abortion services, tax increases, benefit cuts, especially for Medicare Advantage. And, in leaving the $245 billion doctor fix out of the bill and put in a separate bill, it really makes a mockery of what the President said here when he said not one dime will be added to the deficit.

The bill also has no appreciable attempt at medical malpractice reform and actually tries to avoid State limits imposed by State legislatures.

Mr. Speaker, this bill simply must be voted down, we start over and try to find a collaborative process, and come up with something that will work for America.

□ 1530

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. A Supreme Court Justice once wrote; ''The Constitution protects us from our own best intentions. It divides power precisely so that we may resist the temptation to concentrate power in one location as an expedient solution to the crisis of the day.'' Now, he wasn't talking specifically about the health care bill, but there has never been an effort to try and concentrate power as an expedient solution to the crisis of the day as the Pelosi health care bill.

We are not the only ones working on this issue; States are as well. Massachusetts has a system, it's pricey, but they seem to enjoy it, but it wouldn't meet the needs of Utah. Utah has a reformed system that's based on our demographics. It wouldn't fly in Boston. The problem is, if the Pelosi bill were to pass, all of these State efforts would be stopped.

There are things we can do to help the costs come down: Tort reform, allowing interstate competition and block grants to States for high-risk pooling. Those things would be good if indeed we were allowed to do them, but they're not part of the Pelosi bill. All this does is concentrate power in Washington and would, to paraphrase P.J. O'Rourke, have the same effect as giving alcohol and the keys to the car to a teenage boy.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, the first month I was practicing law, I had a client that came into my office and he gave me a single sheet of paper. It said, ''Do everything we talked about. And remember, money is no object.'' I took that sheet and I went into the managing partner's office and I showed it to him. And he smiled and he said, Randy, the reason money is no object is because he doesn't have any money; he spends his father's money. And then he looked in his drawer and he pulled out a sheet of paper and it said this: ''I'm tired of his reckless spending. Be on notice, he is hereby cut off. Enough is enough.''

Mr. Speaker, if you don't read anything else in this bill, please read the section between the lines that says this, Money is no object. And the reason it's no object is because they're not spending their money. They're spending our senior citizens' money, our jobs' money, and the money of our grandchildren. And I believe the American people are sending them a single message: We're going to cut off their reckless spending. Enough is enough.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, as the Nation awaits consideration of Speaker PELOSI's health care bill, all 1,900 pages of it, we now learn from the Congressional Budget Office that its price tag has now climbed to $1.2 trillion. That's $1.2 trillion over 10 years, not the smaller amount that the supporters claim it will cost.

Over 13,000 of my New Jersey constituents have weighed in with me on health care reform, about 90 percent of whom worry that a government takeover would jeopardize their own private health insurance, and planned cuts to Medicare Advantage in the Pelosi bill for seniors, Medicare cuts for payments to doctors and hospitals, and their anger and anxiety rises even more.

Mr. Speaker, more Washington mandates, more taxes, and less control over their lives, people back home have a right to be very worried and angry.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, Speaker PELOSI has more than 250 votes in the House of Representatives and she only needs 218 to pass legislation. The Democrats in the other body control 60 votes out of 100. The Democrats have the White House. They can pass legislation to take over the health care system in spite of what the American people are saying and in spite of what the American people are asking for.

Because, you see, the American people do want health care reform; they want to lower the costs; they want to be able to deduct all their health care expenses from their taxes. They want tort reform. They want us to address defensive medicine costs. They want to shop around across State lines so they can get a cheaper price. And they want health savings accounts. But the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is they want the freedom to control their health care, the freedom to choose their own doctor.

Whatever they pass here, Mr. Speaker, I will work to repeal, and I will work for the health care reform that the American public wants to keep them in control of their health care.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Democrat leadership introduced their ever-evolving health care bill, a patchwork of deals cut to garner enough votes to secure a political victory.

In this bill, the trial lawyers win big. My home State of California has enacted commonsense trial practice reforms that have lowered medical liability costs for our residents. Since the enactment of reforms, malpractice rates in California have grown at one-third the rate of States without malpractice reforms, a savings which is passed on to patients. However, this bill would force States to repeal effective liability reforms in favor of unlimited payoffs for trial lawyers or States will lose out on Federal funds for their health care systems.

Health care reform must not reward frivolous lawsuits that drive up the cost of health care to the detriment of doctors, health care professionals and, most importantly, patients. Let's prove that Congress is more serious about the health of the American people than it is about the financial health of trial lawyers.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. ROONEY. Mr. Speaker, when I came to Congress over 1 year ago, I was hoping to work across party lines in the spirit of bipartisanship because that's what the people in my district in Florida expected. But ever since I got here, the Democratic majority has locked Republicans out of the debate time and time again. And now here we are talking about what The Wall Street Journal calls the ''worst bill ever.''

The Pelosi health care bill cuts Medicare, increases taxes on businesses, individuals and employers, and it's a $1.2 trillion boondoggle that will complete a government takeover of the health care system, even though the majority of Americans don't want it.

I don't know what the majority was doing over the August recess, but I was holding town hall meetings with hundreds of my constituents and friends; and the message was clear, we are a free people that chose to be governed, not the other way around. Enough is enough.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, this 2,000-page health care bill is not a health care reform bill. It's a monstrosity. It contains three-quarters of a trillion dollars in tax increases on small businesses and the middle class, which will lead to more people losing their jobs. It contains half a trillion dollars in cuts to Medicare for our senior citizens. This bill increases the Medicaid costs on our already hard-hit States, which will inevitably have the result of cutting education funding and funding for our first responders on the State level. This bill actually increases the cost of health care, Mr. Speaker.

You know, the American people understand that this bill will make the Wall Street bailout, known as TARP, the government takeover of the car industry, and the failed stimulus pale in comparison.

Mr. Speaker, the American people have already rejected this bill. Congress needs to listen to them and do the same.

HEALTH CARE REFORM AND ABORTION

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

Mr. CAO. Mr. Speaker, health care reform is an issue of paramount importance, and we must be deliberative in solving the main question, which is: How can we make our health care system affordable, accessible, and accountable? Unfortunately, the health care reform forum has not been used to address the problem of affordable health care, but to expand the controversial issue of abortion.

When President Obama addressed a joint session of Congress on September 9, he said, ''Under our plan, no Federal dollars will be used to fund abortion, and Federal conscience laws will remain in place.'' The health care reform plan presented by Speaker PELOSI does not reflect the long-standing policies that ban Federal abortion funding.

America needs responsible health care reform, and it should not be a vehicle for expanding the abortion agenda. The majority of the American people, including those in my home district of Louisiana, are against the Federal funding of abortion. Real health care is about saving and nurturing life, not about taking life.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, everyone agrees that health care is too expensive, and it is not affordable to every American. Everyone also agrees that the American health system is the best in the world for innovation and invention. And polls have shown that most people are happy with their health care. That's why people from all over the world come here to receive health care.

So why are we talking about dismantling our great health system, one-sixth of our economy, and replacing it with a government-run health program that will cost $1.5 trillion in borrowed money that will be paid for by our grandkids?

We need to work together to bring down the actual costs of health care. Republicans have such a plan: cap lawsuits, giving Americans a real choice by letting them purchase insurance across State lines, allowing small businesses and individuals to join together and pool to purchase less expensive coverage.

We need to keep the best system in the world. Don't throw the baby out with the bath water.

WHAT'S AT STAKE

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, Congress is about to make a decision that will impact every American for the rest of their lives. Simply stated, what's at stake is the freedom to make our own decisions about our own health care. PELOSI's bill forces every American to purchase our insurance through a government-run exchange. It forces us to purchase only those policies that meet all of the requirements set by the new health czar or be fined for failing to do so. And it forces us to pay for all the cost overruns through higher premiums or higher taxes.

Where does it all lead? In 1993, the government introduced a public option for student loans, but only a fraction of the public opted in. So last month, the House voted to give the government monopoly control over all student loans. That's about to happen to our health care unless 40 Blue Dog Democrats decide to stop them. Please, call them today.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, the Wall Street Journal said it best, this bill may well be the worst piece of post-New Deal legislation ever introduced. My constituents of the Texas 24th District agree. They have told me loud and clear, time and time again, that they do not want this government takeover of our health care system.

This legislation creates 111 new Federal programs, bureaucracies, commissions and boards; and this is just counting the ones that are in the original bill. I am sure that when the manager's amendment is introduced, there will be many more.

We need a patient-centered approach to health care reform. We do not need to mortgage the future of our children by saddling them with a $1 trillion debt. Let's not punish our seniors, our families, and our grandchildren by passing this bill.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Madam Speaker, there is a difference between the right way and the wrong way on health care reform, and the American people know it. Results from a survey on my Web site just came back the last few days. We asked the question what the people in the 19th Congressional District thought about their current health care system versus the one being proposed by Speaker PELOSI. Eighty-eight percent of the people who took my survey believe that their current health care system is better than the one in this bill. Speaker PELOSI, this is the worst bill ever.

H.R. 3962 will cost $1.2 trillion over the first decade, and that's after using some smoke and mirrors with the numbers, not the $894 billion that the Speaker claims; or, simply put, this is bending the cost curve in the wrong direction.

This bill permits Federal programs to be spent on abortion services. It includes a government-run plan that will force tens of millions of Americans off their current coverage. In navigating the new health care system, the bill creates 111 new programs and bureaucracies. These are not the positive solutions the American people are looking for.

Mr. Speaker, let's start over.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. WOLF. Uncle Sam is saying, Don't let debt defeat a great Nation.

America is going broke. We must carefully weigh the implications of a costly new government spending program at a time when the country already owes $56 trillion of entitlement obligations to China and to Saudi Arabia.

I am deeply concerned about the national debt, which has doubled since 2000 and is nearly $12 trillion for the first time in history. Any plan put forward must control costs, not add billions of dollars to an already ballooning deficit.

America is going broke. Is this the legacy Congress wants to leave to our children and our grandchildren? Don't let debt defeat a great Nation.

□ 1545

BETTER WAY TO LOWER HEALTH CARE COSTS

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

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, the Democratic leadership in Congress continues to push a flawed, massive government takeover of health care that is going to cost more than $1 trillion. What's more, their health care overhaul will drive up health care costs for families and small business, and it will disrupt the doctor-patient relationship. States already straining under runaway budgets will be forced to cut services or to raise taxes when they're forced to raise Medicaid eligibility.

As a doctor, I saw the problems with our current health care system, and I saw the amazing innovation which makes the U.S. the envy of the world. Let's build on what works. We can achieve commonsense solutions in a bipartisan way, but the Pelosi health care bill focuses on where we disagree.

House Republicans put forward a commonsense plan to revitalize the American health care system—to lower costs for families and businesses and to improve quality. Our plan puts patients first, and it puts doctors and patients back in control of decision-making. Our plan makes health care more affordable and more accessible, with patients being able to see the doctors of their choice.

We can do better. Adopt the Republican plan.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, of course there is no Republican plan for health care. I rise today to discuss the unconscionable economic cost of doing nothing, which is their plan.

Without health insurance reform, small businesses will pay $2.4 trillion in health care over the next decade and up to $800 billion in additional costs to them. Without reform, health care costs will rise from 18 percent of GDP today to a staggering 34 percent by 2040. Without reform, government spending on Medicare and Medicaid will nearly triple from 6 percent of our GDP to 15 percent of our GDP by 2040. Without reform, Federal, State, and local governments paid $42.9 billion in 2008 to reimburse the costs of uninsured visits to emergency rooms, placing a tax burden of $627 a year on every family in America, and that, without reform, will triple by 2030. Without reform, Mr. Speaker, the average employer-sponsored health insurance family deductible grew almost 50 percent from 1999 to 2006.

These are unconscionable cost increases, and we cannot sustain them. We need reform now.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Speaker, one of the more Orwellian aspects of the Pelosi health care bill is that, amongst its 1,990 pages, it uses the word ''shall'' 3,425 times. That is 3,425 times that this bill compels somebody somewhere to do or to not do something, and that doesn't even include several hundred mentions of the word ''must'' or ''require.''

Yet, with all of those compulsions in there which are telling Americans what to do, there is an interesting use of the word ''may,'' and that's relative to Members of Congress—to us. We may be a part of the government option, not must, not require, not shall, but we may participate in the public option—in the so-called public option—or in the government-run health care plan.

It is another case where this Democratic Congress is saying, Do what I say, not what I do.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SCHOCK. Mr. Speaker, last night, I hosted a town hall back in my district with over 1,000 of my constituents in attendance. I felt that was a better use of my time than was rushing back to this Chamber to vote on resolutions honoring dogs.

The final question of the night last night came from a 9-year-old constituent in my district named Joshua who asked me a very simple question: Do you support what President Obama wants to do with health care?

I told Joshua that I spent the first 9 months of my term in office trying to figure out exactly what it is the President wants to do on the issue of health care.

It is precisely this confusion of goals, of conflicting messages and this lack of communication from the majority which has all Americans still trying to figure out what exactly the President wants versus the Speaker of the House's bill before Congress.

We need to do this right. It's too important to get it wrong, and Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and the American people deserve to be in the room.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, we've been advised that the House of Representatives may have only 3 hours of debate on this 1,990-page bill plus, perhaps, another 1,000-page manager's amendment. That comes out to $500 billion an hour which will be spent of the public funds.

We should be debating this bill for weeks and months so that the American people know exactly what's in it and so that Members of Congress can be very exact in explaining it to our constituents and so that we can learn how deep and broad this bill is. In fact, there is even a provision which provides for reimbursement to veterinarians. Perhaps it's a mistake in the bill, but that's why we have to read it thoroughly.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. McCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, when I listened to thousands of my constituents on tele-town halls this past summer and held town halls with 5,000 constituents in August, the overwhelming and consistent message they told me was to find real solutions.

My constituents told me we need to improve health care, but H.R. 3200 is bureaucracy; it's deficit spending; it's taxes; it's intrusion into the personal health care decisions between our doctors and ourselves moved in the wrong direction.

I don't think any one of my constituents told me that Congress needs to double down on H.R. 3200, but that's what the new 1,990-page Pelosi health care bill is. It is version 2.0 in the government's taking over of the health care of Americans. It creates government bureaucracies that make health care decisions for us. It costs over $1 trillion, and it uses Medicare cuts on seniors and new taxes on Americans and small businesses to pay for them.

We want solutions that will give us the ability to purchase health insurance across State lines. We want solutions that will help people who can't get insurance because of preexisting conditions. We want solutions that don't use Medicare to pay for non-Medicare spending, and we want solutions that will control health care costs.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, the Democrat bill we may be voting on later this week is not the prescription for what's ailing this country.

The CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, confirmed the Democrats' bill spends well over $1 trillion, far more than even the President asked for. Nearly half of the people who get coverage in the bill will get it through Medicaid. This isn't health care reform. It's welfare expansion. It's the expansion of a program that is already financially unsustainable and that is crushing State budgets.

The Democrats' bill includes more than $700 billion in tax increases, many

of which will be paid by middle class families, including penalties on people who don't buy insurance, penalties on employers who can't afford to cover their workers, and new taxes on Federal spending accounts, health savings accounts, insurance premiums, and medical devices.

The bill also includes about $500 billion in Medicare cuts that will reduce seniors' access to doctors and to hospitals, and it will force millions out of their Medicare Advantage plans.

House Republicans support taking the first steps towards comprehensive reform that is focused on driving down costs for health care for all Americans.

EXPRESSING PRO-LIFE CONCERNS WITH PELOSI HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, as a strong believer in the dignity of all human life, I have worked to defend the rights of the unborn, but the Pelosi health care bill does not protect those rights.

The newly created public option will be authorized to fund elective abortions. The Pelosi health care bill does not include the pro-life language, which was offered and rejected in committee, to prohibit the Federal funding of abortion and of plans that include abortion. As the bill is written, Federal funds will pay for elective abortions.

This goes against a longstanding rule that government insurance programs, such as Medicaid or the Federal Employees Health Benefits, cannot cover elective abortions. Health care reform should be about improving the quality of life, not about taking it.

The National Right to Life Committee has expressed its concerns with this legislation as have thousands of residents from the Third District of Arkansas.

The respect for life needs to be a core value of our Nation, and it needs to be reflected in our national policies and health care reform.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I oppose the government takeover of our Nation's health care system. It would have a disastrous impact on women and their families. As moms, doctors, nurses, caregivers, and taxpayers, women play a critical role in the health care debate. Eighty-five percent of women are the primary health care decisionmakers in the home.

Women overwhelmingly support health care reform, but they don't want reform that will increase their health care costs, that will ration care or that will undermine their ability to make the best health care decisions for their families. Speaker PELOSI's bill empowers government bureaucrats; it increases taxes, and it raises health insurance premiums while using Federal dollars to fund abortions.

Mr. Speaker, I support reform solutions that let women, not your government, take over, continue to decide what is best for their families.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, last evening, I did a telephone town hall meeting, and I talked to thousands of my constituents. We had a poll. We asked the question:

Do you support the health care reform bill that was just introduced by Speaker NANCY PELOSI?

The results were overwhelming: 76 percent of the people responded ''no.'' The reason is that what people are concerned about are the costs in health care today, and the people at home understand the fact that this is only going to raise their costs. The government-run plan, the takeover plan of our health insurance, actually is going to cost more than what private insurance costs today.

This isn't what was advertised. This isn't what people want. They don't want the government coming in, taking over their health insurance, changing their policies for them without their permission, cutting benefits to people on Medicare—people who need those benefits desperately. They're going to take those benefits away. This is not what the people wanted, and we're going to vote this bill down.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to be here today after months and months of discussing the health care reform proposals with the people of America and particularly with those in my district in south Florida.

It's great to be here to talk about how, finally, we're going to deal with preexisting conditions and about how, finally, people who have mental illnesses and chronic illnesses won't have arbitrary caps on their insurance and about how, finally, small businesses, which are the heart of our total economic system, will be able to pool their purchasing power to bring their costs down.

Medicare is one of the most important programs in our country. It's about fixing the doughnut hole to reduce the costs for prescription drugs, which is the lifeblood of many Americans within our senior citizen population. This is what the American people want. I am very proud that we are fixing the Medicare system and that we are making it last even longer than has been alleged by those on the other side.

It's about time we do something right to fix health care. This is the proposal.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, we need to strengthen health care. We need to improve health care outcomes for all Americans, and we need to reduce costs, especially for families and small businesses, while protecting vulnerable persons. The question is how.

The current bill is very risky. It is nearly 2,000 pages and will cost $1.3 trillion. It shifts the cost of what we have been doing to more government-run health care without reducing the cost drivers that have gotten us into the very circumstances we find ourselves in. It reduces the funding for important Medicare programs. It increases burdens on small businesses. It passes on costs to States, and it will reduce health care liberties for millions of Americans, including forced payment for abortion services.

The solutions: We should shift our health care culture to the focus of prevention and wellness. We should allow for commonsense reforms like the portability of insurance, the buying of insurance across State lines, the creating of new insurance risk pool models for small businesses and families, of appropriately addressing preexisting conditions, and of expanding opportunities for health savings accounts.

No one disputes the diagnosis. Our health care system must be strengthened. Let's get it right, Mr. Speaker.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I support changing and improving our health care delivery system, and there is a lot that can be done. Unfortunately, H.R. 3962, the Speaker's health care bill, does too much and too much wrong.

This nearly 2,000-page bill will create 111 new government boards, bureaucracies, and commissions. Additionally, the bill uses the word ''shall,'' which is the government's way of saying people must do something, a whopping 3,425 times.

Instead of turning our entire health care system on its head and increasing government, we need to implement reforms that eliminate unnecessary costs in our system. Further, history shows that a government-run health care plan will be way more expensive than what is estimated today. The experience with health care entitlement programs is that they end up costing so

much more than ever thought. In 1967, experts predicted that the then-new Medicare program would cost $12 billion in 1990. Actual Medicare spending in 1990 was $110 billion.

Instead of growing government, increasing bureaucracy, and creating more requirements, we must invest in wellness and prevention and promote cost savings and personal responsibility. All of that will improve opportunities for Americans.

□ 1600

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this latest attempt at a government takeover of health care that has been proposed by Speaker PELOSI.

Now, this 1,990-page bill that has just been filed a few days ago by the Speaker adds up to over a trillion dollars of new spending. If you break this spending down, how much does this really cost? $530 million per page, $530 million per page.

What's in this bill? Sure enough, they still have components that allow a health care czar to take away your health care plan even if you like it. They still have over $700 billion in new taxes on the backs of small businesses and families. Yes, as senior citizens know well, they still have over $500 billion in cuts to Medicare.

Now, with all of these horrible provisions, this has nothing to do with health care reform. It is clearly an attempt at a government takeover of health care. In fact, this bill at $530 million per page has been called the worst bill ever by The Wall Street Journal. Let's do real reform.

HEALTH CARE

(Mrs. BACHMANN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that we need to know about this health care bill that Speaker PELOSI is putting before the American people. It's what President Barack Obama's economic adviser Christina Romer said: simply this, if this bill passes it will mean 5.5 million job losses.

That's probably why the Wall Street Journal has called this the worse bill ever. Epic new spending and taxes, pricier insurance, rationed care, dishonest accounting, the Pelosi bill has it all, but even worse, in an already downbeat economy, 5.5 million jobs lost. Let's go with the positive alternative, which the Republicans have been happy to share with the President.

Let's pass a positive alternative for the American people and not have job loss.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

OPPOSING ANY ENDORSEMENT OR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS FACT FINDING MISSION ON THE GAZA CONFLICT

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 867) calling on the President and the Secretary of State to oppose unequivocally any endorsement or further consideration of the ''Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'' in multilateral fora, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 867

Whereas, on January 12, 2009, the United Nations Human Rights Council passed Resolution A/HRC/S–9/L.1, which authorized a ''fact-finding mission'' regarding Israel's conduct of Operation Cast Lead against violent militants in the Gaza Strip between December 27, 2008, and January 18, 2009;

Whereas the resolution pre-judged the outcome of its investigation, by one-sidedly mandating the ''fact-finding mission'' to ''investigate all violations of international human rights law and International Humanitarian Law by . . . Israel, against the Palestinian people . . . particularly in the occupied Gaza Strip, due to the current aggression'';

Whereas the mandate of the ''fact-finding mission'' makes no mention of the relentless rocket and mortar attacks, which numbered in the thousands and spanned a period of eight years, by Hamas and other violent militant groups in Gaza against civilian targets in Israel, that necessitated Israel's defensive measures;

Whereas the ''fact-finding mission'' included a member who, before joining the mission, had already declared Israel guilty of committing atrocities in Operation Cast Lead by signing a public letter on January 11, 2009, published in the Sunday Times, that called Israel's actions ''war crimes'';

Whereas the mission's flawed and biased mandate gave serious concern to many United Nations Human Rights Council Member States which refused to support it, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;

Whereas the mission's flawed and biased mandate troubled many distinguished individuals who refused invitations to head the mission;

Whereas Justice Richard Goldstone, who chaired the ''United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'', told the then-President of the UNHRC, Nigerian Ambassador Martin Ihoeghian Uhomoibhi, that he intended to broaden the mandate of the Mission to include ''all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law that might have been committed at any time in the context of the military operations that were conducted in Gaza during the period from 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009, whether before, during or after'', a phrase that, according to Justice Goldstone, was intended to allow him to investigate Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians;

Whereas Ambassador Uhomoibhi issued a statement on April 3, 2009, that endorsed part of Justice Goldstone's proposed broadened mandate but deleted the phrase ''before, during, and after'', and added inflammatory anti-Israeli language;

Whereas a so-called broadened mandate was never officially endorsed by a plenary meeting of the UNHRC, neither in the form proposed by Justice Goldstone nor in the form proposed by Ambassador Uhomoibhi;

Whereas, on September 15, 2009, the ''United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'' released its report;

Whereas the report repeatedly made sweeping and unsubstantiated determinations that the Israeli military had deliberately attacked civilians during Operation Cast Lead;

Whereas the authors of the report admit that ''we did not deal with the issues . . . regarding the problems of conducting military operations in civilian areas and second-guessing decisions made by soldiers and their commanding officers 'in the fog of war.' '';

Whereas in the October 16th edition of the Jewish Daily Forward, Richard Goldstone, the head of the ''United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'', is quoted as saying, with respect to the mission's evidence-collection methods, ''If this was a court of law, there would have been nothing proven.'';

Whereas the report, in effect, denied the State of Israel the right to self-defense, and never noted the fact that Israel had the right to defend its citizens from the repeated violent attacks committed against civilian targets in southern Israel by Hamas and other Foreign Terrorist Organizations operating from Gaza;

Whereas the report largely ignored the culpability of the Government of Iran and the Government of Syria, both of whom sponsor Hamas and other Foreign Terrorist Organizations;

Whereas the report usually considered public statements made by Israeli officials not to be credible, while frequently giving uncritical credence to statements taken from what it called the ''Gaza authorities'', i.e. the Gaza leadership of Hamas;

Whereas, notwithstanding a great body of evidence that Hamas and other violent Islamist groups committed war crimes by using civilians and civilian institutions, such as mosques, schools, and hospitals, as shields, the report repeatedly downplayed or cast doubt upon that claim;

Whereas in one notable instance, the report stated that it did not consider the admission of a Hamas official that Hamas often ''created a human shield of women, children, the elderly and the mujahideen, against [the Israeli military]'' specifically to ''constitute evidence that Hamas forced Palestinian civilians to shield military objectives against attack.'';

Whereas Hamas was able to significantly shape the findings of the investigation mission's report by selecting and prescreening some of the witnesses and intimidating others, as the report acknowledges when it notes that ''those interviewed in Gaza appeared reluctant to speak about the presence

of or conduct of hostilities by the Palestinian armed groups . . . from a fear of reprisals'';

Whereas even though Israel is a vibrant democracy with a vigorous and free press, the report of the ''fact-finding mission'' erroneously asserts that ''actions of the Israeli government . . . have contributed significantly to a political climate in which dissent with the government and its actions . . . is not tolerated'';

Whereas the report recommended that the United Nations Human Rights Council endorse its recommendations, implement them, review their implementation, and refer the report to the United Nations Security Council, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, and the United Nations General Assembly for further action;

Whereas the report recommended that the United Nations Security Council—

(1) require the Government of Israel to launch further investigations of its conduct during Operation Cast Lead and report back to the Security Council within six months;

(2) simultaneously appoint an ''independent committee of experts'' to monitor and report on any domestic legal or other proceedings undertaken by the Government of Israel within that six-month period; and

(3) refer the case to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court after that six-month period;

Whereas the report recommended that the United Nations General Assembly consider further action on the report and establish an escrow fund, to be funded entirely by the State of Israel, to ''pay adequate compensation to Palestinians who have suffered loss and damage'' during Operation Cast Lead;

Whereas the report ignored the issue of compensation to Israelis who have been killed or wounded, or suffered other loss and damage, as a result of years of past and continuing rocket and mortar attacks by Hamas and other violent militant groups in Gaza against civilian targets in southern Israel;

Whereas the report recommended ''that States Parties to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 start criminal investigations [of Operation Cast Lead] in national courts, using universal jurisdiction'' and that ''following investigation, alleged perpetrators should be arrested and prosecuted'';

Whereas the concept of ''universal jurisdiction'' has frequently been used in attempts to detain, charge, and prosecute Israeli and United States officials and former officials in connection with unfounded allegations of war crimes and has often unfairly impeded the travel of those individuals;

Whereas the State of Israel, like many other free democracies, has an independent judicial system with a robust investigatory capacity and has already launched numerous investigations, many of which remain ongoing, of Operation Cast Lead and individual incidents therein;

Whereas Libya and others have indicated that they intend to further pursue consideration of the report and implementation of its recommendations by the United Nations Security Council, the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Human Rights Council, and other multilateral fora;

Whereas the President instructed the United States Mission to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva to vote against resolution A–HRC–S–12–1, which endorsed the report and condemned Israel, at the special session of the Human Rights Council held on October 15–16, 2009;

Whereas, on September 30, 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton described the mandate for the report as ''one-sided'';

Whereas, on September 17, 2009, Ambassador Susan Rice, United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations, expressed the United States' ''very serious concern with the mandate'' and noted that the United States views the mandate ''as unbalanced, one-sided and basically unacceptable'';

Whereas the ''Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'' reflects the longstanding, historic bias at the United Nations against the democratic, Jewish State of Israel;

Whereas the ''Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'' is being exploited by Israel's enemies to excuse the actions of violent militant groups and their state sponsors, and to justify isolation of and punitive measures against the democratic, Jewish State of Israel;

Whereas, on October 16, 2009, the United Nations Human Rights Council voted 25–6 (with 11 states abstaining and 5 not voting) to adopt resolution A–HRC–S–12–1, which endorsed the ''Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'' and condemned Israel, without mentioning Hamas, other such violent militant groups, or their state sponsors; and

Whereas efforts to delegitimize the democratic State of Israel and deny it the right to defend its citizens and its existence can be used to delegitimize other democracies and deny them the same right: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) considers the ''Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'' to be irredeemably biased and unworthy of further consideration or legitimacy;

(2) supports the Administration's efforts to combat anti-Israel bias at the United Nations, its characterization of the ''Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'' as ''unbalanced, one-sided and basically unacceptable'', and its opposition to the resolution on the report;

(3) calls on the President and the Secretary of State to continue to strongly and unequivocally oppose any endorsement of the ''Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'' in multilateral fora, including through leading opposition to any United Nations General Assembly resolution and through vetoing, if necessary, any United Nations Security Council resolution that endorses the contents of this report, seeks to act upon the recommendations contained in this report, or calls on any other international body to take further action regarding this report;

(4) calls on the President and the Secretary of State to strongly and unequivocally oppose any further consideration of the ''Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'' and any other measures stemming from this report in multilateral fora; and

(5) reaffirms its support for the democratic, Jewish State of Israel, for Israel's security and right to self-defense, and, specifically, for Israel's right to defend its citizens from violent militant groups and their state sponsors.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUMMINGS). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I would inquire whether the gentlewoman from Florida is opposed to the resolution. If she is not, I request the time in opposition to the resolution, because I am, in fact, opposed to the resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I do not oppose the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Minnesota will be recognized for 20 minutes in opposition.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to divide my debate time equally with the ranking member, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN).

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H. Res. 867, a resolution that calls on the Secretary of State and the President to unequivocally oppose further consideration of the Goldstone Report in international arenas.

This resolution sends a clear message to the international community. The Goldstone Report does nothing to advance peace and security in the Middle East. Rather, it serves to reinforce the deep mistrust that pervades the region and excuses the actions of terrorist groups and their state sponsors.

The Goldstone Report ignores the facts. The terrorist threat surrounding Israel's defensive actions in Gaza require a decisive response, and any sovereign nation would have and should have done what Israel did.

In fact, Richard Goldstone himself said, If this was a court of law, there would have been nothing proven. The Goldstone Report disregards what it means to fight against terrorists who use human shields and have no regard for human life. The findings and conclusions of the report have ominous consequences for the United States and other countries who seek to prevent terrorist threats from taking root around the world.

We cannot allow the Goldstone Report to set a precedent. The stakes are too high. This report was not guided by a commitment to human rights but, rather, motivated by a bias against Israel.

Now is the time for the United Nations to immediately turn its attention to the very real human rights violators around the world. Human rights victims are pleading for the world's attention. I would urge U.N. member states to devote time and thoughts to the realities of human rights around the world, not Israel.

Israel, with strong democratic and judicial institutions, can make any

necessary determinations about how to move forward from here, and it is doing so.

I would like to thank Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their leadership in authoring this resolution and bringing it to the floor. This is a true example of the importance of bipartisanship, because the U.S.-U.N. resolution is strong.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, if I could ask unanimous consent to extend the debate time in light of the fact that we have three factions asking for time. I would ask for unanimous consent to extend equally the debate time, because we have so many requests for time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain that request from the manager.

Mr. BERMAN. Could the gentlewoman, on her unanimous-consent request, which is not going to be entertained, yield to me?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I yield to the gentleman from California for the purpose of talking about debate time, not taking from my time.

Mr. BERMAN. I am told that as much as I would like to, because I am flooded with requests for time, and I think it's worthy of a longer debate that because of the schedule, the long delay today and the 1-minutes, the fact that tonight is an election night and a number of people have to get back to their districts, I cannot make such a unanimous-consent request.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This past winter, Operation Cast Lead in Israel exercised its right as a sovereign nation and its obligation to defend its citizens, and its very existence, against attacks by Hamas and other violent extremist groups in Gaza.

Israel did so while taking extraordinary measures to minimize the risk of civilian casualties. Indeed, as Colonel Richard Kemp, former commander of the British forces in Afghanistan, has stated: ''During Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli Defense Forces did more to safeguard the rights of civilians in a combat zone than any other army in the history of warfare.''

Then, in January, the Human Rights Council, dominated by dictatorships, voted to authorize a so-called fact-finding mission. Notably, most free democratic nations did not render their support for this sham. The mission's mandate had nothing to do with fact-finding and everything to do with persecuting Israel for defending herself. The mandate prejudged Israel's guilt, targeted only Israel, and Richard Goldstone agreed to head this mission.

Mr. Goldstone claims that he got the Human Rights Council president to modify the mandate. Well, my colleagues, just as the Speaker of the House cannot unilaterally change a resolution once adopted, neither could the president of the council change the mandate without the council's approval. Claims of a revised mandate are false since the council did not take any action to approve any modifications.

Fast forward to September, Mr. Speaker, when the so-called fact-finding mission released its report. Indeed, it's a 575-page hatchet job commonly known as the Goldstone Report.

While this report contains sweeping accusations that Israel had deliberately attacked civilians, in contrast the report disregarded evidence that Hamas and other such groups in Gaza used innocents as human shields and deliberately launched attacks from schools, from hospitals, from mosques. To fully appreciate the Goldstone Report's bias, one need only look at the testimony of an Israeli doctor whose clinic was hit by a rocket launched from Gaza.

The doctor, who was severely wounded in the attack and had already undergone seven operations to address her injuries, says, ''Judge Goldstone, in July you invited me to testify. I told you my story.

''I testified in good faith.

''But now I see your report. I have to tell you: I am shocked.

''Judge Goldstone, in a 500-page report, why did you completely ignore my story?

''I feel humiliated.

''Why are there only two pages about Israeli victims like me, who suffered thousands of rockets over 8 years?

''Why did you choose to focus on the period of my country's response, but not on that of the attacks that caused it?''

Mr. Goldstone claims that the report never sought to deny Israel its right to self-defense, but the report sought to cast Israel's actions in response to rocket and mortar attacks from Gaza, not as carefully targeted defensive measures, but as the deliberate infliction of violence on civilians.

This is not surprising. The fact-finding mission includes a member who, even as the operation was taking place in January of 2009, signed a statement entitled, ''Israel's bombardment of Gaza is not self-defense, it's a war crime.''

Indeed, this statement began by categorically rejecting Israel's right to defend herself against such attacks. Further, the words ''self-defense'' or similar terms never appear in the report. The report recommended further action by multiple U.N. bodies, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and International Criminal Court. The Human Rights Council has already used this report to condemn Israel. No surprise there.

Tomorrow, the General Assembly will likely to do the same. As Israel is being ostracized at the U.N., violent extremists in Gaza continued to fire rockets and mortars at innocent Israelis, 265 of the last 9 months alone. Just yesterday, militants in Gaza fired another rocket, which exploded near an Israeli residential area. No surprise there.

Israel's military intelligence chief testified yesterday that Hamas has test-fired a rocket with a 60-kilometer range, far enough to hit the Tel Aviv area, threatening up to 3 million Israelis.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

(Mr. ELLISON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ELLISON. I would like to thank Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their openness and professionalism in this debate.

□ 1615

Mr. ELLISON. I rise today to urge my colleagues to oppose H. Res. 867, a resolution that condemns the Goldstone Report regarding the conflict in Gaza. This resolution should be opposed because it suppresses inquiry, inquiry that is the hallmark of democratic societies.

The resolution contains factual errors and undermines Israel's ability to conduct its own investigation. The resolution goes against President Obama's foreign policy direction. I ask my colleagues to review the facts about the Goldstone Report's integrity and the content of his report.

First, what is there to fear about Judge Goldstone? Judge Goldstone has a stellar reputation. He is famous for apprehending Nazi criminals in Argentina and for serving as a chief prosecutor for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunals. He is a self-described Zionist. He serves as a trustee at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Judge Goldstone has said that bringing war criminals to justice stems from the lessons of the Holocaust.

Unfortunately, the debate about the Goldstone Report has been diverted by serious problems with the original U.N. resolution called for in the report. I agree that the first U.N. resolution calling for an investigation of the Gaza war was one-sided and focused unfairly on Israel. Let me repeat: I agree that the original U.N. resolution was unfair. But Judge Goldstone pushed back. He succeeded in expanding the scope of the mission to include an examination of actions of both Hamas and Israel.

So what does the Goldstone Report really say? Four sections of the report deal with abuses by Hamas, including the launching of rockets into civilian towns in Israel. The report explicitly states these rocket attacks are war crimes. The report recounts actions by Israel in Operation Cast Lead that harmed the civilian population in Gaza.

I repeat the point I started with. The word ''inquiry'' is an essential hallmark of democracy, and Israel is strong enough to withstand an investigation of its actions in the Gaza war. Hamas should investigate its actions as well and be held to account.

What if Israel would have participated in the review from the beginning? It could have pointed out that the United Nations Humans Rights Council has a history of unfairly singling Israel out for criticism. It could have pointed out the consequences of the Hamas rocket attacks.

Let's consider the following question: Why are we going to pass a resolution without holding a single hearing? Why is the House voting for a resolution which condemns a report that few Members have fully read?

House Members should know that Israeli leaders, like Deputy Prime Minister Dan Meridor, a Likud party member, and National Infrastructure Minister Uzi Landau have called for Israel to conduct its own investigation.

I urge Members to oppose this resolution because it will undermine President Obama's commitment that all countries, including our own and our allies, should be accountable for their actions. This resolution complicates the President's current Middle East initiative.

I conclude with a letter written by Israeli human rights groups who oppose the resolution. ''We are concerned that H. Res. 867 may derail the momentum towards an Israeli investigation. Resolution 867 contains factual inaccuracies, both about the Goldstone Report and the measures taken by Israel to date, that must not guide choices by policymakers. We urge interested parties and Members of the House to show their support for the internal democratic conversation taking place in Israel today and to call on Israel to demonstrate that it can ensure genuine accountability at home.''

When nations like the United States, Israel, South Africa, and others have pursued truthful investigation, however uncomfortable, their people have emerged stronger. The House of Representatives is poised to condemn the Goldstone Report today because the report says that both parties to the conflict engaged in possible violations of international law. What is the logic of the action? How does it advance the cause of peace in the Middle East?

I urge my colleagues to look closely at the Goldstone Report, which is right here on this table, and what actions truly advance the cause of peace.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to a member of the committee, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I rise to support the resolution.

We should reject the Goldstone Report, which is part of an ongoing effort at the U.N. to single out Israel and to deny Israel the same rights accorded to other nations.

For example, of the 34 motions adopted by the so-called U.N. Human Rights Council since its inception in 2006, 27 of them are directed at Israel. I might say that these paragons of democracy on this Human Rights Council are Libya, Syria, and other dictatorships.

The report equates Israel's long-delayed acts of self-defense with Hamas' 12,000 intentional, indiscriminate attacks on Israeli civilians since 2001.

The report ignores the well-documented, unprecedented efforts by Israel to limit civilian casualties in Gaza neighborhoods where they were being used as human shields by the terrorists.

Finally, the report fails to assign appropriate responsibility to Hamas for its decision to base itself and its military operations in heavily civilian-populated areas.

This Congress should stand by the only democracy in the Middle East, Israel, and should reject the biased Goldstone Report.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am so honored to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR), our well-respected and esteemed Republican whip.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from Florida.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of this resolution. More importantly, I stand to support the right of democracies to defend their citizens against terrorism.

For years, without provocation, Hamas and other terrorists in Gaza launched thousands of deadly rockets at Israeli civilians. The attacks laid siege to entire swaths of Israelis. By last December, Israel said enough was enough.

When it entered Gaza, Israel found a ruthless enemy hiding in civilian areas. Hamas committed blatant war crimes by using the Palestinian people as human shields. But the one-sided and biased Goldstone Commission isn't concerned with any of this. Its report equates a democracy's defensive strikes on armed targets with a terror group's deliberate efforts to kill and sacrifice innocent people.

The Goldstone Report does not contribute to the ongoing peace process. The cases of Gaza and Lebanon show that every time Israel makes concessions of peace, it results in increased terrorism. Why would Israel agree to deal if it knows the international community will demonize it should it have to respond to terror?

Mr. ELLISON. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise in opposition to H. Res. 867. The United States has a responsibility to engage in tough and in honest diplomatic efforts for peace as a purveyor of human rights and the rule of law in the Middle East and throughout the world.

The Goldstone Report raises many questions, its most critical recommendation being that both parties, mind you, both parties conduct their own impartial investigation to find answers.

Neither a dismissal nor an endorsement of the Goldstone Report will change the facts on the ground for Israelis and Palestinians who continue to struggle for a life of normalcy and peace.

Indiscriminate rocket attacks launched by Hamas against Israel have terrorized and killed innocent Israelis, leaving entire communities in grips of fear. The United States and the international community have consistently condemned these attacks and reaffirmed Israel's right to self-defense.

The tragic deaths of innocent civilians in Gaza and the devastation brought upon their homes, schools, and infrastructure has worsened a humanitarian crisis that cannot be ignored. Residents of Gaza and the West Bank continue to lack appropriate access to the most fundamental needs, including food, fuel, water, sanitation, education, health care, and the basic materials needed to rebuild their communities.

The urgency and the gravity of these harsh realities on both sides require that Congress act always with an eye toward peace and reconciliation. In the words of President Obama in Cairo in June of 2009, he said, ''All of us have a responsibility to work for the day when the mothers of Israelis and Palestinians can see their children grow up without fear.''

As Members of Congress, we can never hesitate or shy away from defending the United States' indispensable role in the peace process if we hope to achieve these goals. This resolution does not bring us closer to realizing a two-state solution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mr. ELLISON. I yield an additional 5 seconds.

Ms. LEE of California. It doesn't lead us to securing Israeli peace and security nor Palestinian peaceful coexistence and for their citizens a life of respect.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to explain why I will vote ''no'' on House Resolution 867, which calls on President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton to ''oppose unequivocally any endorsement or further consideration'' of what has become known as the ''Goldstone Report.''

The United States' connection to the State of Israel is both strong and deep; we are connected through decades of history, culture, business and geo-political interests. We care about the people of Israel who strive for what we have struggled for in the United States—the ability to live in security, peace and prosperity. The well-being of our friends in Israel was, is and will remain an American priority. As Israel's closest ally, we have an obligation

to see to it that Israel and its neighbors reach a peaceful end to ongoing conflict.

The situation in Gaza is a tragedy, both for Israelis who for too long suffered from indiscriminant rocket attacks and for the hundreds of innocent Palestinians in Gaza who lost their lives, their loved ones, their homes, and their faith in the international community during Israel's military offensive last December.

And so now the world is grappling with the report on the Gaza war, submitted by the highly respected Judge Richard Goldstone—a self described Zionist, a trustee of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and a man widely known for his integrity, fairness, and conscientiousness, who investigated war crimes in Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Kosovo and who uncovered Nazi war criminals in Argentina.

But, rather than deal seriously with the contents and recommendations of the report, rather than ask Judge Goldstone to testify before Congress, so we can debate specifically what sections may be valid or flawed, we are seeking with this resolution to foreclose all discussion and action on the report by our President and our Secretary of State, in every multinational forum.

One of the arguments supporters of this resolution make is that the report is one-sided, representing only the Palestinian point-of-view. That argument would have some validity if not for the fact that (a) the report strongly accuses Hamas of indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israeli citizens, referring to their actions as a "war crime" and (b) the Israeli Government chose not to participate, going so far as to block Judge Goldstone and his team from entering Israel to conduct their investigation. This forced Israeli citizens who were invited to testify in front of Judge Goldstone, including Noam Shalit, the father of imprisoned IDF soldier Gil'ad Shalit, to travel to Switzerland and Jordan to provide their perspectives on the Gaza operation.

This resolution is a deliberate diversion, taking Congress' attention away from what should be our main focus. The bottom line is that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a tragedy that begs for real engagement and real solutions. The resolution before us today offers neither. Instead, it seeks to deflect our attention from what we should be considering: how to reinvigorate the stalled peace process and help Israelis and Palestinians navigate a path towards a two-state solution. I challenge Congress and the committees of jurisdiction to invest their time and resources into more constructive efforts that further the cause of peace.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to a distinguished member of our committee, the gentlelady from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY).

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership on this issue, and I thank my friend ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for introducing this important resolution.

Today, the American people stand with the State of Israel and all other peace-loving nations and people who face the threat of terrorism and are forced to defend their innocent citizens from terrorist attacks.

In 2005, Israel withdrew from the Gaza to allow the Palestinians to begin building a state. They didn't. Instead, Hamas used the Gaza to terrorize the Palestinian people and as a launch pad to rain missiles on Israeli cities, 8,000 rocket attacks in a 3-year period. The U.N. was silent.

In the fall of 2008, even more rockets fell on innocent Israelis and the situation became untenable. And the U.N. was silent. Only when Israel retaliated in order to protect its own citizens did the U.N. speak up, to condemn Israel.

For those who suggest that Israel used disproportionate force, I say Israel used extraordinary restraint: missile after missile, injury after injury, death after death, and year after year.

Today, we stand up for justice and the right of all nations to act in self-defense, to protect innocent civilians and end the horrors of terrorism. Let's put the blame where it belongs, with Hamas and the terrorists, not Israel.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield 1 minute to my good friend from Indiana, Mr. BURTON, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia of our Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Israel has been our friend forever. They have been attacked again and again and again. So what did they do? Ariel Sharon tried to reach out in a peaceful way to give Gaza back to the Palestinians. And what happened? Hamas goes in there and starts launching missile after missile after missile at innocent people, blowing them up, trying to kill them. They want to destroy Israel, as does Iran. So what happens?

The Human Rights Council of the United Nations 27 times has issued decisions against Israel, and the Goldstone Report is just another in a long line. This is something that we should not tolerate. There shouldn't be one vote, not one vote in this place against Israel.

And the people who are making these comments on the other side of the aisle really bother me, because Israel has been such a great friend of ours and they have been trying to reach peace over there forever. And, instead, they keep getting rocket attack after rocket attack, and then they are criticized for human rights problems because they defend themselves.

If we launched missiles into Michigan, I guarantee you, Michigan would be really ticked off at us and would want to stop it and would do everything they could to stop it.

We ought to support Israel.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I yield 1¾ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT).

Mr. DELAHUNT. I thank the gentleman.

Well, I do support Israel, and I intend to vote "present" on this particular resolution because, like most Members, I haven't had time to read 575 pages.

We often speak about process in this body and it is a concept we all embrace, at least rhetorically. But on this occasion, we only have the rhetoric, and the process has been totally inadequate.

This resolution came to the floor on suspension without a hearing, despite the willingness of Judge Goldstone to come before the United States Congress and answer any questions that we might pose to him. And that judge, by the way, is highly regarded in the international rights community for his courage, impartiality and scholarship. He has participated in a number of high profile inquiries, including investigation into Nazism in Argentina.

As the gentleman from Minnesota indicated, he is a self-described Zionist. As both the Chair of the full committee and the Chair of the Subcommittee on the Middle East indicated, they have the utmost respect for Judge Goldstone.

He has expressed his strong concerns about this resolution, and he said this: "I have strong reservations about the text of the resolution in question, text that includes serious factual inaccuracies and instances where information and statements are taken grossly out of context." Last night, we received in the form of a "Dear Colleague" a response by Chairmen BERMAN and ACKERMAN that attempted to refute it.

Clearly, we need more discussion and more debate. An opportunity to have that discussion should have occurred prior to this resolution coming to the floor.

□ 1630

This is not about bias against Israel.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. LEE of California). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentleman 10 additional seconds.

Mr. DELAHUNT. We know that exists. This is not about Hamas. They have committed horrific acts of terrorism against citizens. This is about us. This is about us.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield 1 minute to my good friend, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), a member of the Agriculture, Transportation, and Veterans' Affairs Committees. A busy man.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, the Goldstone Report is a dangerous document that makes no distinction between terrorism and the acts of a nation to defend its people. For years terrorists launched rockets at Israeli civilians. Israel responded with a defensive measure to clear a terrorist threat and protect the lives of its citizens.

The Goldstone Report ignores Israel's right to self-defense. Despite Israel's efforts to avoid civilian casualties and its humanitarian assistance to civilians, the report unfairly accuses Israel of war crimes. Israel sought to limit its actions to military targets. Yet terrorists hid behind civilians, near hospitals, schools, and mosques.

Every nation should be alarmed at the report and its implications. All nations, including Israel, have the right to defend their people.

I urge my colleagues to stand with Israel in recognition of this right, this basic right, of self-defense.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the State of Washington (Mr. BAIRD).

Mr. BAIRD. I thank my colleague from Minnesota for his leadership.

My friends who have described the Goldstone Report, as a colleague just did, I'm not sure if they have read it. I have read it. It is not at all silent on whether or not Israel had a reason to respond. It specifically talks about the unacceptability of Hamas rocketing Israeli citizens.

Here's a picture of Israeli kids in Sderot, hiding, practicing how to deal with those rockets. It is absolutely unacceptable that any people have to undergo this kind of attack; and the Goldstone Report is, in fact, quite clear on that. And contrary to this resolution and contrary to what some of my colleagues said, it is explicit about suggesting that Hamas may have engaged in war crimes.

But there is another side to this story. I have twin 4-year-old boys at home. When I kiss them goodnight, they look for all the world like these three little Palestinian children. I don't know that father, but I can imagine his grief.

We must not say that this Congress will unequivocally oppose any consideration of a report by a jurist of this integrity and this reputation. Those children deserve someone to ask why they died, just as these children in Sderot deserve someone to say they must not be rocketed. And the Goldstone Report does both. It does both.

Unlike most of my colleagues here, I have been to Gaza and I have read in its entirety the Goldstone Report. And I will tell you he says many things that, though unpleasant, are true and must not be obstructed.

There used to be a school in Gaza called the American International School. The motto of that school: ''Peace, Understanding, and Leadership Through Education.''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. BAIRD. This is a picture of what happened to that school. This is a picture of what happened to that school.

Do not pass this resolution. Support this fine jurist. Give justice, true justice, a chance to be heard.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I'm proud to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE), a member of the Agriculture, Education, and Veterans' Affairs Committees. Another very busy man.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 867, which condemns the United Nations Human Rights Council's decision to endorse the views of the Goldstone Report. Among its conclusions was an assertion that the Israeli military campaign was aimed at civilians in Gaza rather than the terrorist group Hamas. The assertion itself is outrageous, but the fact that it was endorsed by an arm of the United Nations should be a cause for concern for anyone who's concerned about terrorism or human rights.

In criticizing Israel's behavior and not even mentioning Hamas in this resolution, the council essentially endorsed Hamas's decision to use Gazans as human shields to protect themselves from retaliation for their rocket attacks into Israel.

The fact is that the Human Rights Council is no better than its predecessor at the U.N., the Human Rights Commission, when it comes to anti-Israeli rhetoric. I think the resolution correctly urges the Obama administration and Secretary Clinton to strongly condemn this report, but I further urge them to reconsider their decision to participate in and fund the HRC. This body has proven time and again that they are incapable of acting without bias and simply gives a forum for anti-Israeli and anti-U.S. voices to be heard.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. JOHN DINGELL.

(Mr. DINGELL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DINGELL. This is a bad bill. It's a bad resolution. It is unfair. It is unwise. It contributes nothing to peace. It establishes a bad precedent, and it sets up a set of circumstances where we indicate that we're going to just arbitrarily reject a U.N. finding and a U.N. resolution and that we're going to have that as a precedent. This is bad.

What we must do here is to make the United States a fair, honest, respected broker. This does not do this. It leaves the United States in real danger of losing the ability to participate actively in the creation of a lasting peace of benefit to both Israel and to the Palestinians.

If you're a friend of Israel, if you're a friend of world peace, if you're a friend of peace in the Mid East, if you're a friend of the Palestinians, if you want to look to the well-being of the United States, you should reject this resolution. It is a bad proposal. There have been no hearings on it. We do not know what underlies all of the circumstances, and I urge the House to reject it.

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H. Res. 867. This resolution, though non-binding, sends a signal to the world that the United States Congress is not serious about pushing the Israelis and the Palestinians toward a peaceful resolution.

It is true that the body that mandated the Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, known as the Goldstone Report, has been no friend to Israel. Indeed the United Nations Human Rights Council has consistently passed one-sided biased resolutions against Israel while, at the same time, allowing documented, blatant human rights violators to preside over that body without criticism. It is right for the United States and other friends of Israel to question and call out the why six of ten special sessions of the U.N. General Assembly have been about Israel, while none have been called on Tibet or Darfur.

However, we must ask ourselves, does this resolution bring us closer to peace in the Middle East? Does it spur negotiations between the Israelis, Palestinians, and other parties, or does it marginalize and itself choose sides? We must ask, are we undermining President Obama's, Secretary Clinton's, Special Envoy Mitchell's efforts to serve as an honest broker, bring the two sides together, and achieve peace, by passing this resolution?

Madam Speaker, Israel, unequivocally, has a right to defend itself against those who seek to destroy it. We know that Israel was relentlessly attacked by rockets and mortars leading up to the Gaza war. They made the calculation that they could not allow Hamas to continue this violence and abuse.

However, neither Israel nor Hamas, nor any other country or other non-state political act is exempt from international human rights laws or free of consequence for violations of them. If nothing else, the Goldstone Report should serve as a document from which Israel and Hamas, and the rest of the international community can use to ensure that future human rights violations do not take place in civilian areas and that their militaries and fighters are actively working toward minimizing civilian casualties in the future.

Madam Speaker, time and again we acknowledge the urgency of this conflict. The Obama Administration is working feverishly with both sides toward a peaceful resolution, a two-state solution. Let us not undermine this effort today. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting ''no'' on this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Today we journey from Operation Cast Lead to Operation Cast Doubt. Almost as serious as committing war crimes is covering up war crimes, pretending that war crimes were never committed and did not exist.

Because behind every such deception is the nullification of humanity, the destruction of human dignity, the annihilation of the human spirit, the triumph of Orwellian thinking, the eternal prison of the dark heart of the totalitarian.

The resolution before us today, which would reject all attempts of the Goldstone Report to fix responsibility to all parties to war crimes, including both Hamas and Israel, may as well be called the ''Down is Up, Night is Day, Wrong is Right'' resolution.

Because if this Congress votes to condemn a report it has not read concerning events it has totally ignored

about violations of law of which it is unaware, it will have brought shame to this great institution.

How can we ever expect there to be peace in the Middle East if we tacitly approve of violations of international law and international human rights, if we look the other way, or if we close our eyes to the heartbreak of people on both sides by white-washing a legitimate investigation?

How can we protect the people of Israel from existential threats if we hold no concern for the protection of the Palestinians, for their physical security, their right to land, their right to their own homes, their right to water, their right to sustenance, their right to freedom of movement, their right to human security of jobs, education, and health care?

We will have peace only when the plight of both Palestinians and Israelis is brought before this House and given equal consideration in recognition of the principle that all people on this planet have a right to survive and thrive. And it is our responsibility, our duty to see that no individual, no group, no people are barred from this humble human claim.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to yield 1 minute to the majority leader, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. I thank the chairman for yielding. I thank the ranking member, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for introducing and working with the chairman on this resolution.

I rise to voice my objection to the unfair, unbalanced, and inaccurate report of the United Nations fact-finding mission on the Gaza conflict, otherwise known as the Goldstone Report.

The report not only paints a distorted picture of Israel's legitimate efforts at self-defense, in my opinion, but it epitomizes the practice of singling Israel out from all other nations for condemnation.

The Goldstone Report does little to build confidence that the U.N. or its Human Rights Council can deal with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in an evenhanded manner. I agree with those who spoke before me that it ought to, but the Goldstone Report does not give us much confidence that that's what's happening.

For one, the Human Rights Council's mandate for the report specifically targeted Israeli actions, ignoring, ignoring the deliberate Hamas attacks on civilians that provoked Israel's self-defense in Operation Cast Lead.

The report's lead author himself, Justice Richard Goldstone of South Africa, objected to that one-sided Band-Aid. Let me repeat that. Goldstone himself, when the commission issued its report, objected to that one-sided mandate that they issued. But notwithstanding his objection, it was not formally altered.

Similarly, former U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, whom many of you know, Mary Robinson, not known as a great defender of Israel, Mary Robinson, who has criticized Israel's record in the past, also objected to this one-sided mandate. In her words, and I quote Mary Robinson: ''Unfortunately, the Human Rights Council passed a resolution seeking a fact-finding mission to only look at what Israel has done, and I don't think that's the human rights approach,'' said Mary Robinson.

□ 1645

Secretary of State Clinton agrees. She said this:

''We believe that the mandate for the Goldstone Report was one-sided and that many of the recommendations are appropriately dealt with by the institutions within Israel.''

And, indeed, if they were not, I would be here to say that we ought to support the United Nations' actions. The Goldstone Report largely neglects the context within which Israel's action took place. Why is that context so vital, and why is the report so empty without it? Because for years—for years—Israel has been the target of asymmetrical warfare for terrorists who hide behind civilians and aim to kill civilians. For 8 years before Operation Cast Lead, Hamas, aided by Iran and others, launched deadly rockets and mortar fire into Israel, even after Israel dismantled its Gaza settlements, even after it withdrew its military. More than 6,000 rockets have fallen indiscriminately on southern Israel's cities and towns. I can't imagine there is one of us in this Chamber that if Canada or Mexico rained down six missiles on our civilian population—not 6,000 on our population—that there would be a Member here who would not want decisive response to stop that assault. Each was intended to kill the maximum number of civilians. These rockets did not target military targets. They targeted civilians. How do I know? I've been there, and I have seen the effectiveness firsthand of the fear that has been put in the minds of the people of Sderot and others.

In the Israeli town of Sderot, I saw children who had lost literally the ability to speak, who no longer had control over their bodily functions, who were condemned to play in an armored playground from fear of the rockets that could kill with only seconds' warning. There is no military establishment in Sderot. Families, children. That is the context of which the Goldstone Report makes such short shrift.

Tragically, civilians in Gaza suffered and continue to suffer. They suffer in major part from the determination of their imposed leaders to pursue indiscriminate terror. I have had a discussion with my friend Mr. KUCINICH, for whom I have a great deal of respect. We ought to have great empathy for the Palestinian people who have been put at great risk by their leaders pursuing terrorism. We ought to have empathy for those children who live in the camps in Gaza. Terrible condition. I've been there. Is there anybody here who doubts that if those children living there for decade after decade after decade were European children or American children or Jewish children that they would still be there in those camps? I say to you, not the case. Why are they there? Because the Arab community does not want to absorb them, and their leaders will not seek a meaningful peace. That is why they're there.

Hamas, like its state sponsors, is notorious for using men, women and children as human shields and political props. As Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice put it earlier this year, ''Hamas has held the people of Gaza hostage.'' They still do. Should we have empathy for those young people and not so young people held hostage? Absolutely, we should. Should we act to help their plight? Absolutely, we should. But that does not mean we ought to rationalize terrorists who attack children in Sderot or any other place. Hamas continues to hold them hostage, likely subjecting the Goldstone Report's Palestinian witnesses to intimidation and threats, a possibility that the report does not take into account, of course.

Unlike Hamas and its sponsors, Israel is a democracy with an independent judiciary, and all of us know that that judiciary frequently has said to the military and to the Israel Government, you cannot do this. You did it wrong. You're going to be held accountable. There is nothing like that in Gaza, little like that in the West Bank, although the West Bank is getting better. Its security is increasing. Abbas and Fayad are making progress. It is fully investigating its military for any—I am going back to Israel now—for any human rights violations that may have been committed in Gaza. That is appropriate. They ought to do that. Tragically, we know that when men and, indeed, women go to war, that there are those who do not always act properly on both sides. We need to hold that conduct accountable.

I believe in the integrity of Israel's investigations because I believe in its legitimacy as a democratic state, but I do not accept the legitimacy of singling out Israel for biased censure. It is essential to hold every nation to international norms of behavior in peace as well as in war. Israel must be held to the same standards as any other nation. It holds itself to such standards, I would add, even when its enemies do not. Indeed, few nations constrain themselves more than Israel, but no other nation has so many in the U.N. eager to condemn it, irrespective of facts and justification.

Soon, the U.N. General Assembly will vote on endorsing the Goldstone Report. Goldstone himself said that their report was not a fair report, but by doing so and by condemning Israel, the U.N. would also be threatening the just self-defense of any state endangered by asymmetrical warfare.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself my remaining time.

We must recognize what is at stake here. The Goldstone Report asked for this matter to be considered by the International Criminal Court, equating Israel with the genocidal regime in Sudan. Today enemies of freedom seek to haul democratic, political and military leaders of Israel before an unaccountable court for defending their nation against Hamas, but how long before U.S. officials will have to face the same persecution for defending our Nation against al Qaeda or any other such threat?

Madam Speaker, the way forward is obvious. We must support the right of all democracies to defend ourselves and our citizens. We must reaffirm our support for Israel and her efforts to defend herself from violent Islamic militants and their state sponsors. We must oppose any attempts to grant consideration or endorsement to this irredeemably biased Goldstone Report.

House Resolution 867 achieves these goals, and 170 of our colleagues who cosponsored it agreed. My colleagues, we have a choice to make: stand with free democratic nations or send a message to those who seek Israel and America's destruction that they can continue unhampered as the U.N. and its apologists sweep under the proverbial rug incessant attacks like the ones Hamas and other violent extremists launched from Gaza against Israel. The choice is clear. Support this resolution.

Mr. ELLISON. May I inquire as to time, Madam Speaker?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 6¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. ELLISON. I yield 1¼ minutes to the gentlelady from Minnesota, Congresswoman MCCOLLUM.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, this resolution harms U.S. national security interests in the Middle East. The U.S. is attempting to be an honest broker in the Israeli-Palestine peace process, yet this resolution is blatantly biased, and it damages U.S. credibility.

This resolution seeks to hide the ugliness of the Gaza war by covering up violent excesses committed against innocent civilians by both Hamas and the Israeli Defense Forces. Why does the U.S. House want to reject an accounting of Hamas' terrorism against Israeli civilians, as if thousands of rockets were not fired at Israel? And why would this resolution want to deny that hundreds of Palestinian women and children and elders were needlessly killed?

American-made white phosphorous shells were used by Israel in civilian areas, causing horrible burns to Palestinian children, yet this resolution refuses to seek the truth. The report Congress is burying today was led by a former chief prosecutor who has faced far tougher actors than the critics in this Chamber, critics who have not held one single hearing.

There must be only one standard for respecting human rights, a single standard by which we must hold ourselves and our friends and our adversaries accountable.

Madam Speaker, this resolution harms U.S. national security interests in the Middle East and American leadership for human rights and humanitarian law. And, while the U.S. attempts to be an honest-broker in an Israeli-Palestinian peace process this resolution is blatantly biased and damages U.S. credibility.

This resolution seeks to hide the ugliness of the Gaza war by covering-up the violent excesses committed against innocent civilians by Hamas and the Israeli Defense Forces.

Why does the U.S. House want to reject an accounting of Hamas's terrorism against Israeli civilians as if thousands of rockets were not fired at Israel?

Why does this resolution want to deny that hundreds of Palestinian women and elders were needlessly killed by the IDF?

American-made white phosphorus shells were used by Israel in civilian areas causing horrible burns to Palestinian children, yet this resolution refuses to seek the truth?

The report Congress is burying today was led by a former chief prosecutor for war crimes in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, a jurist of exceptional experience who has faced far tougher actors than his critics in this Chamber, critics who have not held a single hearing or conducted a single fact-finding mission on the subject of his report.

There must be only one standard for respecting human rights, a single standard by which we must hold ourselves, our friends, and our adversaries accountable. Establishing situational standards for respecting human rights is dishonest and only encourages actions that destroy human dignity and life.

Therefore I agree with U.N. Secretary Ban Ki-moon who recently said at the Anti-Defamation League's annual dinner that he is "a friend who is acutely aware of Israel's security needs." But on the issue of the Goldstone report Secretary Ban said, "When human rights are violated anywhere in the world we need accountability."

Today, I would ask my colleagues to vote for human rights and accountability by voting against this resolution.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I plan to be the last speaker. Correct me if I am wrong, but I understand that under the rules, I have the right to close, so I will reserve my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. ELLISON. I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS).

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my sincere disappointment that my colleagues and I are once again in a very untenable position on such a critical issue facing our country, our ally Israel, the Palestinian people and the global community.

House Resolution 867 is just the wrong resolution yet again at this time. The U.N. General Assembly takes up this business tomorrow, and I think it's really important for us to note that the Congress gets one shot, one shot, to address the shortcomings of the mandate for the inquiry, the pitfalls of the Goldstone Report, and one shot to call on the Palestinians and Israelis to conduct their independent investigations and to stand for human rights and international law.

David Ben-Gurion once said, ''Without moral and intellectual independence, there is no anchor for national independence,'' and I think we should heed that today. I say it's the wrong resolution because it's our opportunity actually to get it right in a new direction for the Middle East. Regrettably, in this flawed process, we are tarnishing the reputation of one of the greatest advocates for human rights of our time, Justice Richard Goldstone. As a member of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I believe we should have and the oversight committees of jurisdiction should have extended to Justice Goldstone the courtesy of inviting him to present his findings on the record. We didn't. We did not extend to the Israeli Government the courtesy of explaining on the record the shortcomings they find in this report.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. ELLISON. I yield the gentlelady an additional 5 seconds.

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. I want to just communicate that it's really important for us to get it right, and I appreciate the leadership of Chairman BERMAN. I look forward to us working in the future for something that actually does lead to peace.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my sincere disappointment that my colleagues and I are once again in a tenable position on such a critical issue facing our country, facing our ally Israel, the Palestinian people and the global community.

This resolution, H. Res. 867, is the wrong resolution at this time. The U.N. General Assembly takes up this business tomorrow. Our Nation will be speaking in defense and support of Israel. It is important to note, that while we are united in our support for Israel and the Palestinian people, this Congress gets one shot to address the shortcomings of the mandate for the inquiry and the pitfalls of the Goldstone report. We also get only one shot to call on the Palestinians and the Israelis to conduct their own independent inquiries, to stand up in defense of human rights and international law, and to investigate wrongdoing by all parties with the objective of ensuring that it does not happen again.

David Ben-Gurion once said, "without moral and intellectual independence, there is no anchor for national independence." I believe that Israel operates under that spirit today; I am encouraged that there is a robust dialogue within the country over the Gaza war. It is important that this dialogue continues and Israel is allowed to pursue the rule of law unhampered. Now is the appropriate time for the Palestinians to take additional steps to eschew violence and operate with moral and intellectual independence. This will provide additional support to their calls for national independence. They can do this by conducting their own inquiry and investigate the allegations against entities in Gaza.

I say this is the wrong resolution because it fails to call for independent investigations by

the Israelis and Palestinians. This was our opportunity to get it right and when this resolution passes, we will have gotten it wrong. It will be a missed opportunity to move closer to achieving a two-state solution. Regrettably, in this flawed process, we are tarnishing the reputation of one of the greatest advocates for human rights of our time, Justice Richard Goldstone. As a member of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I believe we should have, and the oversight committees of jurisdiction should have extended to Justice Goldstone the courtesy of inviting him to present his findings on the record. We didn't. We did not extend to the Israeli Government the courtesy of explaining, on the record, the shortcomings they find in this report. By not taking these actions we have now been forced to consider a poorly constructed resolution at the eleventh hour just before our U.N. delegation presents its case to the General Assembly. Further, this resolution actually calls on the administration to not go to the U.N. tomorrow as it is so broad that it calls on the President and Secretary of State to "oppose unequivocally any endorsement or further consideration of the Goldstone report in multilateral fora". Unfortunately, these mixed messages and inconsistencies damage this resolution and the lack of due diligence risks a diminished reputation of this body in the international arena.

As I stand right now I want to communicate to the United Nations that enough is enough: It is inappropriate to create a mandate that is so easily impeachable. However, I find it difficult to abide with a resolution that I find so deeply flawed and as one-sided as some suggest of the Goldstone Report.

I know that these issues are difficult, and I want to thank Chairman BERMAN; while I disagree with many points in this resolution, I appreciate his leadership on this issue. I appreciate that we will be standing united behind our President as we work toward a lasting two-state solution to find peace for Israel and her people and a homeland for Palestinians.

Mr. ELLISON. I would like to inquire as to the time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Minnesota has 4 minutes remaining.

Mr. ELLISON. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, let's be clear about what we're debating here. Nobody in this Chamber disputes Israel's right to defend itself against attacks by Hamas and other terrorist organizations, and neither does the report issued by Justice Goldstone. The report instead examines the conduct of the war by both sides, including a detailed chapter on the savage rocket attacks launched from Gaza into southern Israel, which it describes as ''serious war crimes'' and possibly ''crimes against humanity.''

Nobody here is defending one-sided mandates either:

But in the interest of full disclosure, critics should note that Justice Goldstone insisted on a rewritten and balanced mandate before he took on the assignment.

Nobody here is disputing the obligation of the U.S. to insist that any resolution debated by the U.N. be fair and balanced and to vote against or veto it otherwise. But there is a crucial distinction between criticizing the way in which the Goldstone Report was handled at the U.N. and criticizing the very existence of the report in the first place, which is exactly what this resolution does. Conflating the two does a disservice to a respected jurist who has devoted his life to upholding international norms of justice and human rights, and more importantly, it may damage future efforts to hold countries accountable through international investigations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ELLISON. I yield the gentleman 15 additional seconds.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Finally, bringing this resolution up at this time and in this manner could have implications for the possibility of internal investigations into the conflict by the parties themselves. That is a central recommendation of the Goldstone Report as well as the Obama administration and prominent Israeli officials and Israeli human rights organizations. Israel is a strong and resilient democracy. Successfully investigating this episode could only make it stronger. We shouldn't pass a resolution now which could actually slow or stop the wheels of justice.

Mr. ELLISON. I yield 1¼ minutes to the gentlewoman from California, Congresswoman CAPPS.

Mrs. CAPPS. I thank my colleague for yielding, Madam Speaker.

I rise to express my opposition to the resolution before us. Sadly, I think that in this body's haste, we've overlooked some of the depth of unspeakable tragedies that have occurred during the war on Gaza. Innocent Israeli and Palestinian lives were lost. We owe it to all victims' families to vow to do everything in our power to prevent further tragedy. Instead, we have a flawed resolution before us.

As an example, the text of the resolution focuses on the original mandate of the report, not the mission that was actually carried out by the investigators. I am disappointed the committee chose to ignore the fact that Justice Goldstone did not agree to take on the investigation until it was agreed to that the conduct of all parties would be investigated. This is just one of many parts of the resolution.

The United States will remain a true friend to our ally Israel without passing a resolution that has questionable accuracy and motives. So let us call for an open and honest debate with the reputable Judge Goldstone. Let us not act in haste to pass a resolution that will in no way achieve our ultimate goal of achieving a lasting peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

□ 1700

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN).

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, this resolution should not be coming before us. I agree that there is an anti-Israel bias at the United Nations. But at this moment in history, it should be the responsibility of every Member of this House to help bring the parties in the conflict in the Middle East back to the negotiating table.

We need to resurrect and advance a peace process, so that rockets never again fall on innocent Israeli civilians and the terror of Gaza is not repeated. This resolution does not do that. This resolution heightens the rhetoric of division.

Regardless of what you think of the Goldstone Report, it makes an important recommendation: that it is incumbent upon both Israel and the Palestinians, in particular Hamas, to carry out credible investigations into actions by their forces that led to the harm and loss of civilians.

I regret that we are not calling upon all parties to return to the peace table so that the rockets and bombs may be silenced in the Middle East, once and for all.

I regret that this resolution is on the House floor increasing the politicization and the polarization and the heated rhetoric so characteristic of the crisis in the Middle East.

So, Madam Speaker, I will vote ''no'' today on this resolution.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I am going to take the balance of my time to close. As I do, I would like to first of all have entered into the RECORD a letter from Israeli human rights organizations, including B'Tselem, Gisha, the Public Committee Against Torture, Rabbis for Human Rights, and Yesh Din, Volunteers for Human Rights.

In regards to: House Resolution 867 regarding the Goldstone Commission report on Operation Cast Lead.

To: Interested Persons.

From: Israeli Human Rights organizations.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: We appeal to you as representatives of the human rights community in Israel regarding House Resolution 867.

From day one, the Israeli human rights community has consistently called for Israel to conduct an independent and impartial investigation into the conduct of its forces during ''Operation Cast Lead'' in the Gaza Strip. Today, this call is increasingly echoed by Israelis across the political spectrum. Deputy Prime Minister Dan Meridor (Likud), Minister of Improvement of Government Services Michael Eitan (Likud), Minority Affairs Minister Avishay Braverman (Labor), and National Infrastructure Minister Uzi Landau (Yisrael Beiteinu) have all called for such an inquiry, as has Aryeh Deri, former leader of the Shas party. The US State Department has called for such an inquiry as has National Security Advisor James Jones.

Such an investigation, provided it meets international standards for scope and independence, would put an end to the polarizing international debate around the Goldstone Report and show that Israel is a law-abiding state that can ensure accountability at home.

However, we are concerned that H. Res. 867 may derail the momentum towards an Israeli investigation. Resolution 867 contains factual inaccuracies, both about the Goldstone

Report and about the measures taken by Israel to date, that must not guide choices by policy makers.

We urge interested parties and Members of the House to show their support for the internal democratic conversation taking place in Israel and to call on Israel to demonstrate that it can ensure genuine accountability at home.

Sincerely,

B'Tselem.

Gisha.

Hamoked—Center for the Defence of the Individual.

Public Committee Against Torture in Israel.

Rabbis for Human Rights.

Yesh Din—Volunteers for Human Rights.

I would also like to enter into the RECORD the Goldstone Report itself. This voluminous document, 574 pages, which I hope Members will take the opportunity to read.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. ELLISON. I can't yield with the short time I have.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. You asked unanimous consent to put the Goldstone Report in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, I object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. ELLISON. The point is I have already received unanimous consent and do intend to enter the document into the RECORD. But what I ask for, from all sides, it is clear that everybody in this body is very concerned about peace in the Middle East. We all have to assume best intentions from everyone, and we have to look to this issue with a mind toward helping Israel and the Palestinians to come to a lasting peace. Two states, two people, in security, side by side.

I don't think this resolution helps us achieve that. So I will be voting ''no,'' and I urge my colleagues to do likewise.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. If my colleague would yield, I would like to know how much it will cost the taxpayers to put 575 pages of the Goldstone Report in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. BAIRD. Is it not the conditions under which this is considered that Members would have an opportunity to introduce extraneous material without having to ask unanimous consent at the moment of request? We already have that, I believe. In other words, the gentlelady's objection is irrelevant.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. General leave has been obtained.

Mr. BAIRD. Meaning what, if I may ask. My belief is we had unanimous consent at the outset.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman have a further parliamentary inquiry?

Mr. BAIRD. I have a further parliamentary inquiry. With respect to the Parliamentarian, ''general leave may be obtained'' is cryptic, and I would like a straight answer. My belief is that the conditions of this, at the outset of this debate, Members were given the authority to introduce extraneous material, and without having to request unanimous consent. In other words, the gentlelady's objection is irrelevant.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. General leave has been obtained, but each submission of extraneous material is subject to certain page limits.

Mr. BERMAN. Parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California may state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. BERMAN. Is it not correct that I sought and received unanimous consent for extraneous material to be introduced into the RECORD related to this resolution?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. BERMAN. Further parliamentary inquiry. Is it not correct that with the exception of items introduced of more than a certain page, wherein the cost has been to be established and leave sought, that large items can also be put into the RECORD as part of that unanimous consent request?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. General leave is subject to certain page limits for extraneous material.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Parliamentary inquiry, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman will state her inquiry.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Is it correct that after a certain number of pages, there will be a cost estimate for the printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD? This report is 575 pages, and I am wondering the cost to the taxpayers for the printing of this biased report.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. General leave is subject to certain page limits. Extraneous material in excess of those limits may be further assessed on cost.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I just want to be clear, when you asked under general leave for unanimous consent, that I will object to that for the printing in the RECORD.

Mr. BAIRD. Parliamentary inquiry, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his inquiry.

Mr. BAIRD. Is it my understanding that the gentleman from Minnesota lost time because of the parliamentary inquiry?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. No, the time of the gentleman from Minnesota had expired.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERMAN. The question is raised by several of the opposing speakers: Why are we doing this now? What's the rush? And the only rush, because I would prefer we have more time, I prefer we have more discussion, is that tomorrow the General Assembly, in its rush to adopt a resolution to send this matter to the Security Council and to the international criminal courts if there is not an investigation within 90 days, is speeding to a judgment, and I personally think it is very important for us to act on this matter before the General Assembly meets, debates, and votes.

Secondly, there have been glowing tributes, and I am sure they are deserved, to the record, the resume, the judgment, the reputation of Justice Goldstone. Several of my favorite Supreme Court justices voted in a decision called Korematsu to pick up Japanese Americans who resided in different parts of the United States and put them into detention camps. They are still my favorite justices, but they made a mistake. A wonderful jurist can issue a flawed report, and I would suggest this is such a situation.

Next, let's talk about the Human Rights Commission. The U.N. Human Rights Council is obsessed with Israel. They have had 24 negative resolutions on Israel in its 3 years of existence, which totals more than every other resolution on any other country regardless of their human rights record. Total, 24 on Israel; less on all of the other countries of the world. It is the only country which is on the permanent agenda of the Human Rights Council, and it is discussed every year automatically. The only country.

Now, we corrected what I think were some inaccuracies in the initial language regarding the mandate, and we recognize the efforts. Never, as my ranking member points, to formally change the mandate, but for Justice Goldstone to operate. But I would not rest my opposition, my support for this resolution, and my disagreement with the opponents simply based on the reputation and conduct of the Human Rights Council. The fact is I too believe the report is flawed.

I am going to take a couple of moments to quote from this coming week's New Republic an article by Moshe Halbertal. I want to quote two paragraphs which I think reflect better than I can say on my own the problem here and ask my colleagues to come to grips with this.

He writes, ''The commission that wrote the report,'' that is the Goldstone Report, ''could have performed a great service if it had concentrated on gathering the testimonies from Gaza and assessing them critically, while acknowledging (as the Goldstone Report failed to do) that they are partial and incomplete.''

By definition, they did not talk, for reasons that we all know, they did not talk to the Israeli forces that were involved in the crimes this commission found them to have committed.

''This would have forced Israel to investigate various matters, provide answers, and take appropriate measures.''

Continuing, ''But instead, the commission opted to add to its findings

three unnecessary elements: the context of the history that led to the war; its assessments of Israel's strategic goals; and long sections on Israel's occupation of the West Bank. Why should a committee with a mandate to inquire into the operation in Gaza deal with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at large?

''The honest reader of these sections,'' and I have read those sections, ''cannot avoid the impression that their objective is to prepare a general indictment of Israel as a predatory state that is geared toward violating human rights all the time. It will naturally follow from such a premise that the Gaza operation was yet another instance of Israel's general wicked behavior. These long sections are the weakest, the most biased, and the most outrageous in this long document. They are nothing if not political. In Goldstone's account of the history that led to the war, for example, Hamas is basically described as a legitimate party that had the bad luck to clash with Israel. The bloody history of the movement—which, since the beginning of the Oslo accords, was determined to do everything in its power, including the massacre of civilians, to defeat the peace process—is not mentioned.''

We are in a very strange situation. Israel has conducted numerous investigations on this issue. I would like to see Israel conduct a formal inquiry on this particular issue. But until we in this Congress come here and recommend that some outside commission recognize the U.S. military because a number of civilians died in the asymmetrical war or when we dealt with Taliban forces in Afghanistan, or other issues that come in an asymmetrical war where the soldiers wear no uniforms and there is no front, don't start telling us that democratic allies like Israel have to have these investigations. Their process will produce the right result, I truly believe.

I urge an ''aye'' vote for the resolution.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, the United States and Israel have shared a close relationship of friendship, cooperation, and strategic alliance that serves as an example to the rest of the world. I believe it is imperative for the United States to unequivocally reject the findings of the Goldstone Report, in order to preserve and nurture this relationship.

The U.N. Human Rights Council has long been recognized for its anti-Israel bias, so it comes as little surprise they would rubber-stamp the ''Goldstone Report'' and its findings of ''crimes against humanity'' with regard to Israel's activities in Gaza. To quote Israel's Ambassador to the U.S., Michael Oren, ''Israel basically was the equivalent of being summoned to a court in which its guilt was already presumed . . . I can't think of any country in the world which would participate in such a farce of justice.''

Indeed, while this report condemns Israel's actions, it ignores the precipitating causes of Israel's self-defensive actions, concluding that Israel's military operations were ''deliberate and systematic,'' and directed at the people of Gaza as a whole, failing to acknowledge Israel's right to defend itself against terrorism, namely the thousands of rockets launched daily at its citizens. Moreover, the Goldstone Report ignores the extraordinary steps taken by Israel to minimize civilian casualties, often putting its own soldiers at greater risk to do so.

Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that recent years have been marked by escalating armed conflict between Israel and Hamas; however, I believe the United States should stand steadfast in its commitment to a free and secure Israel as the Middle East comes to embrace the liberties and freedoms of democratic societies.

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today regarding H. Res. 867 condemning the United Nation's Goldstone Report on last winter's conflict in Israel and the Gaza Strip, which the House of Representatives considered today. I am unable to attend today's legislative session, but had I been present I would have voted ''aye.''

The right of our close friend and ally Israel to defend itself from rocket fire originating in the Gaza Strip is without question. Since 2000, over 9,000 rockets have fallen on the residents of southern Israel, who live in constant fear of this violent terrorism. Since Hamas took over the leadership in Gaza, the number of rockets fired has increased considerably, and the range of these rockets is ever expanding.

The situation in the Gaza Strip remains unsustainable. The ongoing blockade and the damage to the territory inflicted during the recent conflict have caused great hardship to many innocent Palestinian's living in Gaza. This situation is only made worse by Hamas, who embed themselves in private homes, schools, mosques, hospitals, and use innocent Palestinians as human shields during the conflict.

Judge Richard Goldstone has previously investigated war crimes in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. His report on the Gaza war contains many accusations of troubling actions taken by both sides during the recent conflict. I have extreme reservations regarding the history of the United Nations Human Rights Council and it is troubling that their original mandate focused solely in Israel and ignored Hamas' clear violations of international law. I applaud Judge Goldstone for his insistence on changing that mandate to include investigations of both sides, however the pattern of bias exhibited by the UNHRC is troubling and difficult to ignore. Therefore, I would not support any further action by the United Nations that unfairly singles out Israel, and would urge the administration to work to actively defeat any such attempts.

I believe many of the allegations in the report are serious, and the most appropriate course of action to take would be for the Israelis and Palestinians to each commission independent investigations into their countries respective conduct during the war. The war in Gaza last winter brought terrible suffering to both the Israelis in southern Israel and Palestinians in Gaza and this cannot be ignored.

The recent conflict makes it clearer than ever that the endless cycle of violence has done nothing to bring peace or security to the region. I applaud the Obama administration for their commitment to a two state solution that represents the best chance for a lasting peace between the Israelis and Palestinians. I urge both sides to start negotiations as soon as possible.

Mr. COSTELLO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my concern over the Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict and in support of H. Res. 867.

On October 16, 2009, the United Nations Human Rights Council endorsed the findings of the Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, commonly referred to as the Goldstone Report. The Goldstone report unfairly documents the events that occurred during Operation Cast Lead, or the Gaza conflict, from December 27, 2008, to January 18, 2009, determining that Israel deliberately attacked Gaza civilians.

As a member of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I am deeply committed to ending human rights violations and holding the perpetrators accountable for their actions. However, I join my colleagues and over 15 member states of the United Nations Human Rights Council, who believe that this report is biased and deeply flawed.

As a cosponsor of H. Res. 867, I agree that the Obama administration should not endorse the Goldstone Report because it unfairly castigates Israel's actions during the Gaza conflict. For example, the report recommends that the U.N. General Assembly establish a reparation fund to compensate Palestinians who have suffered loss during the Gaza conflict. However, the report ignores any need that a similar escrow fund be established for Israelis who have suffered years of violence and destruction at the hands of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza.

Finally, the report fails to recognize the repeated violent attacks committed against Israeli citizens and its unequivocal right to defend itself. Israel has the right and the responsibility to defend its people and ensure its security. That right should be fully acknowledged.

Madam Speaker, there is an urgency to reach a workable peace between Israel and Palestine. It is my hope that these two nations are able to find a lasting peace in the near term to circumvent further violent conflicts, and I believe this report does not move us closer to that goal. I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing the Goldstone Report and supporting H. Res. 867.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H. Res. 867. This resolution, though nonbinding, sends a signal to the world that the United States Congress is not serious about pushing the Israelis and the Palestinians toward a peaceful resolution.

It is true that the body that mandated the Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, known as the Goldstone Report, has been no friend to Israel. Indeed, the United Nations Human Rights Council has consistently passed one-sided biased resolutions against Israel while, at the same time, allowing documented, blatant human rights violators to preside over that body without criticism. The U.S and other friends of Israel have every right and every reason to be critical of the United Nations' treatment of Israel, when, for example, 6 of 10 special sessions of the U.N. General Assembly have been about Israel, while none has been called on Tibet or Darfur.

Therefore, we must ask ourselves, does this resolution, which opposes further consideration of the Goldstone Report, bring us closer to peace in the Middle East? Does it spur negotiations between the Israelis, Palestinians, and other parties, or does it marginalize and itself choose sides? We must ask, are we undermining President Obama's, Secretary Clinton's, and Special Envoy Mitchell's efforts to serve as an honest broker, bring the two sides together, and achieve peace, by passing this resolution?

Madam Speaker, Israel, unequivocally, has a right to defend itself against those who seek to destroy it. We know that Israel was relentlessly attacked by rockets and mortars leading up to the Gaza war. They made the calculation that they could not allow Hamas to continue this violence and abuse.

However, neither Israel nor Hamas, nor any other country or other nonstate political actor is exempt from international human rights laws or free of consequence for violations of them. If nothing else, the Goldstone Report should serve as a document that Israel, Hamas, and the rest of the international community can use to ensure that future human rights violations do not take place in civilian areas and that their militaries and fighters are actively working toward minimizing civilian casualties in the future.

Madam Speaker, time and again we acknowledge the urgency of this conflict. The Obama administration is working feverishly with both sides toward a peaceful resolution, a two-state solution which will benefit both parties, the United States and the Middle East region as a whole.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting "no" on this resolution.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, regrettably, I rise in opposition to H. Res. 867, a resolution condemning the recently issued "Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict," commonly known as the Goldstone Report.

I do not believe that the House should be asked to vote on this resolution when it has not come before the Committee on Foreign Affairs for even one hearing and was brought to the House with little notice under procedures typically reserved for noncontroversial legislation. Given the subject matter of this resolution and the diverse range of views expressed on it from many organizations and individuals, including individuals in my own congressional district, I do not believe this resolution can be described as noncontroversial.

The military conflict in the Gaza Strip last winter resulted in devastating consequences to innocent Israeli and Palestinian civilians. It is critical that the international community evaluate the events of last December and January in a factual, unbiased manner. To this end, I am pleased that H. Res. 867 recognizes the numerous problems in the original resolution passed by the United Nations Human Rights Council authorizing the Goldstone Report, as that original resolution wrongly singled out alleged Israeli abuses and ignored the harm caused by Hamas' rocket and mortar attacks on the Israeli people.

However, I have serious reservations about other aspects of H. Res. 867.

No congressional hearings have been held on H. Res. 867 or the Goldstone Report. On an issue of such importance, Congress must do its due diligence and ensure that we have a full understanding of the facts before being asked to vote to condemn the report and its authors.

Furthermore, I am concerned that H. Res. 867 implicitly criticizes the Goldstone Report because of the initial Human Rights Council resolution. Justice Richard Goldstone, who oversaw the Goldstone Report, is a distinguished jurist with a long record of support for human rights. Most notably, Justice Goldstone was a prominent critic of the abhorrent apartheid regime in South Africa. As H. Res. 867 notes, to his credit, Justice Goldstone extended the original mandate for the Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict to include an evaluation of Hamas' rocket attacks on civilians in southern Israel, among other issues.

Regardless of one's ultimate evaluation of the report, it is important to recognize the changes that Justice Goldstone was able to make to it and evaluate his report on its own merits.

I fully support efforts to provide clarity, honesty and accuracy to the debate about the conflict in Gaza, just as do many of my constituents who have contacted me this week urging me to oppose this resolution. Hastily voting on a resolution to condemn this report without the ability to properly evaluate its findings does not serve this purpose.

Also, I do not believe that this resolution aids the important effort of achieving a two-state solution to help end the ever-present violence and strife in the region. President Obama has taken admirable steps to bring the two sides to the negotiating table, after years of neglect under the Bush administration. Yet, this resolution today does not aid the administration in that effort or further the peace process. In fact, I believe this resolution undermines the ability of the United States to further push both sides toward serious peace negotiations.

The House can play a constructive role in promoting peace and understanding in the Middle East and I look forward to supporting such efforts. Regrettably, due to the concerns I have stated above about specific aspects of this resolution and the process under which it has been brought to the House, I must oppose the resolution.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, it is with great disappointment that I rise today to address H. Res. 867, a resolution calling on the President and the Secretary of State to oppose unequivocally any endorsement or further consideration of the "Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission."

Like many of my colleagues, I support the rights of countries—including Israel—to defend themselves. When a democratically elected and peace-seeking nation is forced to take up arms, it is within its rights and obligations to protect its own land and people.

Sadly, the resolution we consider today goes far beyond that principle. H. Res. 867 will only serve to drive a wedge between the parties and will derail the Administration's efforts towards a peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflict.

While the "Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict" is far from perfect, it should not be used as a political tool to block the peace process or to promote distrust and division.

Any action Congress takes should serve to promote a negotiated peace that will end the violence that threatens to overtake the region and irreparably scar generations. I fear that the resolution before us today only fans the flames of discord and moves us no closer to the common goal of security and prosperity.

It is my hope that in the future Congress will have the opportunity to consider legislation that is balanced and that—at its core—promotes a smart security policy for the U.S. and its allies in the region. Unfortunately, this resolution does not.

Mr. PAULSEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support for the resolution before us calling for the unequivocal opposition to any endorsement or further consideration of the Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict.

This report, more commonly known as "the Goldstone Report" continues the U.N.'s misguided treatment towards Israel.

Madam Speaker, this report and its findings have been skewed from the start. Former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, condemned the mandate to initiate the report as being one-sided and "guided not by human rights, but by politics."

Therefore, the results are not surprising. The report gives a one-sided account of the conflict and does nothing to promote or bring about stability in the region.

While seeking to condemn Israel with outrageous accusations, nowhere in the misguided report does it recognize the fact that Israel has a right to defend itself from violent terrorist attacks.

Adopting this resolution will go a long way in sending a message to the U.N. that the American people will not stand for this biased and misleading action.

I want to thank Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their thoughtful work on this resolution. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" and move towards real, meaningful peace in the Middle East.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support for H. Res. 867, a resolution calling on the President and the Secretary of State to oppose unequivocally any endorsement or further consideration of the "Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict in Multilateral Fora."

Madam Speaker, this past August, I had the opportunity to visit Israel with my husband Brian. There, I saw firsthand how real the struggle for survival really is. I realized that when surrounded by enemies and people who think nothing of suicide bombing innocent civilians and launching hundreds of rockets across the borders, self-defense becomes paramount. Action becomes necessary when diplomacy and words fail. And, despite decades of attempts to engage its enemies, action continues to be necessary to protect this small, but strong nation.

The Goldstone Report is just another attempt by Israel's enemies to delegitimize it—this time using the pretense of a "United Nations fact finding mandate."

Biased from the start—mandating the fact finding mission to "investigate all violations of international human rights law and International Humanitarian Law by . . . Israel, against the Palestinian people," the mission intentionally ignored the use of human shields by Hamas and the indirect support of Syria and Iran.

American courts have long recognized the right to act in self-defense. Only a biased United Nations report could find the Palestinian attackers morally equivalent to the Israeli defenders.

When I left Israel in August, I pledged to work tirelessly on behalf of the Israeli people to ensure their survival. I am glad to speak out against this overtly biased report and I urge my colleagues to join me fighting for the Israeli people.

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, this resolution before us today, House Resolution 867, does nothing to advance the cause of peace and understanding between the Israelis and Palestinians.

In a recent meeting with Jewish constituents, I heard a comment that I thought was moving for its simplicity and power. My constituent told me, ''Israel will not have peace and security until Palestinians have hope.''

This resolution does nothing to give hope to the people of Palestine that a better, peaceful future is possible and therefore does nothing to give greater security to the people of Israel. It is a hasty and unconstructive measure that fails to establish a foundation upon which a future peace and prosperity will be constructed.

House Resolution 867 has too many flaws and questionable conclusions for me to support it. I think the Committee should have given the Goldstone report a hearing and taken the opportunity to ask Justice Goldstone questions about his mandate, his findings and his conclusions.

I would ask that Justice Goldstone's letter to Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN be included in the RECORD.

In this letter, Justice Goldstone clarifies that he demanded and received an expanded mandate to include the attacks on Israel. The report includes more than 150 instances where it explores the rocket attacks against Israel. And as a matter of fact, the Goldstone report found that rocket attacks constituted ''indiscriminate attacks upon the civilian population of southern Israel''.

I recognize a history of bias against Israel at the United Nations and I believe that one-sided resolutions against Israel have no place in an honest debate. However, it should be noted—and it is not in the resolution before us today—that Justice Goldstone dedicated scores of pages to expose war crimes and human rights violations perpetrated by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups for the first time ever.

This resolution suffers too many instances of inaccuracy. It too often gives an account of the Goldstone report that is incomplete and therefore ends up being misleading. I don't believe this moves us closer to peace and for these reasons I cannot support the resolution.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I strongly support the resolution and want to express my deep appreciation to the Chairman, Mr. BERMAN, and to the Ranking Minority Member, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for their efforts to bring this resolution before the House.

In April 2009, the U.N. Human Rights Council set up a Commission to condemn Israel. To the surprise of no one, it did exactly that. But for the grave subject matter, the Goldstone report, built heavily on testimony provided under the auspices of Hamas, would be laughable. In the self-righteous fantasyland inhabited by Judge Goldstone and his colleagues, there's no such thing as terrorism; there's no such thing as Hamas (and if it does exist, it's certainly nothing to fear); there's no such thing as legitimate self-defense; and war is like a sporting event, rather than the most ghastly, destructive, chaotic phenomenon we human beings are capable of creating.

Had the report been submitted by a group of eager law students or the human rights club on a college campus, I would suggest that their efforts had been unfortunately wasted on the production of a pompous, tendentious, one-sided political diatribe. Notwithstanding all their alleged ''facts'' there's very little truth, and for all the so-called ''context'' they supply, there's very little wisdom.

As this diatribe actually carries the imprimatur of a part of the United Nations, there have been—as I feared when the report was first issued—a number of very unfortunate developments all based on the report is being mistaken for a credible piece of work, which it is not. In addition to the wasteful consideration of this thoroughly biased and fatally flawed document in several bodies of the United Nations, the report has also set off yet another round of offensive and sterile Israel-bashing that has brought peace no closer, that has produced no international consensus, and, along the way, that has further sullied and cheapened the reputation of the United Nations and the cause of human rights.

Certainly, the United States must do all that it can to ensure that no more time is spent on this distraction from the real work of making peace. The Obama Administration has rightfully denounced the Goldstone Report, which, if it was taken seriously, would make it legally impossible for this country, or any other country, to defend themselves from terrorists who hide behind civilians. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has been forcefully arguing that international community can't possibly expect Israel to exchange ''land for peace'' if, when the peace breaks down, Israel is effectively prohibited from defending itself.

First of all, I think Prime Minister Netanyahu is completely right. And second, there's not even the smallest shred of a possibility that the Israeli public would agree to any peace agreement under the absurd operational restrictions that the Goldstone Report proposes to require of Israel's (and every other country's) armed forces.

The resolution makes clear the strong view of the House that the Obama Administration must do everything it can to quash the Goldstone report, both to protect our own right of self-defense, and to make clear to the world that they can have Goldstone, or they can have Middle East peace, but they can't have Goldstone and Middle East peace.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 867, a bipartisan resolution which calls upon the President and the Secretary of State to oppose the endorsement and further consideration of the ''Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'' in multilateral fora.

The report, commissioned by the United Nations Human Rights Council, called for an investigation into war crimes and possible crimes against humanity by Israel during 22 days of fighting in Gaza and southern Israel in December 2008 and January 2009.

As a result, the fact-finding mission released an unbalanced 575-page report which unfairly focuses on Israel's conduct despite efforts by the report's chief author, Justice Richard Goldstone, to broaden the mandate to include violations committed by Hamas and other militant groups.

In spite of its inaccuracies, the United Nations Human Rights Council endorsed the report and its recommendations and referred it to the United Nations Security Council, United Nations General Assembly and the International Criminal Court for further action.

A report that is not inclusive of all the facts and circumstances surrounding the conflict is an inconclusive report. It is unacceptable to consider a report which fails to provide a complete and accurate account of the Gaza conflict. To do otherwise undermines the inquiry process and denies the truth.

I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 867.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 867, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3639, EXPEDITED CARD REFORM FOR CONSUMERS ACT OF 2009

Mr. MCGOVERN, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 111–326) on the resolution (H. Res. 884) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3639) to amend the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009 to establish an earlier effective date for various consumer protections, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2868, CHEMICAL FACILITY ANTI-TERRORISM ACT OF 2009

Mr. MCGOVERN, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 111–327) on the resolution (H. Res. 885) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2868) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to extend, modify, and recodify the authority of the Secretary of Homeland Security to enhance security and protect against acts of terrorism against chemical facilities, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

□ 1715

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. LEE of California). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H. Res. 867, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 3157, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 736, de novo.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

OPPOSING ANY ENDORSEMENT OR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS FACT FINDING MISSION ON THE GAZA CONFLICT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 867, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 867, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 344, nays 36, answered ''present'' 22, not voting 30, as follows:

[Roll No. 838]

YEAS—344

Aderholt
Adler (NJ)
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Austria
Baca
Bachus
Barrow
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bean
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boccieri
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boyd
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bright
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Cao
Capito
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carter
Cassidy
Castle
Castor (FL)
Chaffetz
Chandler
Childers
Chu
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cohen
Cole
Conaway
Connolly (VA)
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
DeGette
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Dreier
Driehaus
Edwards (TX)
Ehlers
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
Etheridge
Fallin
Fattah
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Guthrie
Hall (TX)
Halvorson
Hare
Harman
Harper
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jenkins
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilroy
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kissell
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Kosmas
Kratovil
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee (NY)
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Maffei
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey (CO)
Markey (MA)
Marshall
Massa
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McClintock
McCotter
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McMahon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meek (FL)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Minnick
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy (NY)
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Myrick
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nye
Oberstar
Olson
Ortiz
Paulsen
Pence
Perlmutter
Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Polis (CO)
Pomeroy
Posey
Putnam
Quigley
Radanovich
Rangel
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schauer
Schiff
Schmidt
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Space
Spratt
Stearns
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Taylor
Teague
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Visclosky
Walden
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson
Waxman
Weiner
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—36

Baird
Baldwin
Blumenauer
Boustany
Capps
Carson (IN)
Clarke
Clay
Davis (KY)
Dingell
Doggett
Edwards (MD)
Ellison
Filner
Grijalva
Hinchey
Johnson, E. B.
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kucinich
Lee (CA)
Lynch
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
Miller, George
Moran (VA)
Olver
Pastor (AZ)
Paul
Price (NC)
Rahall
Snyder
Stark
Waters
Watt
Woolsey

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—22

Becerra
Cooper
Dahlkemper
DeFazio
Delahunt
Duncan
Eshoo
Farr
Heinrich
Hirono
Honda
Johnson (GA)
Jones
Kaptur
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Luján
Obey
Speier
Tierney
Welch
Wu

NOT VOTING—30

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Bachmann
Barrett (SC)
Boucher
Brady (PA)
Capuano
Conyers
Davis (AL)
Davis (TN)
Deal (GA)
Gordon (TN)
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Holt
Meeks (NY)
Murphy, Patrick
Nunes
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pingree (ME)
Price (GA)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sires
Souder
Stupak
Towns
Velázquez
Wamp

□ 1741

Messrs. COOPER and HONDA changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''present.''

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER and Mr. LOEBSACK changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''present.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, on November 3, 2009, I was unexpectedly detained and could not vote on H. Res. 867, calling on the President and the Secretary of State to oppose unequivocally any endorsement or further consideration of the ''Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict'' in multilateral fora. Had I been present, as a cosponsor of this resolution, I would have voted ''yea.''

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN REMEMBRANCE OF MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES

The SPEAKER. The Chair would ask all present to rise for the purpose of a moment of silence.

The Chair asks that the House now observe a moment of silence in remembrance of our brave men and women in uniform who have given their lives in the service of our Nation in Iraq and in Afghanistan and their families, and all who serve in our Armed Forces and their families.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. LEE of California). Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

MAX J. BEILKE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CENTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3157, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3157.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 398, nays 0, not voting 34, as follows:

[Roll No. 839]

YEAS—398

Aderholt
Adler (NJ)
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Arcuri
Austria
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boccieri
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bright
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cao
Capito
Capps
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cassidy
Castle
Castor (FL)
Chaffetz
Chandler
Childers
Chu
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cohen
Cole
Conaway
Connolly (VA)
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Dahlkemper
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Dreier
Driehaus
Duncan
Edwards (MD)
Edwards (TX)
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Guthrie
Hall (TX)
Halvorson
Hare
Harman
Harper
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heinrich
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Honda
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kilroy
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kissell
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Kosmas
Kratovil
Kucinich
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee (CA)
Lee (NY)
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maffei
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey (CO)
Markey (MA)
Marshall
Massa
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McMahon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meek (FL)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Minnick
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy (NY)
Murphy, Tim
Myrick
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nye
Oberstar
Obey
Olson
Olver
Ortiz
Pastor (AZ)
Paul
Paulsen
Pence
Perlmutter
Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Polis (CO)
Pomeroy
Posey
Price (NC)
Putnam
Quigley
Radanovich
Rahall
Rangel
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schauer
Schiff
Schmidt
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Space
Speier
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Taylor
Teague
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Visclosky
Walden
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—34

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Andrews
Barrett (SC)
Brady (PA)
Cantor
Capuano
Conyers
Davis (AL)
Davis (TN)
Deal (GA)
Gordon (TN)
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Holt
Meeks (NY)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Nunes
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pingree (ME)
Price (GA)
Rothman (NJ)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sires
Souder
Stupak
Towns
Velázquez
Wamp
Wittman

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining on this vote.

□ 1750

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and agreeing to the resolution, H. Res. 736.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 736.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 393, noes 0, not voting 39, as follows:

[Roll No. 840]

AYES—393

Aderholt
Adler (NJ)
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Austria
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boccieri
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bright
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cao
Capito
Capps
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cassidy
Castle
Castor (FL)
Chaffetz
Chandler
Childers
Chu
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cohen
Cole
Conaway
Connolly (VA)
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Dahlkemper
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Dreier
Driehaus
Duncan
Edwards (MD)
Edwards (TX)
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Guthrie
Hall (TX)
Halvorson
Hare
Harman
Harper
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heinrich
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Honda
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kilroy
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kissell
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Kosmas
Kucinich
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee (CA)
Lee (NY)
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maffei
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey (CO)
Markey (MA)
Marshall
Massa
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McMahon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney

Meek (FL)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Minnick
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy (NY)
Murphy, Tim
Myrick
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nye
Oberstar
Obey
Olson
Olver
Ortiz
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Pence
Perlmutter
Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Polis (CO)
Pomeroy
Posey
Price (NC)
Putnam
Quigley
Radanovich
Rahall
Rangel
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schauer
Schiff
Schmidt
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Space
Speier
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Taylor
Teague
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Visclosky
Walden
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—39

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Barrett (SC)
Berry
Blumenauer
Brady (PA)
Cantor
Capuano
Conyers
Davis (AL)
Davis (TN)
Deal (GA)
Frank (MA)
Gordon (TN)
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Holt
Kratovil
Meeks (NY)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Nunes
Pallone
Pascrell
Paul
Payne
Pingree (ME)
Price (GA)
Rothman (NJ)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sires
Souder
Stupak
Towns
Velázquez
Wamp
Wittman

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining in the vote.

□ 1758

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, on November 3, 2009, I was unable to cast votes due to personal reasons. I was not present for rollcall votes 835 through 840. Had I been present, I would have cast a "yea" vote for final passage of H.R. 3949. I would have cast a "yea" vote for final passage of H. Res. 398. I would have cast a "yea" vote for final passage of H. Res. 866. I would have cast a "nay" vote for the final passage of H. Res. 867. I would have cast a "yea" vote for final passage of H.R. 3157. Also, I would have cast a "yea" vote for H. Res. 736.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably absent yesterday and today from this Chamber. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 832 through 840.

□ 1800

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

RECOGNIZING 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 641) recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 641

Whereas Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) was founded in 1949 by the National Committee for a Free Europe with the mission to promote democratic values and institutions by broadcasting unbiased and factual information and ideas to audiences behind the communist "Iron Curtain", and transmitted its first program to the former Czechoslovakia on July 4, 1950;

Whereas many Central European and Russian leaders, including Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic, and the late Boris Yeltsin of the Russian Federation, have testified to the important role RFE/RL broadcasts played in ending the Cold War;

Whereas the former President of Estonia, Lennart Meri, nominated RFE/RL for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991;

Whereas Nobel laureate and former President of Poland, Lech Walesa, testified to the role played by RFE/RL in Poland's struggle for freedom when he stated that its influence "cannot even be described. Would there be earth without the sun?";

Whereas RFE/RL programs were so comprehensive that communist authorities relied on secret transcripts of the broadcasts for information they could not obtain from the local media they themselves controlled;

Whereas RFE/RL was subjected to efforts to undermine its operations through offensive actions launched by communist regimes and intended to discredit the broadcasts;

Whereas the Soviet KGB and Warsaw Pact intelligence services penetrated the radio stations with their spies, jailed sources, and even resorted to violence in attempts to intimidate RFE/RL staff;

Whereas RFE/RL Bulgarian Service correspondent Georgi Markov was murdered in London in 1978, evidently by the Bulgarian communist intelligence service;

Whereas the Romanian communist security service detonated a bomb at RFE/RL's headquarters in Munich, West Germany, in 1981, critically injuring six employees;

Whereas today, after having played a significant role in the collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union, RFE/RL continues to provide news, information, and open discussion of domestic and international issues to countries where free and independent media are not permitted, or are not yet fully established;

Whereas RFE/RL is available via FM, AM, shortwave and satellite radio, and employs a range of newer technologies including SMS text messaging, Facebook, Twitter, and other interactive social media;

Whereas RFE/RL broadcasts in 28 languages to 30 million listeners in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Russia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and Central and Southwest Asia;

Whereas during the June 2009 presidential election in Iran, RFE/RL's "Radio Farda" provided 24 hour news coverage of the post-election protests;

Whereas beginning in 2002, RFE/RL began "Radio Azadi", reaching nearly 50 percent of the Afghan people in the Pashto and Dari languages and making RFE/RL the largest international broadcaster in Afghanistan;

Whereas in August 2009, RFE/RL's Radio Azadi hosted a historic presidential debate featuring President Hamid Karzai and his two top opponents, the first ever in Afghanistan's to feature an incumbent Afghan President;

Whereas in early 2010, RFE/RL will begin Pashto language broadcasting to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, including the Swat Valley, promoting democratic values and institutions by providing the people of the region a source of independent and factual media to compete in the battle of ideas with those radical elements that have disrupted the peace in the Afghan-Pakistan border region;

Whereas RFE/RL employees and freelance journalists are subject to intimidation and oppression by the authorities of regimes in many countries to which RFE/RL broadcasts; and

Whereas RFE/RL has a proven history of promoting freedom and liberty in oppressive and autocratic regimes through news broadcasts based upon the principle that the first requirement of democracy is a well-informed citizenry: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the 60th anniversary of the founding of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and honors its contribution to promoting freedom and liberty around the world; and

(2) commends the employees and reporters of RFE/RL for their commitment to provide fair and unbiased news to people living under oppressive regimes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 641, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution celebrates 60 years of broadcasting history and the continuing mission of an effective instrument of public diplomacy.

Radio Free Europe was established in 1949 by the National Committee for a Free Europe, an anticommunist organization, and made its first broadcast to what was then Czechoslovakia on July 4 of the next year.

From its start, the organization approached the Cold War as a war of ideas, pushing back on propaganda that was being spread by autocratic governments behind the Iron Curtain. As it grew and merged with Radio Liberty to reach more people, its purpose became all the more urgent as its broadcasts were banned and Communist authorities used jamming techniques to keep their citizens from tuning in.

In fact, those very authorities were said to have relied upon secret transcripts of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty programs so they could have better information about what was happening in their own countries than their own national media could provide.

After the Cold War ended, many paid tribute to the role that the American radio programs had played. Nobel Laureate and former Polish President Lech Walesa, who recalled listening to RFE/RL's broadcasts in secret, said their influence ''cannot even be described,'' asking, ''Would there be an Earth without the Sun?''

Today, RFE/RL is located in the very country to which it once beamed its first broadcast, now known as the Czech Republic. From its Prague headquarters, the organization serves as a surrogate broadcaster to places where uncensored or reliable information is hard to come by, where independent media are banned or not yet fully established.

Using AM, FM, shortwave, and satellite radio, as well as the Internet and newer social media tools, RFE/RL reaches an estimated 30 million people in Eastern Europe, Russia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and Central and Southwest Asia.

Its programs in Farsi, under the banner of Radio Farda, are widely followed in Iran. Radio Azadi provides unbiased reporting of current events in Afghanistan. And next year, RFE/RL will begin Pashto-language broadcasts to the troubled Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, including the Swat Valley.

Mr. Speaker, as this resolution notes, ''RFE/RL has a proven history of promoting freedom and liberty in oppressive and autocratic regimes through news broadcasts based upon the principle that the first requirement of a democracy is a well-informed citizenry.''

H. Res. 641 congratulates the organization on six decades of helping to keep the spark of freedom alive in some of history's darkest hours and salutes the men and women of RFE/RL for their continuing commitment to the free flow of information.

I commend the author of this resolution, the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Ms. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, and encourage its support.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank my esteemed chairman for his words, and I join him in the declaration of support for the work of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.

As we know, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, also known as RFE/RL, was established 60 years ago and was a powerful voice for freedom in the battle of ideas against communist tyranny.

Former Polish President Lech Walesa and Vaclav Havel, the former President of the Czech Republic, have all testified that by means of its broadcast of unbiased and independent news programs behind the Iron Curtain, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty played a vital role in the collapse of the Soviet Union and its communist allies. In fact, the Soviet KGB and the Warsaw Pact intelligence services, appreciating the threat posed by Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty to their communist regimes, conducted massive operations to foil its operations. They even resorted to violence.

Just two instances: For example, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Bulgarian service correspondent was believed to have been murdered by Bulgarian intelligence services; and six Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty employees were critically injured when a bomb paid for by Romanian security services exploded at the headquarters of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Munich, West Germany.

Today, as our generation engages in yet another battle of ideas, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty continues to prove its worth. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's broadcasts in 28 different languages reach people in 20 countries throughout southeastern Europe, Russia, the Middle East, and Central and South Asia.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Afghanistan service is now the most popular media program in that country, and it intends to expand next year to reach the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, providing a much-needed source of independent and accurate news to compete with the shrill rhetoric of the extremists in that area.

Today, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty and its personnel continue to suffer attacks, some mounted in new ways. Just last year, for example, a new style of attack, a cyberattack, was mounted against the Belarusian service of RFE/RL to prevent the broadcast of a rally against the regime in that country.

But in the more traditional style of attack, an Iranian American journalist was convicted and sentenced in Iran to a year in prison, Mr. Speaker, and her 98-year-old mother was threatened with eviction from her housing unit because of the journalist's antirevolutionary work with RFE/RL's Iranian news service.

Also recently, a Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty journalist in Turkmenistan was tortured by authorities who tried to coerce him into signing a pledge that he would stop working for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Turkmen service, and then they detained him against his will and put him in a government-run psychiatric center.

Journalists such as these, Mr. Speaker, who work for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty are heroes, fighting with determination for freedom. I am proud to have authored this resolution in recognition of their brave efforts and proud of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's six decades of service in the promotion of freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the ranking member on the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and I rise in support of this resolution, of which I am a cosponsor, and to note that for 60 years, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty has been basically a free press for societies suffering authoritarian rule, and that is the intent.

The RFE/RL has said that this model of surrogate broadcasting irritates authoritarian regimes, inspires democrats and creates greater space for civil society, and that is the goal. Vaclav Havel and others have testified to the role that the radios played in bringing down the Iron Curtain.

As noted in the resolution, Warsaw Pact intelligence went to great lengths to silence these broadcasts. We have heard some of the examples of the correspondents who were murdered and the headquarters that were bombed.

RFE/RL has expanded its work to countries that are critical to today's national security challenges. Shortly after September 11, the House passed legislation establishing Radio Free Afghanistan, RFE's brand in that country. Actually, I authored that legislation. And today, with 50 percent market share, it is the most popular radio station in the country, offering an alternative to the Taliban's dark leaflets and the type of radio that people hear in that part of Central Asia and South Asia from the Taliban.

The Iranian regime has targeted RFE/RL broadcasts. They have spent a

lot of money to jam those broadcasts. RFE/RL has still managed to provide valuable coverage of the recent uprising there, allowing Iranian democrats to know that they are not alone in this world.

These broadcasts are all the more important now that the administration has muffled itself when it comes to the Iranian democratic movement. As it trims back on programs supporting democracy-seeking Iranians, one expert notes that the administration views the green revolution as a wrench in the works of nuclear negotiations with the Iranian regime.

These broadcasts could be greatly complimented by the White House bully pulpit. They aren't.

A divide between the broadcasters and the diplomats is not new, frankly. In the 1960s, Washington moved to improve relations with Ceausescu's Romania, despite its abysmal human rights record, but RFE kept a spotlight on Bucharest, irritating some of the diplomats. Today, it keeps a spotlight on Tehran's transgressions—the jailing, the abuse, the murder of those who abuse the regime.

Importantly, this resolution commends the employees and reporters of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty for their services and acknowledges their sacrifices. Just as the communist police took steps to prevent the truth from penetrating their house of lies, so has the Iranian regime.

The Iranian Government harasses the journalists for RFE/RL's Persian service, its headquarters in Prague, and their families back in Iran. Those inside Iran who might provide the station with information have been threatened. This fall, two young journalists with the service were killed and a third went into a coma when their car was struck by a truck outside of Prague.

This is the information war happening today. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and its sister surrogates are keeping us in the game. As technology evolves, they can and need to do better, while staying true to their support for freedom and respect for human rights and for the rule of law.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for those statements.

I have no further requests for time, Mr. Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today in support of H. Res. 641, which recognizes the 60th anniversary of the founding of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. I support this resolution because of the incredible role that Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty played in helping to end the cold war.

In 1949, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, RFE/RL, was established by the United States to promote democracy in communist-controlled parts of Europe. RFE/RL broadcasted unbiased and factual information and ideas, providing valuable reporting and demonstrating the value of the freedom of the press. The information provided in the broadcasts was more comprehensive than the information provided on state-controlled media sources, leading some Communist authorities to use secret transcripts to stay informed.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty played an important role in bringing about the demise of communism in Europe. Leaders from Russia and other former Soviet Union countries have extolled the virtues of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. Former Polish President Lech Walesa famously said that RFE/RL's influence "could not be described." Former President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic and former President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, have also described the significant role that RFE/RL played in bringing the end of communism in Europe. Its virtue was encapsulated by the former President of Estonia, Lennart Meri, who nominated RFE/RL for the Nobel Peace Price in 1991.

During the cold war, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty was subject to attacks by Communist governments of the Soviet Union. The Soviet intelligence agency and secret police, the KGB, as well as other Communist intelligence agencies infiltrated radio stations with spies and attempted to disrupt reporting by jailing and intimidating sources. Georgi Markov, an RFE/RL correspondent in Bulgaria, was murdered in London in 1978 by Bulgarian Communist intelligence service agents. In 1981, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty was attacked when Romanian security agents exploded a bomb outside of the RFE/RL headquarters in Munich, West Germany. Such acts of violence by the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries demonstrate the fear that the Communist leaders had for the democratizing influence of the free press.

Today, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty continues to operate in Eastern Europe, Eurasia, and Asia. RFE/RL broadcasts in 28 languages to over 30 million listeners in 20 countries, including Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Georgia, the Balkans, Belarus, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, and Afghanistan. To this day, RFE/RL correspondents and employees are subject to violence and intimidation by regimes that consider the free press threatening.

In 1823, Thomas Jefferson said, "The only security of all is in a free press. The force of public opinion cannot be resisted when permitted freely to be expressed. The agitation it produces must be submitted to. It is necessary, to keep the waters pure." From the cold war to today, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty has demonstrated Jefferson's words throughout the world. By bringing the free press to countries with repressive governments, RFE/RL has proven for over 60 years that governments that use censorship to protect their authority cannot stand forever.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 641, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1815

CONDEMNING THE ILLEGAL EXTRACTION OF MADAGASCAR'S NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 839) condemning the illegal extraction of Madagascar's natural resources, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 839

Whereas Madagascar is the world's fourth largest island, and home to up to 150,000 species of unique flora and fauna;

Whereas during the last 20 years, with the support of the U.S. Government and others, Madagascar has made substantial progress in stopping environmental degradation, effectively managing natural resources and preserving its unique biodiversity;

Whereas three-quarters of Madagascar's people live in rural areas and two-thirds live on less than $2 per day, safeguarding these natural resources is essential to Madagascar's continued economic growth and development;

Whereas these natural resources contribute to economic development through the tourism sector, drawing an estimated $390,000,000 per year;

Whereas, on March 17, 2009, Marc Ravalomanana was forced to resign as the democratically-elected President of Madagascar and Andry Rajoelina was installed as de facto head of state;

Whereas, on March 20, 2009, the United States condemned the removal of Marc Ravalomanana and the installation of Andry Rajoelina as tantamount to a coup d'etat, undemocratic, and contrary to the rule of law, announced a suspension of non-humanitarian assistance, and later terminated compact assistance through the Millennium Challenge Corporation to the de facto Rajoelina government;

Whereas two-thirds of Madagascar's people depend on natural resources for their sustenance and livelihoods, and decreased assistance for conservation efforts may have dire humanitarian consequences;

Whereas the African Union and the Southern African Development Community have suspended Madagascar's participation until constitutional order is restored;

Whereas in October 2009, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Conservation International, and the Wildlife Conservation Society condemned an interministerial order issued by the de facto administration granting sweeping authorization to export raw and semi-processed hard wood as "legaliz[ing] the sale of illegally cut and collected wood onto the market; allow[ing] for the potential embezzlement of funds in the name of environmental protection; and constitut[ing] a legal incentive for further corruption in the forestry sector";

Whereas natural resource degradation occurring under the de facto government includes—

(1) open and organized plundering of precious wood from natural forests, including World Heritage Sites such as Marojejy and Masoala National Parks;

(2) intimidation and menace of legitimate local community management structures,

and expropriation of revenue and benefits from them, causing suffering and impoverishment;

(3) intensified smuggling of endemic and protected species and species parts and/or products to the national and international markets;

(4) proliferation of destructive practices such as illegal mining and slash-and-burn agriculture within protected areas and environmentally sensitive areas;

(5) degradation of forests, pushing some rosewood and ebony species to the brink of extinction; and

(6) the degradation of the resource base that rural communities depend upon represents an immediate and future threat to local governance, local incomes, and food security; and

Whereas the vast majority of this precious wood is destined for global export markets: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) strongly condemns the March 2009 coup d'etat in Madagascar and supports the people of Madagascar in immediately undertaking a democratic, consensual process to restore constitutional governance, culminating in free, fair, and peaceful elections;

(2) commends the African Union and the Southern African Development Community for taking strong action against anti-democratic forces in Madagascar and encourage their continued resolve to return Madagascar to the rule of law;

(3) strongly condemns the illegal extraction of Madagascar's natural resources and its impact on biodiversity and livelihoods of rural communities, including illegal logging, smuggling of wild species, and illegal mining;

(4) supports action by competent authorities and the people of Madagascar to stop this illegal devastation and bring those perpetrating these crimes to justice;

(5) calls upon importing countries to intensify their inspection and monitoring processes to ensure that they do not contribute to the demand for illegally sourced precious woods from Madagascar; and

(6) calls upon consumers of rosewood and ebony products to check their origin, and boycott those made of Malagasy wood, until constitutional order is restored.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 839, a resolution introduced by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) which condemns the illegal extraction of Madagascar's natural resources.

On March 17 the democratically elected President of Madagascar was forced from office in a coup and replaced by Andry Rajoelina, who remains in power today. Over the past 7 months, the political situation has remained tenuous as discussions between both sides continue over the possibility of new elections.

Meanwhile, policies pursued by the de facto Rajoelina government have done terrible harm to Madagascar's fragile ecosystem, which boasts up to 150,000 unique species of plants and animals.

On September 21, the government permitted 13 operators to export 325 containers filled with raw and semi-processed woods. The government reportedly earned almost $12 million in taxes from these transactions.

The World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International, and the Wildlife Conservation Society condemned the decision as ''legalizing the sale of illegally cut and collected wood onto the market.'' This decision came on top of months of illegal activities and violent actions in Madagascar's forests.

Since political turmoil began in January, local communities and officials have reported that armed groups have entered the previously protected Masoala and Marojejy World Heritage Sites and the Mananara-Nord Biosphere Reserve. The NGO Global Witness reports that 7,000 cubic meters of rosewood and ebony have been shipped out of Madagascar since the beginning of the year.

These actions harm not only Madagascar's environment but the local communities that depend on the forests for their income. Without this revenue, communities may be forced to resort to slash-and-burn agriculture, thus furthering damaging Madagascar's sensitive ecosystem.

I commend my friend and colleague Mr. BLUMENAUER for bringing this resolution and this issue before the Congress and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in total support of H. Res. 839, which condemns the March 2009 coup in Madagascar and subsequent upsurge in the illegal extraction of Madagascar's natural resources.

Due to its geography, Madagascar hosts one of the most unique and diverse ecosystems on the planet. According to the World Wildlife Fund, 92 percent of Madagascar's reptiles, 68 percent of its plant life, and 98 percent of its land mammals are unique to Madagascar, existing nowhere else on Earth.

One need only take a page from the latest issue of National Geographic to be inspired to explore Madagascar's tropical rainforests, dry forests, spiny deserts, reefs, and estuaries, not to mention the impenetrable Stone Forest, a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site, where new species are being discovered on a regular basis.

With such unique biodiversity, ecotourism obviously holds great potential to help lift Madagascar's population out of its poverty. Realizing this opportunity, the government in 2003 set aside 3 percent of the island for national parks and reserves, while endeavoring to stem illegal logging and assist rural populations in developing sustainable farming methods.

In April 2005, the Millennium Challenge Corporation signed a 4-year $110 million compact with Madagascar, the very first compact of the MCC, to assist poor rural farmers in transition from subsistence agriculture to a market economy, while promoting environmental sustainability. By all accounts, great progress was being made in reducing world poverty while promoting conservation.

Unfortunately, much of that progress has been dashed since March of 2009 when an illegal coup displaced the elected President of Madagascar in favor of a former disc jockey and mayor of the capital city who is not even old enough to hold office pursuant to Madagascar's own constitution.

The days leading to the coup and the months since have been characterized by deadly protests and serious human rights abuses. The donor community was forced to withdraw support from the government, and critical assistance including the MCC compact was terminated. Madagascar was also suspended from the African Union and the regional Southern African Development Community.

Illegal logging, mining, and smuggling of wildlife in officially protected areas has intensified, as criminal networks exploit political instability and impoverished Malagasy in rural areas struggle to survive.

H. Res. 839, as amended, condemns the coup and the subsequent upsurge in the illegal extraction of Madagascar's resources. It laments the impact these illegal activities are having on conservation and poverty reduction efforts and calls for a boycott of certain wood products until constitutional order is restored.

I commend the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for introducing this timely resolution, which deserves our support.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the author of the resolution, who brought this to my attention less than 2 weeks ago, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I thank Chairman BERMAN for his courtesy and for the prompt action of the committee. I deeply appreciate the bipartisan support and the quick turnaround that we've had from both sides of the aisle on the committee. It is important to move quickly, and I deeply appreciate putting this on the agenda.

The irreplaceable role of healthy forests as havens for biodiversity, carbon sinks, and renewable resources demands that we fight against and reverse a global legacy of environmental pillaging.

Illegal logging and resource extraction is not just about environmental decimation, with watershed pollution, loss of biodiversity, and increased carbon emissions. It's about human loss as well, the local communities left devastated without resources for survival and for their future and beyond to everyone on the planet. We all benefit

from the medicines, the carbon captures, and species diversity that these forests provide.

For years it's been a personal project of mine to work against the illegal logging trade, to make sure that the United States can lead by example and stop our own demand for illegally logged wood. I was pleased that our Legal Timber Protection Act was incorporated into legislation and signed into law by President Bush last year. The United States Government is now empowered to ask where imported wood and plants actually come from to promote legal harvest. Yet the illegal trade continues.

Last month, with Chairman PAYNE and Chairman FALEOMAVAEGA, I introduced this legislation to condemn the illegal logging and extraction of Madagascar's unique and invaluable natural resources.

As has been pointed out by my two colleagues, Madagascar hosts some of the planet's greatest diversity. It's an island larger than the State of California. It broke off from the African mainland 160 million years ago, thus spawning the biological laboratory that my colleagues referenced, the diversity of plants and animals found nowhere else, massive moths, towering trees. There are more than a hundred species alone of lemurs.

Sadly, the majority of Madagascar's people are trapped in a cycle of poverty, less than $2 a day. That's why the United States did step forward with the first Millennium Challenge program. And protection of these incredible and unique resources, only 10 percent of which remain, could be key to a sustainable and economically secure future.

As has been referenced on the floor, the political turmoil is putting the honest livelihoods of many, as well as our planet's greatest treasure, in extreme peril.

Political instability breeds corruption and mismanagement. Twenty years of partnership with the United States Government and NGOs that has resulted in more effective management and preservation is being undone in a matter of months. The de facto regime is using the endangered resources to boost its regime and has issued sweeping decrees allowing the harvest and export of woods from protected forests and World Heritage Sites.

The reports from Madagascar are dire and detail rampant illegal logging, mining, and resource degradation. Traffickers smuggle out record numbers of the world's rarest tortoises to Asian and European collectors. Poachers kill and roast scores of lemurs for restaurants. Armed loggers brazenly plunder protected forests, looting dwindling hardwood for furniture.

The media has detailed this ongoing destruction. Activities that not only deny access to basic resources to locals, they degrade the country's thriving ecotourism industry which brought in almost $400 million badly needed last year. The United States has condemned the current government, suspended all nonhumanitarian aid, and terminated assistance from the aforementioned Millennium Development Corporation compact.

I am pleased that we will join today with the World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International, and the Wildlife Conservation Society, all of whom have denounced this wholesale exploitation of these precious resources.

I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, that we are moving forward. I deeply thank the prompt action and bipartisan support for this legislation.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution, which condemns the illegal extraction of Madagascar's natural resources, although it does so without identifying who's doing the extracting, which I think I'd like to comment on.

I have traveled to Madagascar; and as the co-chairman of the International Conservation Caucus, I have seen the pristine habitat of this island. It has got a very unique biodiversity, as has been mentioned. Ninety percent of the species there are endemic to that island, and that's one of the reasons a lot of people call Madagascar the ''eighth continent.'' It is because it is so unique in this way. And the inhabitants of that island rely very heavily on that biodiversity and on biotourism as an industry. The biotourism draws about $400 million a year. So preserving Madagascar's unique beauty is important not just from an ecologic standpoint; it's also very critical as an economic necessity, basically, for many of the inhabitants of that island. And, rightfully, this resolution condemns the act. It condemns the litany of natural resource degradation that's occurred.

But it's important that it mentions the plundering of precious forests. Unfortunately, from my standpoint there's no mention of who is doing the plundering or where these resources are being sold.

□ 1830

From my standpoint, this would be similar to condemning an act of terror without naming the terrorist.

This resolution would be greatly strengthened by including such information. Reports that I have read from Global Witness identify rosewood taken out of Masoala National Park as being for sale in China. That is the destination of the illegal logging.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution but also to take a closer look at China's role at resource exploitation in Africa and across the developing world. I chaired the Africa Subcommittee for 8 years. I can tell you, the picture of China in Africa is not pretty, and this action in Madagascar is one more example of it.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H. Res. 839 ''Condemning the illegal extraction of Madagascar's natural resources.'' This timely resolution calls upon the leadership of Madagascar to undertake democratic reforms as well as immediately implement measures to protect their fragile and beautiful environment.

There are many beautiful places in this world, but few are as diverse as the island nation of Madagascar. Madagascar is the world's fourth largest island, covering over 144 million acres. This unique island has a wide range of ecosystems including rain forests, dry forests, volcanic mountains, and a large desert. The climate ranges from tropical along the coast to temperate inland to arid in the south. This environmental diversity supports an equally large range of biodiversity. The island is home to 150,000 species of unique flora and fauna, as well as thousands of animals found nowhere else on earth. According to the World Wildlife Fund, ''approximately 92 percent of Madagascar's reptiles, 68 percent of its plant life and 98 percent of its land mammals, including lemurs, exist naturally nowhere else on Earth.''

Madagascar is also home to over 20 million people who depend on the biodiversity to survive. For example, the Wildlife Conservation Society estimates that 150,000 people depend on the Makira-Masoala rainforest as their primary source of water. Approximately 80 percent of Madagascar's population lives below the poverty line, 70 percent of the population live outside cities, and many Malagasy people depend on subsistence farming; thus, the fate of the Malagasy people is closely intertwined with that of their environment.

Mr. Speaker, as this resolution points out, the livelihoods of the people, animals and plants on Madagascar are threatened by a political crisis that triggered a pillage of its valuable wildlife and forests. In mid-March 2009, President Marc Ravalomanana's government was overthrown by forces led by Andry Rajoelina. Mr. Rajoelina, a key opposition leader and sitting mayor of Madagascar's capitol city was upset with the President's conflict of interest between his extensive commercial interests and running the country. Ravalomanana was both the President of the government and the country's mammoth business conglomerate.

Protestors accused the President of wasting international aid money and striking a harmful land deal with Daewoo, Inc. of South Korea. Under the deal, Daewoo would own an area of farmland the size of Belgium.

During the coup, over 135 people died and thousands were injured in frequent clashes between protestors and police and army forces. The violence has crippled the island's $390 million-a-year tourism sector, and unnerved foreign investors in Madagascar's mining and oil industries. The human rights of Ravalomanana's supporters are being threatened throughout the country. Many of his supporters that remain in the country are in hiding, have been beaten, or are in jail.

The Obama Administration has condemned Marc Ravalomanana's forced resignation as President of the Republic of Madagascar, and Andry Rajoelina's installation as de facto head of state, as tantamount to a coup d'etat, undemocratic, and contrary to the rule of law. By

designating the regime change as a coup, the U.S. has suspended all non-emergency foreign assistance. The African Union and other international organizations have similarly denounced the coup but, despite international pressure, a return to democracy seems unlikely.

This is a sad sequence of events for a country once lauded as a success story in Africa. Madagascar, as you may recall, was the first country to receive a contract from the Millennium Challenge Cooperation when, in April 2005, the Millennium Challenge Corporation signed a 4-year, $110 million Compact with the Republic of Madagascar to raise incomes by assisting the rural population to transition from subsistence agriculture to a market economy.

Today, the new government threatens not only the fragile ecosystems, but the citizens of their own nation. This is why I strongly support this resolution that calls on people of Madagascar to immediately undertake a democratic, consensual process to restore constitutional governance, culminating in free, fair and peaceful elections, as well as denounce the illegal extraction of Madagascar's natural resources.

Mr. POE of Texas. We have no other speakers, Mr. Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 839, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

CALLING ON THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF SRI LANKA'S TAMIL INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 711) calling on the United States Government and the international community to address the human rights and humanitarian needs of Sri Lanka's Tamil internally displaced persons (IDPs) currently living in government-run camps by supporting the release of such IDPs, implementing and facilitating an independent oversight of the process of release and resettlement, and allowing foreign aid groups to provide relief and resources to such IDPs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 711

Whereas May 2009 marked the conclusion of the 26-year struggle between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a State Department designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, and the Government of Sri Lanka, and the Government of Sri Lanka committed itself to caring for and ensuring the speedy return of the civilians internally displaced as a result of the fighting;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka is seeking to identify former combatants who were part of the LTTE and as part of the vetting process the Government of Sri Lanka has set up make-shift camps that initially housed over 280,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who fled their homes as the war drew to an end;

Whereas of those 280,000 internally displaced persons at the end of the war, approximately 10,000 of those individuals are being separately held by the Government of Sri Lanka as former combatants or on suspicion of having supported the LTTE;

Whereas as part of the United Nations Human Rights Council 11th Special Session on Sri Lanka held on May 27, 2009, the Government of Sri Lanka made commitments to the world to improve the conditions for the civilians housed in the camps and stated that the ''bulk'' of the IDPs would be resettled within 180 days;

Whereas as of October 23, 2009, over 51,000 IDPs have been released from the closed camps in the Vanni, and of those 36,000 have been returned to their districts of origin and found accommodation in their own homes or, pending return to their homes, with host families and in vacant houses of friends or relatives; and over 16,000 IDPs of special categories, such as the elderly, pregnant women and their families, priests, students, or people of special needs, have been released to host families or institutions;

Whereas as of October 23, 2009, some 220,000 civilian IDPs still remain in military-guarded camps in the four northern districts of Vavuniya, Mannar, Jaffna, and Trincomalee;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka has announced that it would facilitate in the next few weeks the voluntary return of over 40,000 civilian IDPs by the end of October and 60,000 per month of the remaining IDPs in the camps;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka has made some progress in easing camp congestion, registering IDPs, expanding access to humanitarian organizations, and demining the north, but much remains to be done to improve humanitarian conditions, particularly before the onset of the monsoon season;

Whereas the United States is urging the safe and speedy return of civilian IDPs, continued access for international humanitarian organizations, and the registration and provision of national identification cards to IDPs, to help promote freedom of movement; and

Whereas the United States supports the rapid release and voluntary return of all civilian IDPs as a critical element of national reconciliation in Sri Lanka: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) urges the Government of Sri Lanka, consistent with its obligation to provide security for all of its citizens, to expeditiously allow freedom of movement for civilian internally displaced persons (IDPs) to leave their camps voluntarily and return in safety and dignity to their homes or, where that is not possible, to live with host families or move to open transit sites;

(2) calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that IDP camps are truly civilian in nature and administered by civilian authorities, rather than under military supervision, and give full access to national and international humanitarian organizations and observers, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, in order to monitor the situation and to assist in the care of IDPs; and

(3) urges the Government of Sri Lanka to promote justice and political reconciliation for all parties, and engage in dialogue with all parties, including Tamils inside and outside Sri Lanka on new mechanisms for devolving power, improving human rights, and increasing accountability.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself such time as I may consume.

This resolution calls upon the Government of Sri Lanka to expeditiously release its internally displaced Tamil population from military-guarded camps and begin the process of political reconciliation.

This past May marked the conclusion of a long and brutal civil war between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Eelam, or LTTE, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization. While the United States and the international community welcome the end to this bloody war and congratulate the Government of Sri Lanka on its military victory, it is now time for the government to accelerate the process of releasing the hundreds of thousands of ethnic Tamils from the squalor camps where they have been confined.

By all accounts, the Government of Sri Lanka has made great progress in de-mining the northern part of the country to allow the successful return of the Tamil population. Now with the timeline it previously provided to the international community having come and gone, it must take the next step and provide the international community with a transparent and implementable road map for the release of the remaining IDPs.

For the safety of its own citizens who seek a return to normalcy, the Government of Sri Lanka should turn the camps over to proper civilian authorities and allow frequent, unconditional, and uninhibited access to the United Nations, the International Committee

on the Red Cross, and other aid groups. It is long past time for the Sinhalese and the Tamil populations of Sri Lanka to turn the page and, hand in hand, begin a new life together as citizens of a whole, peaceful Sri Lanka.

But doing so will require the Government of Sri Lanka to support a genuine reconciliation process, one that extends beyond local elections, and to make a determined effort to understand and address the legitimate concerns of its Tamil citizens.

I commend the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for introducing this important and timely resolution, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of House Resolution 711, as amended, a measure calling attention to the plight of internally displaced Tamil civilians in northern Sri Lanka.

Mr. Speaker, the United States and Sri Lanka share a long history of cordial relations, based in large part on common democratic traditions. The United States has been a friend to Sri Lanka, and there should be no doubt that we have stood with the people of Sri Lanka in the fight against terrorism.

As Members are aware, Sri Lanka waged a long and bitter conflict against the Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Eelam, called the LTTE, also known as the Tamil Tigers, a separatist group that has been designated by the United States as a foreign terrorist organization ever since 1997.

For nearly 30 years, the LTTE claimed to represent the aspirations of all Sri Lankan Tamils for a separate homeland and became notorious in the process for pioneering the suicide bomb jacket. They are responsible for at least a dozen high-level assassinations, including former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, as well as over 200 suicide attacks.

During that struggle, the United States was a steadfast supporter of Sri Lanka's efforts to stop the flow of arms and financing to the LTTE by providing law enforcement assistance and providing training and equipment to help the Sri Lankan military defend itself against the terrorist actions of the LTTE.

After fierce fighting in late May, the world witnessed the cessation of fighting in Sri Lanka and the apparent conclusion of its long-running insurgency. This brutal conflict cost tens of thousands of Sinhalese and Tamil lives, uprooted countless Sri Lankans from their homes, left thousands maimed or wounded, and badly divided this nation.

In this regard, the United States remains deeply concerned for the welfare of the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons uprooted by the current fighting.

Congress joins with the executive branch in recognizing the tremendous loss of life and hardships endured by the civilians in northern Sri Lanka. To help address their many urgent needs, the United States has provided some $56 million in humanitarian assistance in 2009.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of State has emphasized that while the Government of Sri Lanka has made some progress in easing camp congestion, registering internally displaced persons, called IDPs, and expanding access by humanitarian organizations, much more work remains to be done to meet its commitment to the return of the majority of displaced persons by the end of the year. This is particularly the case with monsoon season approaching.

We urge the government to allow robust humanitarian access to the displaced person camps and to work hand-in-hand with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the nongovernment organizations to ensure that civilian IDPs are accorded the rights and care meeting the highest international standards. The United States stands ready to help the government in these efforts.

Mr. Speaker, the defeat of the LTTE offers a chance for Sri Lanka to forge a new beginning and to ensure a lasting end of terrorism. To seize this opportunity, bold actions are needed to share power and assure all of Sri Lanka's communities a future of hope, respect, and dignity.

As a former U.S. ambassador to Sri Lanka has noted, ''Through such actions, a truly united Sri Lanka can emerge—a Sri Lanka that is rooted in democracy and tolerance, where human rights are respected, where media can operate freely and independently, and where all Sri Lankans can participate freely in an open dialogue on the way forward for your country.''

Mr. Speaker, I hope a successful reconciliation and healing process will emerge to help ensure a lasting end to terrorism in Sri Lanka and open a way for a brighter future for these people. The United States looks forward to working with Sri Lanka in that important endeavor. I support the adoption of this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS), the sponsor of this important resolution.

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me express my appreciation to Chairman BERMAN for yielding time and also for the expeditious manner in which this measure has been handled.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 711, a bipartisan resolution calling on the Sri Lankan Government and the international community to address the human rights and humanitarian needs of Sri Lanka's Tamils. I urge all Members of the body to support it.

Mr. Speaker, May of 2009 marked the conclusion of the 26-year struggle between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Sri Lankan Government. As a result of this war, tens of thousands of Sri Lankan citizens have been displaced and are without homes.

The Sri Lankan Government believes that among their displaced citizens are former Liberation Tiger militants. As part of the vetting process, the Sri Lankan Government has set up makeshift camps to house over 280,000 internally displaced persons and allow the government to relocate these suspected militants. Allegations are being reported that the standard of treatment and the living conditions afforded to people in these camps is grossly inadequate.

Mr. Speaker, the United Nations Human Rights Council's 11th special session on Sri Lanka met on May 27, 2009, to address the internally displaced persons in government-run camps. During this session, the Sri Lankan Government made commitments to improve the conditions for the people housed in these camps and stated that the bulk of the people would be resettled within 180 days. After the first 150 days passing with no progress, the Sri Lankan Government has just released some 50,000 people, which is a good first step; although nearly 230,000 internally displaced persons still remain held in camps.

So, Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution that calls on the Sri Lankan Government to release their citizens and allow them to return to their homes and properties. I, again, urge my colleagues to support the internally displaced persons in their quest for freedom.

Again, I would like to thank Chairman BERMAN for his expeditious handling of this matter. I urge its support.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise as well in support of this resolution, calling on the U.S. Government and the international community to address the humanitarian needs of the Sri Lankan internally displaced Tamil community, and I think the needs are very great.

The Sri Lankan Government routed the Tamil Tigers, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization, earlier this year. This terror group has left a rather bloody trail in South Asia, and that trail, frankly, has even led to our shores.

The Tamil Tigers perfected the use of suicide bombers. They invented the suicide belt. They assassinated two world leaders. They've pioneered the

use of women in suicide attacks. The Tigers have fund-raised in the United States. In recent years, the FBI has arrested men attempting to export shoulder-fired missiles and other sophisticated weapons to the group.

□ 1845

Frankly, the FBI reports the Tamil Tigers are among the most dangerous and deadly extremists in the world. An estimated 280,000 ethnic Tamil Tigers were displaced from their homes due to the fighting earlier this year, and they are now in refugee camps. The condition of these camps are grim. They are crowded. They are dirty. They lack basic necessities. NGO reports that come to us show severe water shortages. Many Tamils have had to line up for up to 5 hours to receive even meager food rations.

It is important that we continue to monitor the human rights conditions in these camps. Abuses must be checked. Although progress has been slow up until recently, I was very pleased to read a BBC report the other day that between 2,000 to 3,000 people are now leaving the camps every day. This is progress, although I am sure it is not fast enough for some.

On this point, I think we should be clear. The Sri Lankan Government should be working to release civilian displaced persons in an expeditious manner, not the terrorist population that may be 10,000 strong, hiding out in the camps. These are the same terrorists that used civilians as human shields and employed lethal force to prevent civilians from fleeing the previous fighting. The Tamil Tiger infrastructure must be rooted out even as we support the effort to release the civilian displaced persons in this expeditious manner.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 711, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

WORLD PNEUMONIA DAY

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 863) recognizing the scourge of pneumonia, urging the United States and the world to mobilize cooperation and prioritize resources to fight pneumonia and save children's lives, and recognizing November 2 as World Pneumonia Day, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 863

Whereas pneumonia kills an estimated 4,000,000 people every year, according to the World Health Organization and UNICEF;

Whereas more than 150,000,000 episodes of pneumonia occur every year among children under the age of five in developing countries, accounting for more than 95 percent of all new cases worldwide;

Whereas of the 8,800,000 children under the age of five who die every year, up to 2,000,000 die from pneumonia;

Whereas pneumonia kills 1 child every 15 seconds;

Whereas pneumonia kills more children than any other illness;

Whereas an estimated 26 percent of neonatal deaths within the first month after birth are caused by severe infections, including pneumonia;

Whereas these deaths occur primarily in the world's poorest countries;

Whereas for every child who dies of pneumonia in an industrialized country, more than 2,000 children die of pneumonia in poor countries;

Whereas pneumonia is a preventable and treatable problem;

Whereas more than 1,000,000 lives could be saved each year through pneumonia prevention and treatment;

Whereas many childhood pneumonia deaths can be prevented with early diagnosis;

Whereas immunizing children against measles, whooping cough, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), and pneumococcus could cut the rate of severe pneumonia in half;

Whereas studies indicate that in developing countries, only one in four caregivers know the two key symptoms of pneumonia, fast and difficult breathing, which indicate that a child should be treated immediately;

Whereas fewer than ⅓ of children suffering from pneumonia in the developing world receive antibiotics which are available for less than $1;

Whereas health professionals agree that prevention and treatment of pneumonia must be a priority in broader, coordinated child survival strategies;

Whereas in the context of child survival strategies, pneumonia control requires a three-prong program of protection, prevention, and treatment;

Whereas preventing and treating childhood pneumonia is critical to reducing the mortality rate of children under the age of five; and

Whereas World Pneumonia Day is recognized on November 2 annually: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) affirms its commitment to child survival and development programs that focus on protection, prevention, and treatment of pneumonia;

(2) salutes the health professionals and community health workers who are on the front lines in the world's poorest countries, extending preventative care and treatment to children most at risk of contracting pneumonia;

(3) reaffirms the United States commitment to reducing child mortality; and

(4) recognizes World Pneumonia Day.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The United States has repeatedly affirmed its commitment to reducing child mortality. We have endorsed the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, one of which is to reduce by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015 the under 5 mortality rate.

We know about the scourge of hunger and the disastrous impacts of diseases like AIDS, malaria, and measles on children around the world. But many people are not aware of that more children die of pneumonia than anything else. Every 15 seconds, a child dies from pneumonia, about 2 million children each year.

It is estimated that more than 150 million episodes of pneumonia occur every year among children under the age of 5 in developing countries, accounting for more than 95 percent of all new cases worldwide. Yet pneumonia is preventable; it is a treatable illness. A life can be saved with antibiotics that cost less than a dollar. It is really outrageous that we have the ability to save lives and we don't because the money is not used for it.

Sadly, according to UNICEF, fewer than 20 percent of children suffering from pneumonia receive these antibiotics which they so desperately need. Despite the fact that pneumonia kills more children under 5 than AIDS, malaria, and measles combined, it has received far less attention and funding than any of them.

Pneumonia can be treated if recognized and diagnosed early. Yet fewer than 25 percent of caregivers in the developing world are trained to identify the two telltale symptoms of pneumonia: fast and difficult breathing.

To raise awareness of these distressing statistics and to build support for addressing the problem, World Pneumonia Day is recognized annually on November 2. That was yesterday. And yesterday, organizations and countries across the globe joined forces in support of the first-ever World Pneumonia Day.

I am proud to report in New York City where I live, more than 100 leaders

in science, politics, and global health, including the Earth Institute of Columbia University, convened a Global Pneumonia Summit.

The resolution before us, H. Res. 863, reaffirms our commitment into national child survival and development programs that focus on protection, prevention, and treatment of pneumonia.

I commend the distinguished gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) for introducing this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of this resolution. Pneumonia is the leading cause of death among children worldwide. In fact, the World Health Organization estimates that pneumonia kills approximately 1.8 million children every year under the age of 5. Most of those deaths occur in impoverished areas of countries in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where infants are particularly vulnerable.

Ironically, despite its tremendous negative impact on child survival, pneumonia is actually a preventable and treatable illness. It is a tragedy that a treatable disease still causes so much pain and suffering around the world. It also is an illness that does not receive enough attention, despite the fact that among children, it can be addressed quite impressibly through prevention and low-cost medical approaches.

In developing countries, for example, only one in five caregivers know how to recognize the key symptoms of the onset of pneumonia. As a result, half the children who are infected with pneumonia quite simply do not receive timely or adequate medical treatment and care. It is, therefore, possible to increase the rates of child survival by educating caregivers on the key symptoms of pneumonia and by broadening children's access to inexpensive antibiotics, among other things.

The World Health Organization reports that the number of lives saved could be more than doubled if such prevention and treatment interventions were universally delivered.

Mr. Speaker, reducing the occurrence of pneumonia is a critical step towards reducing child mortality. This resolution reaffirms our commitment to child survival through prevention and treatment of childhood pneumonia.

Finally, this resolution also commends those health care professionals who are serving on the front lines of this illness and recognizes November 2 as World Pneumonia Day.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER).

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman BERMAN and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN and their staffs for their support and work on this resolution. It is important for the House of Representatives to recognize the devastating toll that pneumonia takes on children around the world, and I am proud that we are considering this resolution today.

Yesterday marked the first annual World Pneumonia Day. Almost 100 global health organizations joined together to bring awareness to this terrible disease. The world's leading killer of children, pneumonia, is undernoticed, underfunded, and undertreated. This disease kills 4 million people each year, 2 million of them children. It takes the lives of more children under the age of 5 than measles, AIDS, and malaria combined. Every 15 seconds, a child dies of pneumonia.

The horror of this disease is that it is so preventable and treatable. Consider these facts:

Studies in developing countries indicate that only one in four caregivers know the two key symptoms of pneumonia: fast and difficult breathing. This leads to pneumonia going untreated, which is deadly;

Fewer than one-third of the children who develop pneumonia receive the antibiotics they need to fight the illness, even though the antibiotics are available for less than a dollar. Half of the cases of pneumonia that occur could be prevented by ensuring that these children have access to the vaccines they need.

Mr. Speaker, these facts paint a bleak picture. Millions of lives are being lost each year when they could be saved. They could be saved by international cooperation to educate and train caregivers. They could be saved if people could have access to the vaccines and medications they need.

My resolution affirms this body's commitment to saving these lives by supporting programs that focus on the protection, prevention, and treatment of pneumonia. It commends the health professionals across the globe who every day work in the world's poorest countries to treat and care for the victims of pneumonia. And it reaffirms the United States' commitment to reducing child mortality. Finally, this resolution recognizes World Pneumonia Day. In doing so, the House of Representatives joins with dozens of global health organizations working to raise the awareness of this disease and to focus resources on protection, prevention, and treatment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to encourage international cooperation to combat this disease. Lives can and should be saved. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today in support of H. Res. 863, "Recognizing the scourge of pneumonia, urging the United States and the world to mobilize cooperation and prioritize resources to fight pneumonia and save children's lives, and recognizing November 2 as World Pneumonia Day". I would like to thank my colleague, Representative SHEA-PORTER, for introducing this resolution, as well as the co-sponsors.

As co-chair of the Congressional Children's Caucas, this legislation is very important to me. Pneumonia kills an estimated 4,000,000 people every year—one child every 15 seconds. According to the World Health Organization and UNICEF, more children die of pneumonia more than any other illness, burying more each year than AIDS, malaria, and measles combined. More than 15,000,000 episodes of pneumonia occur every year among children under the age of five in developing countries, accounting for more than 95 percent of all new cases worldwide. Of the 8,800,000 children under the age of five who die every year, up to 2,000,000 die from pneumonia.

An estimated 26 percent of neonatal deaths within the first month after birth are caused by severe infections, including pneumonia; these deaths occur primarily in the world's poorest countries. For every child who dies of pneumonia in an industrialized country, more than 2,000 children die of pneumonia in poor countries.

Pneumonia is a preventable and treatable problem; more than 1,000,000 lives could be saved each year through prevention and treatment, and many childhood pneumonia deaths can be prevented with early diagnosis. Immunizing children against measles, whooping cough, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), and pneumococcus could cut the rate of severe pneumonia in half. In developing countries, studies indicate that only one in four caregivers know the two key symptoms of pneumonia, fast and difficult breathing, which indicate that a child should be treated immediately.

Despite all that can be done to prevent the disease, less than one-third of children suffering from pneumonia in the developing world receive antibiotics available for less than $1. Health professionals agree that prevention and treatment of pneumonia must be a priority in broader, coordinated child survival strategies, requiring a three-pronged program of protection, prevention, and treatment.

The Millennium Development Goals—which the United States, in its wisdom, has pledged to support—call on us to continue our efforts to prevent and treat childhood pneumonia, and to reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the mortality rate of children under the age of five. That is why I join this esteemed body in affirming its commitment to international child survival and development programs that prioritize protection, prevention, and treatment against pneumonia; as well as reaffirming the United States' commitment to reaching the Millennium Development Goals, particularly for reducing child mortality.

It is also why I join the House in saluting the health professionals and community health workers on the front lines in the world's poorest countries who are extending preventative care and treatment to children most at risk of contracting pneumonia. And it is why, with this resolution, we recognize World Pneumonia Day.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr.

ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 863, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CONGRATULATING THE INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 858) congratulating the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) on its 40th anniversary and recognizing its significant accomplishments and contributions.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 858

Whereas the IAF was originally created as an independent Federal agency to provide a new alternative model to traditional United States foreign assistance that promotes greater community-ownership and self-sustainability of development initiatives;

Whereas the IAF has enabled millions of marginalized and poor people in Latin America and the Caribbean to improve their lives through nearly 5,000 self-help grants for income and employment generation, civic education and citizen participation, access to credit and public resources, food security, environmental sustainability, and cultural and social development;

Whereas the IAF has proven that its people-to-people approach to foreign assistance, delivering aid funds directly to grassroots groups and local organizations of poor communities, is remarkably cost-effective, targeting aid funds to those with the greatest need and those who will use them best;

Whereas each year, hundreds of thousands of IAF grant participants benefit from improved nutrition, medical care, access to clean water, agricultural and vocational skills, microcredit loans, small business management training, increased educational opportunities, and knowledge of sustainable agricultural techniques and environmental practices;

Whereas many grassroots leaders supported by the IAF have gone on to leadership roles at the local and national levels;

Whereas the IAF's beneficiary-driven, responsive approach has fostered trust between Latin American and Caribbean citizens and the United States Government by listening and responding to needs the people have identified, partnering with community-based groups and investing in projects that utilize and validate local knowledge and expertise;

Whereas the IAF's status as an independent United States Government aid agency allows for a streamlined grant-making process, the flexibility to respond quickly and adapt to people's needs on the ground, and the ability to maintain a positive United States presence in the region;

Whereas the IAF continues to demonstrate the political, diplomatic, and strategic value of an independent United States Government aid agency with the ability to reach those on the economic, social, and cultural fringes of society in neighboring countries, facilitating greater access to the licit economy, markets, and public policy decisionmaking processes;

Whereas the IAF's projects complement and strive to maximize the impact of other larger United States aid agencies operating in Latin America and the Caribbean by enabling an important link between poor communities and larger-scale development activities; and

Whereas the IAF was designed with strong bipartisan support and has maintained this balanced support throughout the four decades of its operations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) congratulates the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) on its 40th anniversary;

(2) recognizes that the IAF has demonstrated that its grassroots model for United States foreign assistance is effective; and

(3) declares that the IAF is a vital component of United States foreign policy in the Americas and of the United States development agenda.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of H. Res. 858, a resolution I offered congratulating the Inter-American Foundation, or the IAF, on its 40th anniversary, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I first of all want to thank Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman HOWARD BERMAN and Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for their support of this resolution. And, I am particularly grateful to CONNIE MACK, the ranking member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, which I chair, for being my colead on this resolution.

Over the years, the Inter-American Foundation has enabled millions of marginalized and poor people in Latin America and the Caribbean to improve their lives through grants promoting income and employment generation, civic education and citizen participation, access to credit and public resources, food security, environmental sustainability, and cultural and social development.

During Democratic and Republican administrations alike, the IAF has been an important model of grassroots foreign assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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Furthermore, it is a vital component of United States foreign policy in the Americas and of the United States development agenda.

As chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, I have had the pleasure of visiting Inter-American Foundation projects throughout the region in Latin America and the Caribbean, both places. In Ecuador, I visited with the Community Corporation and Action Foundation, CACMU, a women's microcredit cooperative where I saw firsthand the benefits reaped by IAF's relatively small investment. During that same visit, I also had the privilege of meeting with representatives of the Agro-ecology and Agro-tourism Foundation, a community organization focused on food security and natural resource management.

The IAF's work does not simply provide tangible benefits to the poor. It is also extremely useful in maintaining a positive United States presence in Latin America and the Caribbean.

As President Obama reengages with our neighbors in the hemisphere, the work of the IAF is more important than ever. In April, I had the pleasure of attending the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago as the leader of the U.S. congressional delegation. At the summit, President Obama pledged that the United States would ''be partners in helping to alleviate poverty'' in the region.

One of the best ways that Congress can stand with President Obama in supporting a robust social agenda in the hemisphere is through continued strong support of the Inter-American Foundation. So I congratulate the IAF on its 40th anniversary, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today and join my colleagues in congratulating the Inter-American Foundation, the IAF, on its 40th anniversary. I would like to thank Congressman ENGEL and his staff for working to put this resolution together.

The foundation began as part of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1969 as an alternative to the larger USAID. The foundation presented a new model for funding grass-roots development with an emphasis on improving lives at the community level, not just on the national level. The foundation receives its funds through annual allocations by Congress and from the Social Progress Trust Fund. Since beginning its operations in 1972, the IAF has made 4,578 grants for more than $586 million.

For 40 years now, the IAF has used small-dollar, targeted grants to make significant, long-lasting changes in the lives of people throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. By focusing on self-help development projects, the IAF encourages partnerships directed at improving the quality of life for poor

people and strengthening democratic practices.

While the economic benefits of these efforts cannot be dismissed, it is the sense of ownership at the grass-roots level and the pride these grants help to cultivate that has made the real difference in hundreds of thousands of lives.

Empowering people to take control of their own future, allowing parents to provide for their families, supporting communities to strengthen stability and prosperity, these are the keystones for strengthening democracy in the region.

As country after country in our hemisphere faces new and increasing challenges to their democracies, their institutions and the rule of law, our shared goal must be to advance U.S. interests and, in so doing, help to preserve and protect democratic institutions and fundamental freedoms around the world.

We must listen to the people of these nations and remain committed to our founding values and democratic principles. It is through the efforts of organizations like the Inter-American Foundation, the IAF, that we are able to do this.

I would like to commend and thank the Inter-American Foundation for its hard work and commitment and congratulate them on their 40th anniversary.

I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Texas for his good words.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 858.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

EDITORIAL COMMENTS OF BOB SCHIEFFER

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, tonight I would like to read the words of Bob Schieffer. I watched his show, ''Face the Nation,'' last Sunday, and I was very impressed with his editorial.

His editorial is as follows: ''As the President tries to develop a new strategy in Afghanistan, I wonder if this is the real lesson that we've learned in Afghanistan so far: that nation-building, like charity, probably begins at home (at least the way we seem to be going about it in Afghanistan.)

''Now, don't get me wrong, terrorism poses a threat to America's national security, but is trying to build a Western-style nation in Afghanistan by funneling money to its leaders really the best way to combat terrorism?

''I guess what set me off was that story about how we've secretly put the President of Afghanistan's brother on the CIA payroll. He's the one who's supposed to be mixed up in the drug trade. The idea was that, by doing that, he'll help us pave the way to building a democracy there. Now, that's good work if you can get it, but I don't see how that is making us safer.

''Whatever the size of the military force the President decides on for Afghanistan, I think he needs to be paying more attention to where the money is going for the non-military spending there. Incredibly, no one really seems to know.''

Mr. Schieffer further stated: ''To judge by what we've gotten from it so far, we'd be much better off with some nation-building back home. Our infrastructure is already a mess. We could start at the Oakland Bay Bridge where a 5,000-pound part of the top fell off into the traffic below. That would certainly make us safer for sure.

''In Afghanistan, we're having to relearn what we should have already known—that we can help others but we can't do it for them, and when we have to pay others to help themselves, I don't see how that helps anyone but the guy getting paid.''

Again, that is from the editorial comments of Bob Schieffer this past Sunday on ''Face the Nation.''

Mr. Speaker, I want to say, in addition to what Mr. Schieffer said, I want to thank the President for taking his time and fully trying to understand the options and the trials facing our country in Afghanistan. Our men and women in uniform are very brave, they have done a great job for this country for the last 9 years, and yet we must be sure that we have a goal that can be achieved. And we must have a full definition of victory if we continue to send more troops into Afghanistan.

With that, Mr. Speaker, before I close, as I do each and every night on the floor, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God, in his loving arms, to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I ask God to bless the House and Senate. I ask God to give wisdom, strength and courage to the President of the United States. And I will ask three times, God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

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

(Mr. CUMMINGS 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. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. DEFAZIO 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 Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas 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 gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. MASSA 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 North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY 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 Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. RYAN of Ohio 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 South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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 Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington 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 gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. BACHMANN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. BIGGERT addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. BLACKBURN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. BONO MACK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. BONO MACK addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CAPITO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. EMERSON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING CHENEY UNIVERSITY ON ITS 173RD FOUNDERS DAY

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

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the 173rd Founders Day of Cheney University of Pennsylvania, our Nation's oldest Historically Black Institution of higher education, and its vision to prepare stellar, reflective, visionary leaders and responsible citizens.

At the time of its founding in 1837 by Quaker philanthropist Richard Humphreys, Cheney University served as a learning place for African Americans who sought an education that would prepare them to become teachers. To meet the needs of all qualified young people regardless of economic status, the university offered a free classical education on its Philadelphia campus. But in 1902, the university moved about 25 miles west of Philadelphia to George Cheney's farm, where it is located today in my district. By 1983, Cheney University joined the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

Today, Cheney University has a diverse student body made up of bright, confident individuals who represent a variety of races, cultures and nationalities. In addition to becoming professionals in the education sector, Cheney graduates earn degrees in more than 30 disciplines and make their mark in careers that include journalism, medicine, business, science, law, communications, and government service.

Among the 10,000 talented graduates who have gone on to lead and make a difference in the world have been journalist Ed Bradley of the CBS program ''60 Minutes''; Robert W. Bogle, publisher and CEO of the Philadelphia Tribune, the oldest newspaper continuously owned and operated by an African American.

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Gladys Styles Johnston, chancellor of the University of Nebraska at Kearney; The Honorable Michael Horsey, Pennsylvania House of Representatives; The Honorable Thaddeus Kirkland, Pennsylvania House of Representatives; Robert L. Woodson, founder and president of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (NCNE); Samuel J. Patterson, CEO of Shepard Patterson Systems and Information Consulting Firm; and Ambassador Joseph M. Segars.

On November 6, 2009, Cheney University will celebrate its remarkable history and dedication to excellence in education by looking forward to a new generation of leaders. Through its Academic Success Center and small class sizes, Cheney University provides an academic environment in which students take on a variety of leadership positions at the university. There are more than 40 student organizations allowing students to take advantage of many extracurricular opportunities at the campus newspaper, television station, radio station, and in competitive athletics.

As Michelle Howard-Vital says of her Cheney students, ''On campus, you will see hope and enthusiasm in the eyes of future graduates who will leave Cheney to compete for leadership positions in Pennsylvania, in the United States and around the world.''

To honor Cheney University's ongoing commitment to leadership on its 173rd Founder's Day, educator, author, and motivational speaker Salome Thomas-El will address the university on the subject of leadership and character for the 21st century. In addition, Cheney University will honor The Honorable James R. Roebuck, Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Cheney University of Pennsylvania's 173rd Founder's Day, I acknowledge the alumni, current students, faculty and staff, officers, advisory team, council of trustees, and President Howard-Vital for their collaboration and dedication to educating our next generation of American and world leaders at a marvelous university.

TOP TEN TAX INCREASES INCLUDED IN H.R. 3962

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, as anyone who has been paying much attention to what has been going on in Congress this fall will know, we have been talking about health care. What we had introduced last week was H.R. 3962, which I call a ''tax increase bill'' masquerading as a health care bill, and I want to outline some of the tax increases that are included in H.R. 3962 to back up my comments.

Number 1: Small business surtax, section 551, page 336, $460.5 billion.

Number 2: Employer mandate tax, sections 511–512, page 308, $135 billion. This violates President Obama's pledge to avoid tax increases on Americans earning less than $250,000.

Number 3: Individual mandate tax, section 501, page 296, $33 billion. This also violates President Obama's pledge.

Number 4: Medical device tax, section 552, page 339, $20 billion. Again, it violates President Obama's pledge to avoid tax increases on Americans earning less than $250,000.

Number 5: $2,500 annual cap on FSAs, section 532, page 325, $13.3 billion. It violates President Obama's pledge.

Number 6: Prohibition on pretax purchases of over-the-counter drugs through HSAs, FSAs, and HRAs, section 531, page 324, $5 billion. This is another violation.

Number 7: Tax on health insurance policies to fund Comparative Effectiveness Research Trust Fund, section 1802, page 1162, $2 billion. It violates the pledge.

Number 8: 20 percent penalty on certain HSA distributions, section 533, page 326, $1.3 billion.

Number 9: Other tax hikes and increased compliance costs on U.S. job creators, $56.4 billion; IRS reporting on payments; delay implementation of worldwide interest allocation rules; override U.S. treaties on certain payments by insourcing businesses; codify economic substance doctrine and impose penalties.

All of these are referenced by the section number and the page number so the American people don't have to rely on what we're saying.

There is one other, which is revenue-raising provisions for $3 billion.

The total tax increases in the bill: $729.5 billion. This information came from the Joint Committee on Taxation, Congressional Budget Office.

Mr. Speaker, what we need is reform in our health care system. Republicans have offered commonsense reform. Those commonsense reform items are not being allowed to be heard. They were voted down in committee over and over and over again by the Democrat majority. This is not what the American people want. They want to see reform in health care, not increased taxes and a job-killing bill that will do very little to help with their challenges in dealing with health care reform.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Oklahoma (Ms. FALLIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. FALLIN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. GRANGER addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JENKINS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MYRICK addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. SCHMIDT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. SCHMIDT addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

REPUBLICAN HEALTH CARE SOLUTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POLIS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to be joined this evening by Republican freshman colleagues of mine, and this session will be cochaired by my fellow freshman from the great State of Minnesota, ERIK PAULSEN.

ERIK, thank you for joining me this evening, and our other freshman colleagues will be joining us shortly.

We're going to be talking about health care from the perspective of freshmen. We're going to be talking about some Republican alternatives to the large bill that the Speaker introduced last week and unveiled and that we're discussing this week. We'll be doing some comparisons between bills that Republicans have to provide better solutions, to take incremental approaches, to address the most important concerns that the American people have about their health care system first, and about the need to take a very deliberate, careful approach to changing an American health care system that needs tweaking rather than throwing out and replacing.

I yield to my colleague from Minnesota, Mr. PAULSEN.

Mr. PAULSEN. Well, thank you. I thank the gentlelady for yielding and for organizing this little discussion tonight, and I know we're going to have some of our freshman colleagues joining us.

I think, first and foremost, it's important for me to outline—and I think you share this view. You know, no one is denying that our health care system is in need of reform. Certainly, as a freshman Member, I know that the Members of our class, actually both Republican and Democrat, know that there need to be changes in the status quo. I know the Republicans, in particular in the freshman class, have been very frustrated that the media may not center or focus on some of the proposals that we actually have offered because, as you indicated, there are some very incremental approaches and piecemeal approaches which actually could be done and could be done bipartisanly to show success and progress in helping lower premiums for families, for individuals, and for small businesses.

As most of the public is well aware now, I think, just as early as last week, we had dropped on our desks a 1,990-page bill, which is a huge, mammoth bill, and we can bring that up a little later for a prop. It is a big piece of legislation, and I know we're going to be voting on that later this week.

I think I've come to realize in my first few months in office, as probably you have, that Washington is a place where actions are often taken without properly weighing the consequences and the impact of those actions. I think the bill that has been laid before us is very misguided in that it's going to have a heavy tax load put on the small business community. It's going to tax medical device companies in particular and medical device products, which impacts my district very greatly and the jobs there. We'll talk a little bit more about that in a little bit.

Our goal also is to make sure we are providing adequate coverage and are lowering the costs of health care premiums for all Americans—for individuals, families, and small businesses—because it is a pocketbook issue; but I think the approach that the majority is taking is a very misguided approach, and we're going to have some discussion about that tonight and about some of our alternatives, which, I think, make absolute common sense.

I would like to yield back.

Mrs. LUMMIS. I look forward to having our colleagues join us so we can discuss some of those.

We have been maligned as a party for not having a health care solution to counter the Pelosi approach and the Obama approach to health care; but in fact, we have over 53 bills that you can read online which will address health care reform. We offer and challenge the Democrat leadership, who controls this Congress, to pick and choose from among the better ideas that Republicans have and to bring some of those bills through committees and to the floor so we can debate them openly in a transparent manner.

They were not crafted behind closed doors as was the Democratic bill. They were crafted in the traditional manner with the help of legislative draftsmen and -women to address specific components of our health care system in a way that they can be aggregated into a larger reform package or addressed individually if we prefer. So we can have a healthy debate on a variety of subjects.

Even the Chicago Tribune noted recently that Republicans have a number of great ideas. Here is an excerpt from a recent editorial in the Chicago Tribune:

GOP proposals contain smart ideas to increase choice and competition in the health insurance market. These excellent ideas could expand coverage for the uninsured without cratering the Federal budget or curbing the competition and innovation that drive the U.S. health care system.

My colleague Mr. PAULSEN is on the Financial Services Committee, and I am on the Budget Committee. Among the things that he and I have seen in our committee work in the last 10 months is that we are aggregating more debt than George Washington through George W. Bush combined and that, while our colleagues on the Democratic side of the aisle criticize Republicans for spending too much and criticize their inheriting a deficit, in fact, since we arrived in Washington—we freshmen along with the Pelosi Congress—they have increased the deficit, doubling it in 5 years and tripling it in 10. So it is not an excuse that they inherited a deficit.

Indeed, they did, and indeed, Republicans predating Mr. PAULSEN and I did overspend, but you don't solve an overspending problem by making it two times worse in 5 years and three times worse in 10 years. Our approaches to the health care bill are to advance solutions that will not add a dime to the deficit.

How many people believe that the $1 trillion-plus Democratic health care bill is not going to add a dime to the deficit? In fact, a poll recently showed that more people believe we'll discover life on other planets than the Democrats' health care bill will not add to the deficit.

The Republican bills, however, do not add a dime to the deficit. Here are three of them that I'd like to highlight this evening. As I said, there are 53 on a Web site that I'll provide to you later in this discussion.

One of them is H.R. 3400, Empowering Patients First Act. The prime sponsor is Representative TOM PRICE, a physician from Georgia. It is the product of the Republican Study Committee.

The bill uses a mix of new tax credits and deductions to make the purchase of health care feasible for all Americans. The bill expands the individual health insurance market, using association health plans and interstate health insurance shopping to give people more choices. The bill encourages the creation of State-based portals so people can compare plan prices and benefits. For those with preexisting conditions, the bill redirects unspent stimulus funds towards State-based high-risk pools. Importantly, this bill is fully offset through redirecting stimulus funds, stepping up efforts to root out waste, fraud and abuse in our entitlement programs, reducing defensive medicine through medical liability reform, and capping discretionary spending.

□ 1930

This bill scores in the favorable column.

Another bill, sponsored by Representative JOHN SHADEGG of Arizona, entitled Improving Health Care for All Americans Act, has many of the taxation provisions incorporated into it that were eventually added into H.R. 3400. Then the Patients' Choice Act, which is a fun one to highlight, because it takes a little bit different tack, is sponsored by Representative PAUL RYAN. The bill provisions include some reforms that are badly needed to Medicare and Medicaid without decreasing benefits.

I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. PAULSEN. Thank you for yielding.

Well, I think, as you just mentioned, there is no doubt that there have been other Republican plans that have been offered. There are a variety of bills, 50-some bills that have been out there. In fact, all of these, nearly all of these pieces of legislation have actually been introduced prior to this mammoth nearly 2,000-page bill that has been dropped on our desk just last week.

I want to go back to some of the comments you made earlier about the deficit, because as someone who came to Washington fully acknowledging and recognizing that Republicans were part of the problem on deficit spending many years ago, that is no reason to continue to do the same.

Seeing ourselves now face our very first trillion-dollar budget deficit is of great concern to me. I know it is of great concern to my constituents, for their children and their grandchildren, thinking the share of the national debt for each person now has gone up to about $38,000. Compared to when I was born, it was about $1,500 per person.

At some point we are going to have to pay back that debt, and that's a heavy burden that's going to fall, unfortunately, on our children and our grandchildren. The bill that is being proposed by the Speaker does not address health care costs.

You mentioned earlier there is not a good track record of government introducing legislation and having it be cost-effective or innovative. The reality is, if you look back at 1965, congressional forecasters predicted at that time that Medicare would cost about $12 billion in 1990.

Do you know what its actual cost came in at? The actual cost came in at $90 billion. Today, just like Social Security, it is now on a path to insolvency due to runaway costs. We have massive problems with existing entitlement programs. It doesn't seem to me to make a lot of sense to have a new entitlement program that the government doesn't have a good track record on.

Mrs. LUMMIS. The gentleman from Minnesota has four really cute little girls, and I carried one of their Scooby-Doo backpacks through the Minnesota airport while we were transferring planes trying to get back to Washington for votes. A lot of us have kids or grandchildren that will be affected by this legislation because they will be paying for it for years to come.

One of the things we all learned from our parents in this baby boom generation is the importance of handing a better America to your children, and that is something that I don't want to be responsible for being the first generation to renege on. That's why I am so much more supportive of these Republican bills than of the Speaker's bill.

Among the things that are in the Republican bills that are so important are meaningful tort reform. I say this with a caveat; I am one of those Republicans who would rather see tort reform done at the State level. I think we see more innovation and creativity. We see some States that want to have caps on noneconomic damages. We see some States that want health care panels, States that want to make sure that expert witnesses, within the certain specialty that is charged with malpractice, are the ones that are designated as witnesses. There are a whole variety of ways to address tort reform.

I prefer that it be handled at the State level, but I have signed on to several of these bills that have State tort reform provisions even at this Federal level because I think they take a much better approach to the overall subject of health care reform. In other words, the Republican plan has meaningful tort reform. Oddly, the Speaker's bill contains a provision that says they will give out grants for innovations in tort reform but not to States that have placed a cap on noneconomic damages.

If you talk to some of the former legislators, now Members of Congress, who are from States that enacted caps on noneconomic damages and medical malpractice cases, you will learn that their medical malpractice premiums

for their physicians dropped, thereby allowing their physicians to either charge their patients less or stay in practice in small communities where they don't have as many patients to spread out the costs of that extremely expensive malpractice insurance premium.

Then we have interstate health insurance shopping. This is really what I think is going to be one of the most exciting keys to reducing the costs of health insurance, because it's going to create more competition. Coming from the smallest population State in the Nation, Wyoming, and not being able to buy insurance across State lines for health care the way I can for automobile insurance, I don't have the options, because of our little small pool of citizens, to spread the costs.

It's going to be very important that we have the ability to shop for health insurance across State lines and that we do it in a transparent way. I see these ads on TV for car insurance. Well, there is a little sign that you look at that compares one company's premium to another, to another. You can go online and shop and compare and put in the kinds of factors that you want in your automobile insurance.

We should be able to do that for health insurance. We should be able to buy our health insurance premiums that way, and the Republicans' bills will allow that to happen.

Then, further, association health plans, the Republican plans have it; the Democrat plan does not have it. Association health plans, once again, would allow groups with some common interest to pool, to create a larger pool, whether it's your church denomination, your Rotary Club, your alumni association or any other group that wanted to form an insurance pool for purposes of providing health insurance to their member participants.

This I call kind of an equivalent to what's available in the banking community. You have commercial Main Street banks, and then you have some credit unions. I kind of associated this kind of association health care plan with the notion of a credit union.

These are things that we have that would increase and stimulate competition in the private sector, and these are in the Republican plans. They are not in our colleagues', who are members of the Democratic Party, plans.

Now I would like to call on one of our colleagues who is from the State of Colorado. MIKE COFFMAN is here this evening from my neighboring State of Colorado.

I yield to you and thank you for attending this evening's discussion.

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Thank you, Representative LUMMIS.

What I think is of concern to those of us from Colorado, and I think many people across the country, is what is the impact upon jobs and employers. There is a concern about small business in particular.

There is a provision in the Pelosi bill, the Pelosi health care reform bill, that has a surcharge on small businesses and employers. Now, granted, it has moved up to where it was in the first version, H.R. 3200, where it was if somebody had the average annual payroll between $250,000, and then it started as a surcharge at 2 percent up to $400,000 on an average annual payroll, with an 8 percent surcharge, that number has been moved up a little bit; but I think it's still going to be devastating to the economy. With $750,000 and above it's an 8 percent surcharge, and then it's graduated a little bit down below that.

To put a surcharge on employers, a payroll tax, if you will, on employers that are just trying to keep their doors open, to keep making, to be able to make the payroll that they have, I think, is going to be a devastating job killer to this economy. I think we ought to focus on job creation and not job killers.

Mrs. LUMMIS. The gentleman is correct. In fact, we have found that studies determined that 5.5 million more jobs will be lost as a result of the taxes placed on small businesses under the Democrat version of the bill. Furthermore, there is a double whammy for small business. For businesses under 500,000 in payroll, there is not a big hit. But, of course, a lot of businesses in my State of Wyoming, there are 1,400 in my State of Wyoming that will be hit because they pay these taxes at the individual tax return, but they are small businesses that pay payrolls of more than $500,000. That means 1,400 businesses in Wyoming are going to be slapped with that tax.

I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. PAULSEN. Thank you. Maybe I will ask the gentleman from Colorado a question, because he makes a really good point about this bill, that the proposed 1,990-page bill by the Speaker is bad for small business. Why would the Congress in a tough economy want to further penalize small businesses when they are struggling to get by and a third of all small businesses are going to be impacted by this surtax that you had mentioned?

We want to help small businesses grow, knowing that they are the engine of economic growth for this country, and we are making it tougher and tougher on them. Why would Congress even consider that?

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. The majority of small businesses, they are the job creators. They are the engine for job creation in this country, these really small businesses. Whether we like it or not, the reality is that oftentimes start-ups don't have the cash flow to support health insurance. I started a small business in Colorado and for the first 7 years was not in a position to offer health insurance. When I could, it was at a 50/50 split with the employee.

What this legislation says is that's not even good enough, that you have to be able to pay 72.5 percent of a federally approved plan through the insurance exchange or, for a full-time employee, 65 percent of the family. Anything less than that, you are going to be hit by a surcharge.

You know, the reality is that oftentimes small businesses just—I mean, if you are struggling just to keep your doors open, and you get hit with a payroll tax, it's not like an income tax, that if you make a profit, you pay the tax.

This is, you are going to pay this whether you are losing money or not. This is whether or not you are going to have to lay off employees or not. It's a very bad direction to go, and it's certainly not in the Republican version. It's, unfortunately, in the Democrat version that we will be voting on later this week.

Mr. PAULSEN. Just to mention, I mean, it sounds like it just defies common sense. With unemployment at near 10 percent—I know there are going to be some new job figures that will be released in the very near future—but it defies common sense of why we would really hit the small business community even harder and make it tougher for them to raise jobs.

As the gentlewoman mentioned earlier, the Republicans have a proposal to allow small business to pool together through these associated health care plans to actually help small businesses provide health insurance for their employees.

Mrs. LUMMIS. That will do wonders in my State of Wyoming where a lot of people are small business people, in fact, mom and pop sole proprietors, ranchers, that are just the mom and the dad in the family, and they have individual insurance policies that they purchased as an individual because they are it, they are the business. Under the Democrats' bill, those are the very people who are going to be completely foreclosed from being able to purchase individual health insurance plans after 2013.

We have been joined by our colleague from the State of Pennsylvania. GLENN THOMPSON has with him a very large stack of paper. Representative THOMPSON, what is that?

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. This is a health risk, a serious health risk, for those of us who are carrying it around and, frankly, for the country. This is the Nancy Pelosi health care bill, 1,990 pages, and that's just part one.

Part two, I am sure we will see within the next 24 to 48 hours; that will be the manager's amendment. That will be all the buyouts, the bribes, the deals that are being made right now by the Speaker and my Democratic colleagues to buy their votes to support this.

I don't know what to expect. I don't know if my colleagues have a guess. We do a guess here in terms of the number of pages, this manager's amendment, which, frankly, will be all of the deals that are made. How many pages do you think the manager's amendment might be when we see this in the next 24, 48 hours?

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. I think it's about a couple of inches thick, would be my guess. The manager's amendment to the cap-and-trade, I think, was several hundred pages. I am speculating, but this is double the size of cap-and-trade. So let's go for 600 pages.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Six hundred. Do I have another bid?

□ 1945

Mrs. LUMMIS. The rumor I heard was 800.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. The gentlewoman from Wyoming says 800 pages. How about my good friend from Minnesota?

Mr. PAULSEN. Well, I am going to just gander a guess. It is going to be several inches thick, which is too thick for us to read in a short period of time, unfortunately, and probably for the public to have that right to know.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Now, that was a rather safe guess; a rather safe guess.

Yes, that manager's amendment is coming. And there are lots of just flawed approaches to health care here. Speaking as someone who worked in that field for almost 30 years as a manager in rural hospitals and a skilled nursing facility and many different settings, I want to talk just briefly about some of those, because it has to do with one of the charts you had up there about the promise to not add a dime to the debt, not a dime to the deficit.

This bill was based on the premise of Medicare growth being held at 4 percent. Now, why is that important? Well, Medicare is a significant amount of money, so 4 percent of Medicare is a lot of money. But let's talk about reality here, and that is what this bill lacks is a good dose of reality.

Medicare growth rates have been steady at 7 to 8 percent a year. That is just the reality of it. If you think about it, those in the baby boomer generation who are now retiring, becoming qualified beneficiaries under Medicare, that is a significant number of people adding to the Medicare rolls from this point forward. So, 7 to 8 percent.

If we just look back a year to 2008, the Medicare growth last calendar year alone was 9 percent, 9 percent, and yet this bill was based on holding Medicare at 4 percent. I think that is pretty flawed math. That is not even fuzzy math. That is just wrong.

We know that this is built on half a trillion dollars in new taxes, and you talked about some of those. Small businesses. Taxes on individuals who choose not to buy in, to buy insurance, are penalized. Medical devices will be taxed as an excise tax.

The other part of the funding mechanism is a half a trillion dollars in Medicare cuts. We have talked about that during other forums here, when already Medicare systematically has been underfunded from almost the day it was created. Medicare only pays today about 80 to 90 cents on every dollar of health care costs that a hospital or doctor has. And to do another half a trillion dollars in Medicare cuts, that is just wrong. The people that are going to suffer from that are the providers and older adults. This will bankrupt hospitals.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Reclaiming my time, I would echo some of your concerns in saying that in rural areas Medicare is not reimbursed at the same rates as it is in urban areas. So hospitals and physicians in rural areas receive less compensation for Medicare patients than they do in urban areas; so much less that in Casper, Wyoming, a town in central Wyoming, only about one-third of their actual out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed from the Federal Government when they treat a Medicare patient.

Well, the hospital, because it is a quasi-public hospital, is going to keep taking those patients. But private physicians don't have to keep taking those patients, and when they are undercompensated, some of them choose to no longer take Medicare patients. And in a State that has a dearth of physicians anyway because we have such a small pool of patients, we are losing more and more access to doctors, even today.

My concern under the Democrats' bill is that we will be worse off as a State in terms of the number of physicians who will take Medicare patients and the hospitals that will take Medicare patients because of the poor reimbursement levels and decisions that are being made by the majority party in Congress to make further cuts in Medicare.

I yield to the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Thank you, Congresswoman LUMMIS.

One of the things that concerns me is how seniors are treated in this bill, and I think you certainly mentioned some of the things. But half of the bill is paid for by cuts to Medicare, roughly half, and that is stripping hundreds of billions of dollars out of the Medicare system. So a couple of things concern me.

There are going to be cuts certainly to Medicare Advantage. Many of the 10 million seniors that we know that are on the Medicare Advantage program will lose their coverage.

But what concerns me is the solvency of the system. If in fact there are savings in the Medicare system through looking at waste, fraud and abuse, as the proponents mention, that money really needs to stay in the Medicare system for seniors, because the actuaries or the trustees of the Medicare system are projecting that Medicare will run out of funding in 2013. So what we ought to be concentrating on, and there seems to be no discussion, is what is going to happen to the seniors in Medicare. Will they simply move into the public option? And then the public option, we defer to bureaucrats in the bill to define what are essentially the procedures, the treatments that are authorized.

So they are going to be making that decision, and on what basis are they going to be making that decision? Is it going to be on the quality-of-life issues in terms of maybe end-of-life care isn't important? We don't know these things. But I think the seniors ought to be real concerned about what is going to happen to their Medicare system, their Medicare plans under this particular proposal.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Before I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota, I wanted to remark on something I learned today. The Republicans had a little reading room where we could go and read the bill and share ideas, and especially learn from ranking members of the various committees who have been studying these concepts at least, even though they haven't seen it in bill form, for not only months, but years.

One of the things that I learned today in that session is that the enforcer in the Democratic bill is actually the IRS. One would think that with 111 new government agencies that the enforcement mechanism for providing health care, what is supposed to be a very positive notion, would not be the IRS.

What thinks the gentleman from Minnesota?

Mr. PAULSEN. Well, I thank you for yielding. I just want to go reference back to the comment that the gentleman, my good friend from Pennsylvania, had made on the tax on medical devices.

I have the privilege of being the co-Chair of the House Medical Technology Caucus. So just about 2½ to 3 weeks ago I conducted a field hearing in Minnesota in my district and we heard directly from those that would be impacted by this very onerous tax, because the Senate originally proposed a $40 billion tax on medical devices, and now the House, Speaker PELOSI's bill, the 1,990-page version has a $20 billion tax.

I want to tell you what we heard directly from people. One, we heard directly from small companies. I have a medical alley in my district that employs about 20,000 people in this sector, this economy, and these are folks that are producing these new lifesaving technologies that really give families and individuals the peace of mind that they are going to be taken care of in their elder years, or for their children, for instance.

Some of these companies, one in particular that just turned profitable, was very direct in saying, You know what? If we get hit with this tax, unfortunately, we are going to have to take that reduction in payroll. That is where the tax is going to hit us is in payroll and in layoffs and out of research and development.

So we are actually stifling innovation. It is an innovation tax.

Then we heard from a venture capitalist who is involved in new startups to try and get these little companies going again, some that have five employees, some that have nine. They are

hoping to come up with the ''next best thing.''

We are putting another nail in the coffin for them, as it was explained. We are making it that much tougher, because it is kind of a lottery right now. It is so difficult for a company like this to get the venture capital and then bring a product to market.

Finally, we heard from patients. We heard from patients that would be directly impacted. In particular, there was one individual that has an artificial limb, a prosthetic, that now as a patient we are making health care more expensive for him by having a tax on his products. And the tax that we have now as part of the Pelosi bill is going to put a tax on wheelchairs, on hearing aids, on the bandages that hospitals purchase. So it is absolutely a move in the wrong direction. It is going to make health care more expensive.

Mrs. LUMMIS. And, in fact, we also learned today that the bill runs counter to the President's promise that this was not going to tax people who make less than $250,000 a year. Because of the taxes that the gentleman from Minnesota just described, 90 cents out of every dollar that applies in this bill in additional costs will fall on people that fall in exactly that category, the $250,000 and less income earners.

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Well, I thank the gentlelady from Wyoming.

I think innovation is one of the things that our health care system fosters in this country. When you look at the advancements that we have had, whether it be in medical devices or lifesaving technology, diagnostic, invasive, noninvasive, lifesaving interventions, that comes out of the type of health care system that we have today. It is the way it has been designed and the way it works. It provides those encouragements.

I have a number of similar small businesses that started very small, I don't know if they started in somebody's garage, but started as small operations, and they developed tremendous innovations, innovations in terms of prostheses for individuals who have lost limbs.

Actually, one of them is an incredible small company developing a limb that is not just a powered limb, which is the cutting edge for a prosthesis, an artificial leg, but this one actually selfcharges. In the use of it, that friction builds up the power.

The application of it is just tremendous, starting with our wounded warriors who rehabilitate and return to the field. This is an artificial limb and you don't have to plug it in at the end of the day. It recharges while you use it. We wouldn't get that innovation.

Any time we tax something, we repress it. We hold it back. We destroy it. This tax on medical devices is just, well, I agree, it would be a nail in the coffin of innovation for health care in this country.

Mr. PAULSEN. If the gentleman would yield, he raises a good point, because having visited Pennsylvania and knowing there are some technology sectors right in your district in particular, and there are many States, and maybe that is because some States don't have these medical device technologies growing, they are not being incubated. It is Massachusetts, it is California, it is Tennessee and Minnesota, which surprises me, because the Speaker being from California is proposing this tax. It is actually going to hurt many of these devices.

Again, we talked about the nature of the economy, almost 10 percent unemployment. We are going to be making it tougher to have very well, high-paying jobs, tougher for those companies to keep those jobs. It just doesn't make any sense to me.

Mrs. LUMMIS. One of the math items in this bill that just doesn't add up is the fact that they are going to be paying for 6 years of benefits under this bill with 10 years of revenue collections. And yet when we get, then, to that magical 11th year where we need to be able to pay for it as we go, obviously we won't be able to just stop providing benefits and have the taxes run for 4 years where we don't tap into them before we involve ourselves in the benefit component of the program again.

So that is a one-time in the first 10 years type of financial balancing act or financial gimmick that is being used in this bill to make it sound like it is in some way financially balanced. It is not, and it will suck more out of this economy in the second and ensuing 10 years and in decades when once again our children are going to be paying for it.

So, this bill really does defer to our children and grandchildren huge financial obligations that the people in this room feel is not only unnecessary, but highly inappropriate.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. If the gentlelady will yield, you are going down a tremendously important road here in terms of what this legacy of costs that we are passing along to our children and our grandchildren and great-grandchildren at this point is, on top of all the other deficits that have been accumulated by this Democrat-led Congress since January.

I had the opportunity to spend some time this morning with a former Congressional Budget Office director. And going back to the point of the flawed math here, of saying that growth in Medicare will be held at 4 percent, when we know that it is an average of 7 to 8, 9 percent last year, his estimates are this cost will actually be at somewhere around $1.8 trillion in terms of math.

To give us some idea, I just want to point to a project that actually is literally under our noses. It was a project that did not occur on our watch. This was years past, and it is a beautiful place to visit and we take our constituents there, the Capitol Visitor Center.

□ 2000

I certainly encourage people to come to Washington to visit that, but there is a prime example of estimates that were made, and in the end it was 300 percent more expensive than what the original cost estimates were. So even if we're at a trillion or $1.2 trillion or $1.8 trillion, and we know that we cannot afford that, where could these costs go once this legislation passes? Just based on the example of a project that we should have pretty good oversight on because it was being constructed right under our noses.

Mrs. LUMMIS. I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota to introduce our colleague from Tennessee.

Mr. PAULSEN. I will yield to the gentleman, but in particular, my colleague from Tennessee, whom I have learned a great deal from, one of the things that I appreciate about you is you're a former mayor and you know how to get things done, and certainly I think Members of Congress could take some lessons from you. Coming from this great State of Tennessee, you've got some of those medical technology companies in your great State. And we should hear from you as a physician as well. You've got a very unique perspective, and you can offer a lot to this Congress.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

I would like to start out by saying that I don't think there's a conflict at all either from the Republican side or the Democrat side that we have a need to reform health care in this country, because costs are not sustainable on the current path. I don't think anyone disagrees with that. And, secondly, it's a noble goal and an attainable goal, I believe, to cover our citizens with health care. I believe we can do that in this country. I don't think this bill is the one that does it, and I go back to an experience that I've had in Tennessee.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania was talking about the cost of the Visitors Center. Let's go over the costs of health care in this country and estimates by government people, by the CBO and others. Let's go back to 1965, and I do believe that this is the single biggest debate on a social issue since the civil rights movement in the 1960s and Medicare in 1965. In 1965 the estimate was Medicare would cost $3 billion to $4 billion a year, and that's what it cost. The estimate in 1990, 20 years later, it was going to be a $15 billion program. What was the actual cost? Over $90 billion. And today our Medicare program is over $400 billion.

Let's also dial back to Medicaid. The Medicaid program, the government insurance for low-income people and infants and children, has gone up 37 times since its inception.

In TennCare we had the argument that I hear and, again, I dealt with it as a physician and also as a mayor. In the early 1990s we had a lot of people in Tennessee who were uncovered. So we wanted to cover as many of our people as we could. So we got a waiver from Washington to experiment with a managed care plan called TennCare. And HHS, the Health and Human Services here in Washington, exempted us from the current Medicaid plan.

When we started this plan, we started with eight different companies that would go after your business on a competitive basis, and this was going to hold costs down. We would compete among these plans.

So what actually happened in Tennessee was this: in 1993 the State spent $2.6 billion on our TennCare program. Between there and 2004, 10, 11 budget years later, that had risen to almost $8.5 billion. It had over-tripled in price, where we thought the costs would be less than that. We thought it would hold costs down.

What actually happened with the public option? Well, what happened with the public option was this: 45 percent of the people who got on TennCare had private health insurance, and they made a perfectly logical decision. It was cheaper, it had first-dollar coverage, it was a very generous plan. So they dropped their own private health insurance coverage and got on TennCare.

Now, I just got the numbers this afternoon, and they are what I thought they were. In our State our TennCare plan pays about 58 percent of the cost of actually providing the care. Medicare pays 91 percent in Tennessee of the cost of providing the care, and the uninsured pay somewhere in between. And what happened in our State was those costs got shifted to private insurers.

Well, the State was then left with—almost every new budget dollar that came to the State of Tennessee was used for health care, not for K–12, not for roads, not for other things, colleges and so forth. So what did the Governor, who is a Democrat, and the legislature, which is now Republican, what did they do? Well, they rationed care. And how did they ration care? They cut the rolls. And every year that we had a raise, it was almost double digit. The year that broke the bank was a 19 percent increase in costs in 1 year.

So we have seen the public option. We have seen the competition. And the problem with any public plan is it doesn't pay the cost of the care. And when you do that, three things happen for somebody: one is you decrease access because you don't have someone who will take those patients on that don't pay the cost of the care. Number two, when you decrease access, you decrease quality of care because the patients can't get to a physician other than through an emergency room. And, three, somebody else, that's the private insurers in our State, pay more money. So we had decreased access, decreased quality, and increased costs. So that's what I'm fearful of here that will happen with this.

There is a better way. I mean, I can sit down with the expertise in this room right now and we can write a plan with our Democratic colleagues in 30 minutes. A quick example of that is the current Baucus plan calls for increasing access to 91 percent of our population. Now 85 percent of our population is covered. You can do two things that will get you to 91 percent on one page, and that is, number one, allow young people, like I've had children in my own home that have had to do this, that don't have health insurance when they graduate from high school or college, to stay on their parents' plan until they're 26 years old. This current bill, the Democrats have had that in there, and I agree with that 100 percent. And, number two, simply sign up the people who already qualify for Medicaid or SCHIP, and you will get to 91 percent. So it's a fairly simple thing to do without a lot of government bureaucracy, new plans, czars, commissioners, and so on that's so complicated right now. I'm sure some of you have tried to wade through this bill, and some of it's almost incomprehensible.

I thank you for yielding.

Mrs. LUMMIS. We are all freshmen who have been talking here. Many of us served in some capacity either in our State legislature, in your case as a mayor, a couple of State treasurers; so we know how State government works. And what we see, as States could not print money, we had to live within our means. So when the Federal Government places an unfunded mandate, meaning they require States to provide a service and then don't provide the money for the State to provide the service, the State has to come up with the bucks. And this has been called the ''mother of all unfunded mandates'' by the Democrat Governor of your home State of Tennessee.

And those of us who are here—I know that you were leader in your Minnesota legislature—tried to find good legislation that was sitting around and had been introduced by Members of either party. And in honesty, in my legislature, if a Democrat had a great idea, and we were Republican legislators, we'd go steal their ideas and put Republican names on it and sponsor it. It was the best form of flattery. The ideas were coming up.

And you know who did that maybe better than anybody I have ever seen on a national scale was Bill Clinton. He took what was cultivated in the States and nurtured in the States a plan to reform welfare, and he slapped his name on it and he made it his. And he worked with Republican Members of this Congress to reform welfare.

We could do that today. We have 53 bills out there that our Democratic colleagues could say, hey, this is a good idea or I like the idea of letting young people stay on their parents' insurance until they're 26 years old. That helps them out, especially in these tough economic times when it's hard to find a job. There are ideas out there that would solve these problems.

Yet we are faced with a bill that is almost 2,000 pages long that we're expecting a big additional amendment to, that was drafted behind closed doors, that has some nonsensical language in it that people can't understand that we only get 72 hours to read. It all seems like a bad dream. But it's the American Congress. And there are so many better options out there. I just am so frustrated with the majority party that they won't look through our 53 bills that they could read online and say that's a good idea, let's put a Democrat's name on it and make it our idea. We'd be delighted.

I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. I thank the gentlewoman from Wyoming for yielding.

Just to make your point, something that I promised I would do when I came here as a local mayor, I had dealt with unfunded mandates until I had had them up to here on the local level. The State has to deal with these. And I made a decision I'm not going to vote for an unfunded mandate that the Federal Government puts on local government or State government.

And our Governor right here that you mentioned, Governor Bredesen, who is a Democrat, by the way, and is very knowledgeable in health care, I have great respect for him and the knowledge that he has. He's had to make some tough decisions. He has looked at this current plan and evaluated it from the viewpoint of the State of Tennessee. I think it's September of next year, 2010, the money that the States get from stimulus is gone. It's over with. So he's looking at this unfunded mandate to us.

And let me just tell you how critical it is in our State right now because of jobs. We are losing jobs in the State. The unemployment rate is above 10 percent, and we're a sales tax-based State. We don't have a State income tax. And he has estimated that this particular plan, H.R. 3200, now 3962, that's out there will conservatively cost our State $735 million in the first 5 years. And if it has the same benefit package, which remember the commissioner will decide what an adequate benefit package is, it will cost the State as much as $3 billion to $4 billion.

Let me tell you the dire straits we're in. The SCHIP program right now, the State Children's Health Insurance Plan, known in Tennessee as CoverKids, we can't enroll any other kids in there because we can't afford the current plan. So if we come down with another unfunded mandate, we don't know what we're going to do in the State.

Mrs. LUMMIS. We are now down to the speed round, which means we have

2 minutes left for each Member of this discussion to summarize.

And I would like to start with the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I just want to build quickly on affordability. And our Democratic colleagues have recognized this with this bill, and I just call attention to page 25, section 101, which is the national high-risk pool. These are the folks we should be doing something for. They're high risk, preexisting conditions. They have a difficult time accessing health insurance. And the language that's built into this, our Democratic colleagues recognize this isn't going to be sustainable. We're not going to be able to fund this. Within the legislative language it says, given once the money is spent and goes beyond the premiums checked, it allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services, if all are exhausted, to do three things: cut benefits, increase premiums, and create waiting lists. Page 25, section 101.

I think that's a general acknowledgment early in this bill. And if we can do that type of rationing for folks who are most at risk, who we should be doing health insurance reform for, what does it mean for the rest of us?

I thank the gentlewoman for coordinating tonight.

Mrs. LUMMIS. You are well under your time. Thank you for participating.

I yield to the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. I thank the gentlewoman from Wyoming for yielding.

One concern certainly that I have is that we are, I think, not focused on all that we have in terms of a safety net. For instance, in my home State of Colorado, there is a high-risk insurance pool called Cover Colorado. We have a premium tax on all insurance products, whether it's health care or it's property and casualty, some of which goes into the general fund, some of which goes into a subsidized health insurance plan for people with preexisting conditions that can't otherwise reasonably get insurance but don't qualify for a public plan because of their income or their assets. So they are covered under this program where they are charged a flat 140 percent of what the average premium cost is in Colorado.

□ 2015

We have 183 community health clinics in Colorado. If you look at the community health provider network Web site for Colorado, they saw over 400,000 patients—not patient visits but patients in the State of Colorado—where they got preventive care, primary care, dental services and mental health services, mostly at taxpayers' expense, all for the uninsured and underinsured. We have Medicaid for the poor and disabled. We have Medicare for the elderly. So there is a tremendous safety net right now. To include emergency room care for those that don't have any form of insurance or are not on a plan and walk in, they're required by law to receive all appropriate screening and subsequent treatment. So I think we need to be aware of what the safety net is right now.

Mrs. LUMMIS. I thank the gentleman from Colorado for participating this evening, and I yield now to the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. I thank the gentlelady from Wyoming. Just a couple of brief things that we hadn't touched on maybe as much. Certainly I am one of the few people in this Congress who have had to go down to the emergency room at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and see someone who doesn't have health insurance coverage or has a malignancy that needs care. I have seen it and have dealt with it. Certainly what we would like to do is make sure that we can find a way to help those folks that don't have coverage right now. We have got 85 percent of the people in this Nation who have coverage, and what are they worried about? The cost. I will tell you now that we will never get the costs under control in this country without liability reform. Unless you have medical malpractice reform in some reasonable way—and one of the problems that we have in malpractice reform is that we don't have a way to adequately compensate someone who's been injured.

Right now in this system, in Tennessee, the system that we had doesn't do that. Since the inception of our malpractice company, owned by the physicians in Tennessee, since 1975, over half the dollars that have been paid out have been paid to attorneys and not to the injured party. Less than 40 cents of every dollar that we pay has been paid to someone who's been injured. There is something wrong with that. So we have to look into this as a Nation and decide how we're going to proceed. Certainly people are injured and do need compensation for their injuries. But the system we have now is broken. It needs to be fixed. This particular bill does nothing for that.

I will yield back the remainder of my time so that others can speak. I appreciate you having me on with you tonight.

Mrs. LUMMIS. We are blessed to have three physicians in our Republican freshman caucus who have been gracious in educating us about the medical practice in their parts of the country. It's a great privilege to serve with them in Congress and also the gentleman from Pennsylvania who spoke earlier, who has managed health care in his State. We are deeply grateful for his participation.

I thank the gentlemen from the Republican freshmen for participating in this evening's effort. I can tell you that the women in the Republican Conference have been discussing health care as it relates to women this week, and we'll be doing so again tomorrow. I will look forward to pursuing that discussion again tomorrow. But to wrap things up this evening for the remainder of our time, I would like to turn it over to my colleague and cohost for this evening's Special Order by the Republican freshmen, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN).

Mr. PAULSEN. I thank the gentlelady for helping coordinate the opportunity for all of us tonight as freshmen to express some of our concerns and certainly opposition and reservations to the bill that has been put now before us that we will likely be voting on later this week. We talked about why this bill is bad for the American public. I just want to recap. Number one, we talked about why this bill is bad for small business. It raises their taxes. It's going to cost jobs. We've talked about why this bill is bad for individuals. It mandates that they will have to buy coverage or else they're going to have to pay a penalty. We've talked about—not at great length but why the bill is, indeed, bad for seniors. That is no doubt. I talk to a lot of seniors in my district that are under Medicare Advantage right now, and they are very concerned about having to give up the health care plan that they're under right now. These Medicare Advantage plans, they offer a lot of what the President himself in this very Chamber talked about, good services that benefit a lot of these seniors, going for regular checkups without having to pay an additional copay, having vision care, having dental care. That is what Medicare Advantage plans offer. And to cut Medicare by $500 billion, to me, makes absolutely no sense.

If you really think about it—and my good friend from Tennessee, the doctor, mentioned earlier—some of the good provisions we should be supporting, like allowing young adults to be put on their parents' policies—I mean, that's common sense, and we support that initiative. We just wish that we could hit the reset button and not have a 1,990-page bill where we would have just a provision where we could do that, as well as allowing the small businesses to pool together. We can absolutely cover preexisting conditions. That is something we absolutely should do and we support doing. So there are some good things that we should focus on. Unfortunately, those aren't the priorities of this bill, unfortunately. And ultimately, the American want people want to have the peace of mind that they can get the coverage that they need when they need it, and they want to ensure that they—not the government, not special interests, not Members of Congress—are not going to stand between a patient and their doctor.

In short, I think we all agree that the bill before us is the wrong approach. It's a very dismissive wave of the hand by Congress to those who have raised the voice on this most personal issue in their lives. There's no other issue that affects families more personally than

health care, whether it is taking care of your children, thinking about how you're going to care for your parents or grandparents down the road. There is a better way, as you mentioned. There is a better way, and the gentlelady from Wyoming had gone through a great detail of other proposals that are out there that, quite honestly, there's bipartisan support for. The truth is, with the right reforms, we can absolutely control health care costs and lower premiums. This bill does not lower health care premiums. It will be a massive intrusion from the Federal Government on our individual and personal economic freedoms, though.

I yield back for our closing.

Mrs. LUMMIS. I thank the gentlemen from Minnesota, from Tennessee, from Pennsylvania and from Colorado for joining me this evening. People from all over the United States will be paying a house call on Speaker PELOSI on Thursday at noon this week on the Capitol steps. We will be there to greet them and hopefully discuss with them our concerns about the Democratic approach and to offer better solutions.

I thank the Speaker this evening for his kind attention and tolerance of his fellow freshmen Republicans' efforts this evening.

THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DRIEHAUS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. DRIEHAUS. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate very much listening to my Republican colleagues. I, too, came in in the freshman class, along with my Republican colleagues, and I came to the floor tonight, Mr. Speaker, to talk about the economy and to talk about regulatory reform and what we're doing to address the foreclosure crisis here in the United States. But I can't allow some of the comments that I just heard go without challenge.

I heard it said that we've only been given 72 hours to read the bill. Now I think, Mr. Speaker, you probably remember back at the end of July, there was a push to try to vote on the health care plan. I, along with you, I believe, and many others suggested that the American people have time, that they have time to read the health care bill, that we have time to digest this. We went home. We held town meetings. I don't know about the other Members of Congress. I know I had more than 100 meetings on health care during that time period. So we have had far more than 72 hours.

But then they said, We need 72 hours for this particular bill. So the bill, itself, which is simply a modification of bills that we have been discussing, that we've been hearing in committee, bills that we have been meeting on for months was introduced on Friday. I put it on my Web site. Many people put it on their Web site. There has been plenty of time. If you want to oppose health care, then obviously that is up to you to oppose health care. But let's not hide behind this thing about 72 hours. We have had months to discuss this. We will have far more than 72 hours to look and review the bill at hand.

I also want to talk about small businesses, because I know, Mr. Speaker, you and I have worked very closely on this in protecting small businesses in the health care reform bill. As you recall, the bill as originally introduced had a threshold of $250,000 for payroll. That is, any small business that had more than $250,000 in payroll would be subject to a surcharge, a surcharge where they pay their fair share. That has been increased in this bill to $500,000, a significant increase for small businesses. I don't know what businesses my colleagues from the Republican side are visiting, but I can tell you when I go out to small businesses, be they Democrat or Republican, they're talking about their premium increases. They're talking about their premium increases of 20 percent, of 30 percent. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, this is all about small businesses. This is about protecting small businesses. Because right now in the State of Ohio, the State I hail from, less than 50 percent of small businesses are able to provide health care to their employees; less than 50 percent. It's because of those rising costs. So while they say it does nothing for individuals, well, they're absolutely wrong. If you're an individual working for a small business and the employer cannot afford health care, this bill helps you; it helps you, and it helps your family. If you're an individual with a preexisting condition, you happen to be ill and you need to get health insurance, you can't do it right now. Does this bill help those individuals? Absolutely. If you're an individual that has health insurance and you happen to get sick, and you need to draw upon that health insurance, right now you can be cut off. This bill says, No. You can't do that any longer. The insurance company can't stop covering you for your illness. So this bill is all about helping small businesses and helping individuals.

I would encourage my colleagues to read the bill. Yes, it's long. But we're beyond chapter books at this point. We are able to read long bills. It's long because this is a comprehensive piece of legislation, and I think it deserves debate. It deserves far more than rhetoric. But rhetoric is what you tend to hear when you come down to the House floor. Rhetoric is what you tend to hear when Republicans line up and give 1-minute speech after 1-minute speech after 1-minute speech, be it about energy or health care or the economy. The other side of the aisle is big on rhetoric, but they're not big on solutions, nor are they big on taking responsibility. They act as if they weren't here. They act as if they weren't in charge since 1994, that they weren't elected in the Newt Gingrich majority, that they didn't have power until 2006. But the fact of the matter is that they were the party in party. They were the party in control. They were the party as this housing crisis spiraled out of control. They were the party as the rising costs of health care kept mounting and mounting and mounting and harming our small businesses and harming our economy.

THE U.S. ECONOMY

For the 8 years prior to being elected to Congress, Mr. Speaker, I was a State representative in Ohio. I come from a working-class neighborhood in Cincinnati, and I saw house after house being foreclosed on. Now I didn't know what was happening in 2001. I didn't know what was happening in 2002. So we put together a housing task force, and we started asking questions. We started looking into some of these loans that were being floated to my neighbors, to folks in my neighborhood to figure out why these houses were going into foreclosure. And it was interesting. We found that people who never should have qualified for loans were suddenly qualified. People that couldn't even document that they had the income to purchase a home were qualifying for home loans. Then, of course, they couldn't afford to pay the mortgages, and those were the houses being foreclosed on. We call these subprime loans. When people who can't afford to pay their bills, people who have poor credit scores are able to get a loan, those are subprime loans, as opposed to people who do pay their bills and they do have high credit scores. Those are prime loans.

So we looked at this, and we looked at some of the practices of the financial institutions, and we just scratched our heads and said, Well, how is it that a financial institution can float a loan to somebody that can't prove their income, can float a loan to somebody that has a poor credit history, yet they're purchasing an $80,000 home, they're purchasing a $120,000 home? How is this happening?

Well, the answer is, Mr. Speaker, it was all about what was going on on Wall Street. It was all about what was going on on Wall Street because what was going on on Wall Street was that people were making a lot of money, and they were making a lot of money off of these products that are called derivatives or mortgage-backed securities or credit default swaps.

□ 2030

The world had changed in the area of mortgage finance in the early 2000s. The world had changed dramatically. What had happened was this. Where in the past if you wanted to buy a home, you wanted to achieve the American Dream, you would go down to your bank, you would go down to the savings and loan, and you would talk to

the loan officer. They would work with you to negotiate a mortgage. They would work with you to negotiate that loan, and then they would hold on to the mortgage paper. And this is important. They held the mortgage paper as part of their portfolio. It was their investment portfolio. It was a long-term investment on the part of the financial institution.

But what we found out was that the world had changed. No longer were these financial institutions holding on to that paper. In many cases, no longer were they the local bank or the local savings and loan. They were out-of-town entities who had never seen your house, and who had never looked at the appraisal. The reason they were closing those loans was because of those mortgage-backed securities on Wall Street. You see, they were able to close those loans and they would immediately sell them. They would sell them on the secondary market, and then they would bundle the loans into thousands of mortgage loans that were sold on Wall Street as a security, a mortgage-backed security.

So what happened? Well, the folks that were closing the loans, because they were no longer holding the paper, because they no longer had any skin in the game, they were qualifying everybody that walked in the door. They were qualifying everybody that walked in the door at the highest prices they could possibly get. So, rather than saying, you know, we are going to put you in a 30-year fixed because it is a more stable product or a 15-year fixed because it is a more stable product, we are going to get you in this 3-year, adjustable-rate mortgage. And, oh, by the way, this rate, yes, it is a good rate right now, but it is going to adjust in 3 years. Oh, and there is this little prepayment penalty that is also in the loan. So, yes, I know it is a stretch for you right now, you who are a subprime borrower, you who don't have a steady job, and you who may be making a stretch to make this loan payment every month, yes, I know it is a stretch, but you can qualify. You can achieve the American Dream.

The reality was this, in those 2 or 3 years when that interest rate started adjusting, and in some cases it was adjusting every 3 or 4 months, when it started adjusting, that stretch was no longer a reality for many of those families. They tried to get out. They wanted to renegotiate, but they couldn't renegotiate because they had this prepayment penalty of a thousand dollars or $2,000. So if they couldn't afford their $600 a month loan, they are not going to be able afford the $1,000 or the $2,000 in the prepayment penalty. So they give up. They throw up their arms and walk away. That is a foreclosure. That was happening time after time after time in my neighbor and neighborhoods across Ohio and across the country.

So what do we do? Well, we in the State legislature said wait a minute, we have to do something about this. We have to stop this predatory behavior. And we tried. We tried in the State of Ohio. But in the State of Ohio, like so many other States, we had very little authority because the financial institutions were regulated by the Federal Government.

So we turned to the Federal Government to help us out. This is where we get back to who was in charge. In 2001, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, a tremendous Congresswoman from Ohio, introduced predatory lending legislation. And we had predatory lending legislation introduced in every session of Congress after that. So in 2001, we could have done something. In 2002, we could have done something. In 2003, we could have made a difference. In 2004, we could have enacted predatory lending legislation. In 2005, we could have protected those homeowners. In 2006, we could have done something about it.

There were millions of homes going into foreclosure, but this body stood silent. This body, controlled by the Republican Party, stood silent, and they didn't address the foreclosures. They didn't address the runaway greed on Wall Street in the form of mortgage-backed securities and derivatives that were leveraged up to 30 and 40 times. They didn't address any of it. They said the markets will work it out. We don't need government intervention.

But when housing prices went south and the investors in those mortgage-backed securities soon learned, you know, those mortgages aren't worth much, all of a sudden the bottom fell out of the market. And that inaction, it is that inaction that caused this recession.

This was a recession precipitated by the financial markets. It was precipitated by what was going on in mortgage finance, and it caused the near collapse of our economy. It caused the near collapse of financial institutions across the globe.

So at the end of last year, in September of last year, the Congress was asked, President Bush pleaded with the Congress to pass a bailout for the banks, a bailout that many Americans never wanted to see. But the reality was that things had gotten so bad that but for the intervention of the Federal Government, we could have had the collapse of the financial markets globally all due to the inaction of the Federal Government.

That's where we were. And so now we hear Republicans come down to the floor of the House and act as if the world just began in January of 2009, acting as if all of these problems started just this January. I liken it to this, Mr. Speaker. When I go out and talk about the mortgage crisis and the calamity that has occurred, I say it is like somebody causing a 20-car pileup on the highway and then we show up with the tow truck to try to clean things up, and they start yelling at us for blocking traffic.

You see, we have been elected to clean up the mess, we being elected to clean up the mess caused by the inaction. That is what we are doing. That is why in the Financial Services Committee we are working on regulatory reform. That is why this Congress has passed predatory lending legislation. That is why this administration has worked to save thousands of homes across this country.

I am joined tonight, Mr. Speaker, by my friend, also a new legislator, from the State of Connecticut, JIM HIMES, who has been a tremendous member of the Financial Services Committee, bringing both experience on Wall Street as well as in the neighborhoods.

JIM, why don't you talk a little bit about from your perspective and what you have seen.

Mr. HIMES. I thank the gentleman from Ohio, STEVE DRIEHAUS, for yielding and for organizing this discussion on this important topic, which is how we restore prosperity to the U.S. economy, how we generate jobs to replace those that have been lost in this, the most challenging recession that we have seen in decades.

I am glad that the gentleman from Ohio talked about foreclosures. I represent Bridgeport, Connecticut, which is a wonderful city that also happens to have the highest density of foreclosures in the State of Connecticut. Bridgeport is a city full of people who were on the verge of becoming middle class homeowners, who were nurses and teachers and scraped together the money to buy their first home. And now we talk about these foreclosures. These are families that find themselves having lost the money that they scraped together to become American homeowners, and worse, having lost their homes. If you don't have a stable home, you do not have the foundation that you need to access the American Dream.

Our home is that spot that determines where we work. It determines the community in which we are a member. It is just about everything in terms of building that foundation for economic prosperity. And as we saw, there were far, far too many shenanigans in the mortgage market. The gentleman from Ohio and I have been working very hard in the Financial Services Committee on something that is technical, it is esoteric, it is unglamorous, it is never going to appear on a campaign bumper sticker, but it is terribly, terribly important, and that is reforming this Nation's financial services regulatory regime which failed us miserably. It failed us absolutely miserably in the last 10 years.

This is technical work. We are talking about really toeing a very tough line here between making sure that our banks and our financial services institutions are here, employing Americans, paying taxes in cities like Stanford and New York City and Chicago and Los Angeles, innovating, being a world beating industry, but of course never again putting us in the position that

we find ourselves in today, millions of jobs lost and billions of dollars of taxpayer money brought to the table in the last Congress to bail out these institutions because had they not been bailed out, we would have seen a global financial meltdown.

People forget what it felt like 9 months ago when we really worried that the major financial institutions of this country and of the world, frankly, could go under. Think about what that means. A major bank simply goes under. That bank is a lender to small businesses that make payroll. Except when the bank goes under, all of a sudden the payroll money is not there, and the workers of that small business go to the ATM and there is nothing there. That is global financial crisis, and that is what, obnoxiously, this government had to bail out.

So how do we prevent that from ever happening again? The gentleman from Ohio and I, we have spent hours and hours listening in Financial Services, listening to the minority party tell us what we are doing is going to cost jobs, that this is the end of capitalism, that this is not a market economy, and they are dead wrong about that. They are dead wrong about that because they forget about something critical to our entire financial services business. They forget that without the faith of the American consumer, the American investor, the American bank customer, without that faith, we do not have a banking sector.

I have been sitting in Financial Services now hours and hours and hours listening to this, this is the end of capitalism, this is going to kill jobs. We have seen this movie before. We have seen exactly this movie with exactly this script with exactly the same players. It happened in 1933 and 1934 when this government, the government of the United States, last set about to rise from the wreckage of an economic catastrophe caused by, amongst other things, financial irresponsibility, and this House was left to pick up the pieces.

This House put in place in 1933 and 1934 the fundamental legislation that came to be what governed our banks and our securities companies for the next 70 years. And if you look at what was said in 1933 and 1934, you could be here today. You would have heard about the death of capitalism and how this didn't make sense in a market economy and about how jobs would be lost; and they were wrong then, as they are wrong now.

In fact, in 1933 and 1934 when regulatory laws were passed, with which I am deeply familiar, having spent some time in the banking sector, when those laws were passed, we created that thing which is necessary for a robust capitalist system to survive. We created a level playing field in which your average American family, your average American business could have confidence.

And what happened after 1933 and 1934, after seeing decade after decade of financial crisis, every 7, 8, 9 years, starting in 1933 and 1934, we saw, and the regulations that this House put into place contributed mightily towards the single longest period of prosperity in American history and in human history. Why, because people had faith. Why, because until regulations were loosened, there were no mortgage brokers saying you have no income, you have no job, no problem, we have a mortgage for you. We didn't have securitized products whereby you took paper that you knew was questionable and you bundled it all up, you got yourself a AAA rating and you sold it down the road.

□ 2045

It's like musical chairs, right? You get paid, and it doesn't matter because the problems, the time bombs are in somebody else's portfolio. These were things that developed as our regulatory apparatus failed to keep pace with changes in the financial services industry.

What we are doing now, if we do it right—and I have confidence that we are doing it right—we will restore that faith, we will restore that confidence and once again set us up for the kind of prosperity that we saw for decades after 1933 and 1934.

What are we talking about here?

Mr. DRIEHAUS. Well, you know, I just want to echo your comments, Congressman, because what I see is fierce defense of the status quo by the Republicans, and I think it's important to remind people what the status quo has brought us.

I mentioned earlier I come from Cincinnati, Ohio. Just last year, this is what Hamilton County looked like in terms of the foreclosure map. You can see there were thousands of foreclosures in Hamilton County. There were thousands of foreclosures across the State of Ohio. And when there is a foreclosure next door or when there is a foreclosure across the street, it doesn't just affect the family and the financial institution that agreed to that mortgage. It affects the neighbor next door; it affects your property value; it affects the schools when kids have to be pulled out of the schools; it affects the small businesses down the street when doors are shuttered, when windows are shuttered in neighborhoods. It costs entire neighborhoods.

Mr. HIMES. That is such a critical point. I would just like to emphasize that is such a critical point. There has been so much discussion about the irresponsibility of some homeowners who bought houses they couldn't afford, who had mortgages they knew they couldn't repay sold by people who knew there wasn't a chance that they were going to get repaid.

Many of those criticisms are exactly right, and we have a whole other conversation to have about how we make the American household more responsible, save more, take on less debt, be more responsible like our grandparents were. That is a whole other conversation that we need to have.

But the point is so important that this isn't just about individual irresponsibility; this is a public community problem. As the gentleman says, when you see a foreclosure on a block, every other property value on that block goes down. This has been shown time and time again by the economists.

So irresponsibility, if it was that, affects the neighbors. And there is no way that this Congress, when faced with that kind of a problem to the community, should stand silent and watch people's property values go down and neighborhoods crumble, dark houses, lack of commerce. We have to stand up and say we have to put a stop to this.

Mr. DRIEHAUS. But, again, I go back to this time period when we saw thousands of foreclosures across our States and we were begging the Federal Government to do something about it. And what is the response we hear today from the Republicans who were in charge at that time? They blamed the Community Reinvestment Act, passed in 1977, a bill that incentivized financial institutions to make loans, to make good loans in the neighborhoods where loans weren't going. The Community Reinvestment Act didn't say make bad loans. It said make good loans, and we, the Federal Government, will give you credit for making loans in those communities. It has worked well, and it has served our communities well.

You have worked in community development just like I have, and we know how valuable the Community Reinvestment Act is to those communities. But the Republicans, in order to hide from the failure of inaction, want to point to an act passed in 1977 and say somehow that this Community Reinvestment Act was forcing banks to loan into these neighborhoods. Ben Bernanke, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, said that's ridiculous, that just didn't happen. And the Community Reinvestment Act has served us well. But enough, enough of the blame. There is so much blame that is offered in this Chamber.

What do we know? The fact is we were elected to do something about the crisis. We were elected to clean up that pileup on the road. So when we came in with this administration, this administration acted very aggressively in terms of addressing foreclosures. We passed a very aggressive bill that cracks down on predatory lending.

The administration, working with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and working with the Department of the Treasury, has initiated a foreclosure prevention program that has already saved hundreds of thousands of homes in the United States. We passed a credit card bill that protects consumers and protects consumers against credit card companies who are increasing interest rates and increasing fees on consumers.

We just, last week, passed the Consumer Financial Protection Act, which again brings financial protections to consumers around financial products. You know, it was often stated in the State of Ohio that you had more protections purchasing a toaster than you did a house. In many cases that's true because we do have consumer protections when it comes to products, and we do have consumer protections when it comes to toys; but we didn't have much in the way of consumer protection when it comes to the most valuable purchase of your life in the case of many of us.

Mr. HIMES. So many of the ideas that are incorporated into the legislation that we have been working on are fundamentally commonsense ideas. This notion that you should be able to sell a mortgage to someone who doesn't have an income or who is unwilling to show you the documents that verify his or her income, what flavor of insanity is that? Why is it controversial that a consumer finance protection agency should take a hard look at that? This is common sense.

You know that derivatives, which so few people understand, but people know that derivatives, credit default swaps at AIG were a huge contributor to the meltdown. AIG was writing contracts, making bets that it didn't have a prayer of honoring when things went bad. So you look at that and you say, gosh, they didn't have a regulator, nobody was looking at it. And there are whole swaths of financial services that didn't have regulators. There were plenty of areas that did, but there's AIG writing credit default swaps without any oversight.

So in the derivatives bill—and for the life of me I don't understand why that one became a partisan issue. We didn't say you can't do derivatives; we didn't even put limits on the amount of derivatives that you could assume. We did say, however, that if you're going to buy yourself derivatives, you're going to clear those derivatives on a clearinghouse if the clearinghouse will take it. You're going to trade them on an exchange so that there is transparency, so that we know who's doing what to whom, what the price is, what the volume is, so we get to see and the regulators get to see and the markets get to see who's taking what kind of risk.

This is a fundamental notion of a market economy, transparency and good information, which is at the heart of that derivatives bill, and somehow that was opposed. Common sense, critical to the markets—going to be awfully important to making sure that an AIG never occurs again—and yet it was controversial.

Mr. DRIEHAUS. Well, talking about the credit default swaps at AIG, not only did you have the people engaging in the sale of credit default swaps, which they knew they could never honor, but they were getting bonuses for doing it. There were perverse incentives at play at AIG and at other financial institutions that incentivized payment structures for the sale of these very instruments. So when we wanted to look at executive compensation, we were criticized by the other side. And we said, look, we're not trying to take away people's pay; we believe in fair pay for hard work. But what we don't believe in is these compensation packages that incentivize incredibly risky behavior when the individual engaging in the practice doesn't have any skin in the game.

Mr. HIMES. You're right about that. There was so much hysteria about the discussion around compensation, that somehow the U.S. Government is going to start determining what people should be paid. And the reality is, in all honesty, this House from time to time contributes to that kind of hysteria. But here's another example of just pure common sense.

All we're saying, and I think all the Federal Reserve and the Treasury and those who are concerned with compensation, all we're saying is this: we're saying exactly the same thing that shareholders and owners of every company believe to the core, which is, if you're an executive and you create good value in the long term, you're a long-term value creator, get paid well. That's the American way. But you don't get to be paid well for failure. You don't get to be paid huge for taking enormous risks that look good on day two, but which bring the system down on day 10. The interest of this institution has been exactly the interest that shareholders have: let's make sure that the system is set up to reward people for good, long-term value creation.

People get very concerned about the TARP and the compensation within the TARP. Very special case. And I know that everybody in this Chamber hopes that we never see another TARP again. The TARP of course made the government a major shareholder in many institutions which, of course, as I have been saying, gives you a pretty significant vote on compensation. But again, common sense going forward, let's make sure our executives are rewarded for that which benefits the shareholders, good long-term value creation.

Mr. DRIEHAUS. And as you know, we are now looking at the systemic risk that is involved in all of this, that is, what is the risk inherent with some of these products? What is the risk inherent with some of these institutions that have been deemed too big to fail? Shouldn't we regulate that? Shouldn't we regulate those institutions? Shouldn't we regulate those products so that they don't get too big that their failure could bring down the economy? Shouldn't we regulate those instruments, those financial instruments that if they fail would cause hundreds of thousands of foreclosures across the United States? Isn't that in the best interest of the people of the United States, to step in and actually regulate this behavior? That's what we're taking on right now.

But every step of the way, Congressman, every step of the way when we tried to protect consumers from the credit card companies, so many Republicans said no. When we tried to establish the Consumer Financial Protection Agency to protect consumers who were trying to buy homes, the Republicans said no. When we're looking at systemic risk, we're now hearing it on the other side: no, let the status quo rule. The status quo has brought us the worst recession in our lifetimes.

Mr. HIMES. And this is another good example of common sense.

At the core of what we are trying to do is to make sure that no institution ever gets bailed out again with taxpayer dollars, that we never again see an institution too big to fail. So what are we saying? Are we coming up with something new and radical? No. What we're saying is that if you are large and interconnected and create some systemic risk, you will be more closely scrutinized by the regulators than if you're just a small community bank. You will be required to hold more capital against your activities. Commonsensical stuff.

And maybe most important—and this is where we get to doing away with the concept of too big to fail—if you make bad decisions, if you as a systemically important institution are in danger of failing, we're not going to do something radical; we are going to do something that this country has been doing for 70 years, unwinding, in an orderly fashion, the operation of that bank.

The FDIC has had resolution authority and has been unwinding failed banks in a calm and orderly way for decades. And now we are saying, if you blow it, you fail, but you're going to do it in such a way that there is no risk that you bring down the financial system. That is hardly anything other than a nod of our hats to what has been so successful in this country for decades.

Mr. DRIEHAUS. In the end, Congressman, this is about protecting jobs because this recession has cost millions of jobs across this country. We have millions of families suffering today because of the inaction of Congress, the inaction of the Federal Government when it came to the runaway greed on Wall Street. We've paid the price, so now we are picking up the pieces. But we see unemployment in the double digits. We are now seeing some improvement when it comes to those unemployment rates; we are seeing fewer people losing their jobs.

But we are joined now by our good friend, Congressman JOHN BOCCIERI, my colleague from Ohio. And certainly in northern Ohio just as southern Ohio we have seen tremendous job loss. But we are about action. We are about picking up the pieces and trying to put it back together, as opposed to the inaction of the other side.

Mr. BOCCIERI. Well, I thank the gentleman from Cincinnati. And I thank him for his previous work in the State legislature together as we tackled the very insidious predatory lending practices that were plaguing our part of Ohio.

□ 2100

I think that we have got to break this down for the American people and explain to them that what is happening on Wall Street is affecting their pocketbooks today. When you walked into a bank or when you walked into a lending institution in Canton, Ohio, and when you asked them for a loan several years ago for a mortgage on a new house, they made it relatively easily, and oftentimes they would loan at 120–130 percent of the value of that asset, of that home, oftentimes hedging that risk or putting that risk in that note and then selling it to some investment bank on Wall Street.

Now, when they sold that, when that small mom-and-pop lending institution sold that loan and sold that note, they then bundled these things together on Wall Street. Then we had folks who were betting on these mortgages lasting a long, long time, but there were also folks—bad actors—who were betting that people were not going to be able to pay their mortgages. They were betting on Americans failing. I think that that is what we have got to tackle in this regulatory reform—making sure that this does not happen again.

You know, we look at it on the oil market and on the commodities market. We have folks who are betting on the price of oil going up and who are betting on people failing to pay their mortgages. Is there a bet that Wall Street won't make against the American people? I think enough is enough, and we have got to stand for reforms that are going to make sense.

I agree, like my colleagues here, that the government should set the out-of-bounds markers. We should set the goalposts. We should allow the free market to operate in between but be a good referee. When someone goes out of bounds, throw the flag and say that they committed a penalty. Now, we can have this debate, a robust debate, about where we put these markers. Do they start here or do they start in a much wider fashion? Yet we have got to find some way to make certain that the regulatory reform is going to catch these bad actors and will not allow them to bet against the American people. I think we owe that to the people we represent.

Mr. DRIEHAUS. Well, I think the point is well taken because this is about creating boundaries.

You know, we often have this discussion back home about free markets and capitalism and about allowing free markets and capitalism to thrive. That's what we're all about. We support that and we support that wholeheartedly, but when the behaviors of certain actors on Wall Street or when the behaviors of people acting within the free market cause harm to the public good and cause harm to neighborhoods, it is the job of the government to step in and say, Hold it. Wait a minute. It's okay if you make a profit. It's okay if you sell your goods. It's okay if you produce those goods, but if it's causing harm to the people we are sent here to protect, then maybe we need to intervene. Maybe we need to regulate in a reasonable fashion. That's what we've been doing on Financial Services. It's all about commonsense regulation. It's about stepping in and protecting consumers.

On the other side, all we hear is ''no.'' It's just like health care. It's just like energy. Yeah, they'll step up and say, Yeah, this is a problem. Oh, yeah, this recession is a problem. This double-digit unemployment that we see in our States, yeah, that's a problem.

When it comes to solutions, the book is really thin on the other side.

You know, yeah, we introduced big bills on health care. We introduced bills on energy to protect our energy security across the United States. Yeah, we introduced several bills to regulate properly the financial markets.

We're doing the work of the people, and we're fixing what is broken. The other side is saying, Let's leave it broken because the solution is not something we want to see. That's the problem.

Mr. BOCCIERI. Well, we know what they're against, but what exactly are they for? Are we going to fix our energy crisis that we have in the country? Are we going to fix the economic situation we find ourselves in? Are we going to stand up and fight for the American people or are we just going to push for the status quo and allow these things to happen?

Let us be clear. There are some very good people who work on Wall Street. There are some very conscientious people who work in our financial markets, but there are also some folks who have been pushed and moved and who have accelerated their behavior by greed, by avarice. That is what we want to catch. This is what we want to prevent. Can you imagine this?

You know, as for folks who traditionally want to hedge on the price of a barrel of oil or on the price of gasoline, we want to allow them to do that—the folks at aviation and trucking companies in Ohio who want to hedge and lock in a price of fuel today—but when we allow big corporations, national governments, multinational corporations, and big pension funds to bet on the price of oil going up, that no longer is reflective of a very conscientious market.

Quite frankly, what we've found is that artificially we're driving up the price of a barrel of crude oil even though we have more supply than we did years ago. Demand is down. People aren't driving as much because of the economic situation, but we find ourselves at a point where gasoline prices are on the rise because of what is happening on Wall Street. People now are starting to bet that the recovery is coming soon, and they're betting that the price of oil is going to go up. We've got to stop this.

Mr. HIMES. You know, there's a point that can't get lost here, and I'm conscious, as we're having this discussion, that we're all fathers.

You know, there is blame everywhere to be had for where we are today, and we, day to day, are focused on what we can do better as a government—to better regulate, to better create opportunity, to make these products more understandable to people so that they can make good decisions—but it does at some level come down to good decisions, and we shouldn't let that point, particularly as fathers, go away.

I reflect, as we sort of not just take up financial regulatory reform but as we talk about energy policy and as we talk about health care, if we as families had the same kind of values that our grandparents had—saving and shying away from debt. Of course, we can help on this stuff, right? We've made it awfully easy in this country for people to get into debt without ever knowing about it. Yet, if we were healthier, if we were more responsible about how we used energy and if we were more responsible about when and how we took on debt, like the other problems I've been talking about, we would take huge problems, and we would make them, Mr. Speaker, much more addressable problems.

I'm very interested in this question: How do we as legislators assist in that process?

I don't know that there is a good answer. I do know that, as fathers, there is a good answer. We as a country, I think, need to look back at our grandparents' generation and say, You know what? They got some things right. We need to work with our own families and with our own communities to just say basic things: If it looks too good to be true, it probably is. You'd much rather have some money in the bank than have to go into debt. That's a key point that we, I think, need to get right in this country as well.

I notice that we're joined by our colleague from Virginia, Congressman PERRIELLO.

Mr. PERRIELLO. Thank you very much, Mr. HIMES.

I just want to pick up on what you said about the Greatest Generation. I think part of what made the Greatest Generation great was the concept of deferred gratification—the concept of responsibility. I am going to step up and take care of my family. I am going to save ahead of time. I am going to take that opportunity of the GI Bill, that unprecedented opportunity, to invest in my own education and to help move my family into the middle class.

You look throughout history at empires in decline, and you see this idea—the bread and circus period—in the empire of Rome, and you say, What is it

about that? Well, it's the difference between being a culture of instant gratification—I want it for me right now—and a culture of deferred gratification, or a culture of responsibility.

I think what we've seen in the last few years in this country is really a deterioration of culture and not just of policy and of the market. We really have to point the finger in all sorts of different directions—at the private sector, at the household sector, at people buying homes they couldn't afford, at the government sector of turning the other cheek—and not in the good way but in the way of saying, I'm going to ignore what's happening on the other side. We know right now what we need is this new era of responsibility, which isn't antimarket; it's pro-market.

What I hear from so many of my friends who are in the investment community is that I'm sick and tired of being the responsible investor who makes the right decisions, who doesn't take the high-risk investment, and then I see my colleagues or my peers who did take the high-risk, high-return investment get bailed out.

This has to be about a system of rules and predictability that encourages responsible investing. That includes the diversified portfolio, as we all know, whether it's a fewer thousand dollars of our personal money or whether it's someone taking a larger amount to invest for other people. This is that moment where we can say we want those rules of predictability, where we want to close those loopholes so that we're rewarding good behavior and responsible investing in the same way that, in the energy sector, we need to start rewarding innovation, not rewarding the status quo.

What that means is, instead of always being focused on how can we cash in on other people's misfortune or hedge against that risk, it's how can we create a system that is going to perpetuate the very balance that we need in our market in order to move things forward.

So I think what you and others have been saying tonight is crucial in terms of that sense of not just a shift in policy but a shift in each of us as consumers, as politicians and others, about whether we're going to reward the responsibility of the deferred gratification that the Greatest Generation understood and which will make us stronger than ever before and whether we're going to recreate that comparative advantage.

With that, I yield.

Mr. DRIEHAUS. Well, Congressman, I appreciate the remarks about responsibility because we started this off by talking about responsibility.

You know, it strikes me that the four of us are freshman Members of Congress. When we started running for Congress 2 years ago, none of us knew that we would be walking in the door in January with record job loss in the United States, that we would be in the middle of the worst recession that we have seen in our lifetimes and that we would be walking into a catastrophe. Now, we could run away from that, and we could say these are tough responsibilities, and we need to just say ''no'' and pretend like none of that responsibility falls on us or we could do something about it.

I think that I, like all of you, came here to fix the problems. We came here to step up to that responsibility. We came here to protect those American families who were losing their jobs, those American families who were losing their health care, those American families who knew that Congress for so many years had protected the barons on Wall Street but failed to protect them around their kitchen tables.

We hear all the time on the other side that it's not their fault. They weren't here. They weren't in power for 14 years or 16 years or however many years that was. Apparently, they weren't here. Well, it is our job as Members of Congress to take responsibility, and that's what we're doing.

So, when we look at commonsense regulatory reform around financial institutions, when we look at protecting consumers, when we look at stepping up and at modifying mortgages to keep people in their homes, when we look at stepping up and at addressing issues like health care or energy, it is all about our taking responsibility. It is all about this Congress' stepping up and working together to achieve the common goals that help all of our families across this country. We can say it's not our responsibility, and we can take a backseat and just say ''no,'' but that's not what we were elected to do. We were elected to lead, and I think that is what we are doing in Financial Services.

Mr. BOCCIERI. I further agree, if the gentleman will yield for just a moment, that we do have a responsibility to the American people and that we will be judged by action or inaction, quite frankly. In these troubling economic times in which so many Ohioans find themselves, as Teddy Roosevelt said, In a moment of decision, the worst thing that you could do is nothing. I think there is this call to action from the American people to this legislative body to make sure that we set the boundaries, that we set the out-of-bounds markers, that we set the goalposts, and that we make sure that the referees that we appoint are doing a good job.

I have friends who have worked on Wall Street who have said, if we would have just enforced the regulations that we have, this would have been averted, that this catastrophe could have been averted. We have the housing sector and we have the commercial markets now showing signs of breaking, but we have got to have swift action, and we have got to make sure that there is a steady stream and that there is an equal playing field for the least among us—for those folks who are investing in Wall Street and in the markets. We have to make sure that their investments are protected, that their pensions are there for them when they retire, and we have to make sure that folks aren't gambling on their futures. In my humble opinion, that's what it's all about.

You know, I follow Senator WEBB quite a bit. He has quoted Teddy Roosevelt quite often in one of his most recent books. He has said frequently, as Teddy Roosevelt has said, that the welfare of each of us is dependent upon the welfare of all of us and that we have got to make certain that we are creating this level playing field for the least among us, like my grandparents who arrived here on the shores of America with nothing but the belief and the hope that, if they worked hard, if they persevered and if they gave back to their community, that America was a place where their dreams could be realized. That's what the American Dream is about.

We have a responsibility to make sure that that playing field is level, is equal, so that it's not a slippery slope. It is so, when they begin their climb, their ascent, up the socioeconomic ladder, that America affords opportunity and prosperity. That's what this is about, and that's what the decisions that we are striving for are all about. So I appreciate the gentleman's remarks.

Mr. DRIEHAUS. Mr. PERRIELLO.

□ 2115

Mr. PERRIELLO. Well, I would just echo, I think you and I both come from similar roots from the mother country in Italy, the motherland, but also what we took from that immigrant experience of our grandparents was that idea that if you work hard and play by the rules, there will be an opportunity for you in this country. When this country rewards hard work and responsibility, this country is better than any on Earth.

But when we get away from those fundamental ideals of American hard work and responsibility, we undermine so much of what makes us different, what makes us special. I was meeting with various members from the EU who were here today in part because Chancellor Merkel was speaking to us. They were talking about that quintessentially American spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship.

The great threat to that in our society right now is not one administration or one policy. It's when the influence on this body and that on the other side of this building is such that it rewards what has worked for the last 20 years instead of what we could be 20 years from now. Capitalism is based on the idea of innovation, on the idea of competition and yet too much in our system we see a rewarding of what has worked, not what could work in the future.

If we are going to deliver for the middle class and the working class of this

country, for districts like yours and mine that once had strong factories and manufacturing bases, we must have the courage to think again about not just the financial sector policy, but an industrial policy, an agricultural policy, a jobs policy for this country.

But the first piece of that has to be putting in place the rules that will allow lending to begin flowing again, not just on the macro-level, but to the small and medium-sized businesses that create two-thirds of the job growth in our areas in Ohio and Virginia. But the key to that is predictability. Predictability means that we have a system of rules that people can work within. Entrepreneurship works within a system of predictability.

We need to have that system of accountability so that those who act according to those rules are rewarded for their innovation and success. That is a quintessentially American idea.

Here we are challenged today because both parties in the Congresses before us have failed to live up to that standard. Many on Wall Street have failed to live up to that standard. But as Congressman DRIEHAUS mentioned, the line we will draw is not between the right and the left, but between right and wrong, not between one side of the aisle or the other, but whether we will solve the problem.

What we will hope people will judge us by is did we step up to the challenge of the time and try to solve that problem. I believe the people on this floor tonight are dedicated sincerely to the idea of problem-solving, not to ideology or to the next election cycle.

Mr. DRIEHAUS. Congressman, I very much appreciate your efforts in those regards. Congressman HIMES, if you want to wrap us up, I yield the floor to you.

Mr. HIMES. Thank you, my good friend from Ohio, my two good friends from Ohio and Virginia. It's a pleasure to be out here tonight with you.

We have talked about a lot of important issues, and one of the reasons I feel proud to be in this Chamber with you and with our colleagues is because we are in a moment of crisis, no doubt about it. We were called in a moment of crisis to lead.

When you lead in a moment of crisis, you lead constructively. You take some risks. You acknowledge, as I know that each and every one of us does, that we won't get this perfect. Very little of what has been produced in history in this room has been perfect; but it has been done constructively, it has been done with the spirit that we will get it right over time, and it has been done by people taking some risks.

In a moment of crisis, it is not leadership to say no. It is not leadership to simply snipe at those who are trying to solve the problems, the problems that affect every American family, the problems that mean that families don't have jobs. They worry about whether their kids will be educated. These are the things that we are trying to address, and it is just a fine moment that we have been called upon now to push these things to try to restore the opportunity that is so important to American families and to the sense of the American Dream.

Mr. DRIEHAUS. Gentlemen, I appreciate you coming down to the floor this evening. This is about solutions. This is about stepping up to responsibilities. This is why we were elected.

We hear so often on the other side the naysayers come down and talk about what won't work. They don't talk about the responsibility, the common responsibility we have. They run away from the years that they were in charge.

But this is about stepping up to responsibilities and making a difference. While it's not always perfect, we are doing what's right by the American people and doing what's right by the families that elected us to represent them.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back.

VACATING 5-MINUTE SPECIAL ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the 5-minute Special Order of the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is vacated.

There was no objection.

DOCTORS CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much, and I am proud to spend the next hour as the party of naysayers, as our young colleague from the other side of the aisle just described us. We have, Mr. Speaker, on occasion been accused of being the Party of No.

I have a number of colleagues with me this hour, one of them being my good friend and fellow Georgian, fellow physician, Dr. PAUL BROUN. He and I on a number of occasions just this past Monday, yesterday, I guess, did a number of events together in our great State of Georgia.

We said to editorial boards and television stations, we are the Party of No, guilty as charged; but we don't spell it n-o, we spell it k-n-o-w.

Maybe we do on occasion spell it ''no'' when we say, Mr. Speaker, we say to the Speaker, NANCY PELOSI, that, heck, no, we don't want this form of health care change to one-sixth of our economy with the Federal Government literally going into the exam room with a bunch of bureaucrats and coming in between a doctor and a patient.

Dr. BROUN and I, Mr. Speaker, and many of our colleagues on this side of the aisle who are part of the GOP Doctors Caucus, there are about 15 of us, 12 M.D.s, some dentists, optometrist, a clinical psychologist and author, we are very proud of our almost 400 years of clinical experience, Mr. Speaker.

We are very disappointed, of course, that we were not able to offer some of the knowledge, the k-n-o-w part of knowledge, to this debate.

We sent letters, of course, along with many of our colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle to President Obama, especially after hearing from him in the so-called State of the Union when he really took the opportunity to use this Chamber and to call together a joint session to speak to the Nation on health care and made some very distinct promises in regard to the need for medical liability reform, as an example, which we don't see one word of, essentially, in H.R. 3962.

What little bit, what little tiny piece of medical liability reform, adds an insult, Mr. Speaker, to those States that have already enacted, successfully, I might add, medical liability reform like our State of Georgia, like the great State of Texas and the great State of Florida, when it goes on to say these grants, this little minuscule amount of money in the millions, not billions or trillions, which is more applicable to H.R. 3962, when they say none of these grants are eligible for States that have already enacted any meaningful medical liability reform that limits contingency fees for trial lawyers, or has any caps on noneconomic judgments, awards.

That's the only medical liability reform, Mr. Speaker, that has ever been proven to be effective in the great State of California that, of course, enacted that legislation called MICRA back in 1978. It's pretty frustrating; it really is.

We are here tonight, Mr. Speaker, to speak to our colleagues on both sides of the aisle. We want to do that in a very respectful way and, again, as I say, to try to impart knowledge to the issue. We have a lot of ideas in regard to what could be done to help improve the greatest health care system in the world that's not perfect. We recognize that, and I think all Members, Mr. Speaker, recognize that in both Chambers. We are willing to work in a bipartisan way given the opportunity. Unfortunately, we have not been given that opportunity.

That's why we keep taking advantage of what little opportunities we have like these Special Orders late at night, or maybe 1-minutes. I think on our side of the aisle we have 178 Republicans in this House of Representatives, and I think 120 gave 1-minute speeches today talking about the Republican alternatives, a way to do this, to help make sure that we bring down the cost of health insurance, for those who, if it's 10 million, I don't know the total number, of 300 million people in this country who cannot afford health insurance. We want to bring down the price of the cost of health insurance so they can have access, but also to bring down the cost of health insurance for

the 85, 88, 90 percent of people that do have it, but it's just a little bit too expensive.

We can do that and that's what we are going to be talking about tonight, Mr. Speaker, about ideas, bills, individual bills. I think there are something like 53. I have introduced legislation over and over. This is my seventh year, my fourth term as my great constituents from the 11th of Georgia know, that would save, as a Congressional Budget Office, not me doing the number crunching, but the nonpartisan, Director of the Congressional Budget Office, Doug Elmendorf, hired by Speaker PELOSI, said that, you know, medical liability reform could save $54 billion over 10 years. I mean, that is a significant chunk of money.

We all know that a real concerted effort on reducing waste, fraud and abuse could save another $20 billion. From our perspective, from the Republican alternatives that we are offering, we wouldn't spend more than that amount of money. But we would make those two integral parts of the reform that we would offer, and that we have offered, we will continue to talk about.

We don't spend $1.1 trillion of taxpayers' money when this country is already $11.2 trillion in debt and that we just got through with the fiscal year, I guess, 2009 fiscal year with a $1.4 trillion deficit, Mr. Speaker, four times the largest previous deficit in the history of this country.

To say that, oh, well, look, we have got the numbers here and the Congressional Budget Office says this plan of ours is going to save, over a 10-year period of time, it's going to save $100 billion; but to save 100 billion, we are going to spend 1.1 trillion.

You know, when you do the subtraction, I think that makes you, what, 900-and-some-change billion dollars in the hole.

My Georgia Tech math, six quarters of calculus, I believe my high school arithmetic would tell me that that's not a real good deal for the American taxpayer. We are here tonight to talk about this, Mr. Speaker.

I am proud to have some of my colleagues from the GOP Doctors Caucus, and I want to yield to them. We will engage in a colloquy, and we will have a meaningful hour this evening so that Members on both sides of the aisle, and if there are any folks out there in the good old USA watching, I know there are some elections going on today, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of folks are very interested in, and maybe they will be tuned into that. But in any regard, we appreciate the opportunity.

I yield to my good friend and physician colleague from the great State of Georgia who represents Athens and my hometown of Augusta, Georgia, and a fellow classmate at the Medical College of Georgia, family practitioner, my good friend, Dr. PAUL BROUN.

□ 2130

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Dr. GINGREY, I appreciate greatly your doing this Special Order tonight, and I appreciate your yielding me some time.

When I spoke on the floor this morning in 1-minutes, I started off my speech by saying when I graduated from the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, Georgia, and got my MD degree, we in the medical college all swore to the Hippocratic Oath. One of the clauses in the Hippocratic Oath was ''I will do no harm.''

The Nancy Pelosi health care insurance bill, it is not about health care. It is about insurance, and, actually, it is about power. It is not even about health care. But the Nancy Pelosi health care insurance bill will actually do a tremendous amount of harm for me and all of our medical colleagues who continue to practice medicine, so it is going to destroy the quality of care.

It is also going to destroy the Federal budget. Dr. GINGREY, as you were talking about, it is going to spend over $1 trillion in what I am describing as voodoo economics or zombie economics that CBO utilized in scoring this bill, because they made some assumptions that are just totally untenable. They are just not going to happen. Since they are projecting the growth of Medicare is going to be half of what it has been historically, that is not going to happen. They haven't counted into the scoring a lot of issues that are going to balloon the costs to the American people.

So the Pelosi health care insurance bill is going to destroy our economy, and it is going to create a tremendous debt. It is going to destroy people's private health care plans that they have today. If you continue to buy private health insurance, the American public's premiums are going to double and triple. So it is going to destroy the budgets of families all across America.

It is going to destroy the State budgets, because it is going to have a tremendous unfunded mandate on the States because of the large expansion of Medicaid; thus, the States are going to have to go get that money from somebody, and they are going to increase taxes. They are going to have to. They have no other choice but to increase taxes.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. If the gentleman will yield for just a second, Dr. BROUN, in that regard, Mr. Speaker, I ask the gentleman from Georgia, this Medicaid increase in NANCY PELOSI's health reform bill, H.R. 3962, what kind of dollars are we talking about here? What kind of burden are we talking about, unfunded mandate that that would put on the State, and how does that come about?

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Well, in increasing the Medicaid rolls that the State government has to fund, the Federal Government is going to help by giving money to the States, but the States are going to have to come up with the matching.

Just in our State of Georgia, it is estimated the State of Georgia is going to have an extra $1 billion that Georgians are going to have to come up with in increased taxes just for this Federal mandate on our State alone. It is billions and billions of dollars on every State in this country, so it is a huge burden on the States.

So it is an unfair taxation that is pushed off on the States, and every person, even the middle class, who our President said he was going to protect, the middle class is going to be burdened with a tremendous tax burden because of the mandates.

Some of them aren't direct taxes. As I have already mentioned, their health insurance premiums are going to really double or triple. That is really a tax, because it is a cost shifting from the private insurance.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. If the gentleman would yield back to me just for a second, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask the gentleman, why is that a problem for the States? Mr. Speaker, you and I both know that here in the great Congress, these Halls of Congress, if we want to spend money, if we want to overspend, we just print more money out. I think we have red ink of about $275 billion, and that is why today in the Federal Government we have this debt of $11.2 trillion. Can't the States do the same thing?

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. No, sir. Well, thank you, Dr. GINGREY. The States are prohibited from printing money under the Constitution. Actually, we should be preventing the Federal Reserve from printing money like they are doing, and the Congress has the authority to do that, if we just take that power back from the Federal Reserve, and I, as an original intent constitutionalist, think we should do that.

It is our prerogative as Members of Congress to manage the money instead of the Federal Reserve, and it shouldn't be the Federal Reserve doing it. We should be doing that here in Congress.

But the States can't do that, so they are going to have this tremendous economic burden. Our Governor, Sonny Perdue, is struggling trying to make the budget come out in black ink in our State. Because we have a balanced budget amendment to our State constitution, the State of Georgia cannot spend more money than it brings in, technically, under our constitution.

So if we as a Federal Government put a tremendous burden of $1 billion on the State of Georgia, which is already struggling, already furloughing workers, they are not replacing workers, State services are being cut, teachers' salaries and furloughs and cuts are being put in place, and we add $1 billion to the State of Georgia, an economic burden, that money has got to come from somewhere.

The Federal Government is not going to give it to Georgia. It is not going to give it to Louisiana. It is not going to give it to Texas, New York, Vermont, or Minnesota. The States are going to have to come up with those dollars, and the only way they can do that is

through higher taxes, as well as cutting more services than what they are doing now.

You take States like Michigan, where the unemployment is so high, raising taxes is going to further wreck their economy. So this is going to destroy the American economy as well as the States' economies.

We are going to be destroying lives with this bill, because this bill, the way it is written today, is going to allow taxpayers' dollars to pay for abortions. Now, the Democrats have put some mumbo-jumbo language in there, and it is really a ruse. What they have done is they say private funds can be utilized to pay for abortions through the public insurance system. They call it the public option. But it is not an option; it is a mandate.

It is actually something that the leadership of the Democratic Party, from the President to many of the leadership in their own party, have said that this is just a step to a single party payer health insurance program. So it is going to destroy private insurance here in America too.

So what this Nancy Pelosi health insurance bill is going to do is destroy everything that is good, and good with our health care system. And what is most important, it is going to destroy the quality of care our seniors are getting, because they are going to get the short shrift of all of this.

They are going to draw the short straw, because the Democrats put something in the bill, something that is called comparative effectiveness research in the stimulus bill, and now they have set up a panel that is going to use that comparative effectiveness to determine how best to spend the dollars. And when you have limited dollars, they are going to decide is it better to spend the money on a well person who is 25 versus a sick person who is 70.

So the seniors' health care provision is going to be destroyed. We are going to have more people pushed, because Medicare Advantage is going to be destroyed, we are going to have move people pushed off on the Medicare system, which is going to further increase the burden on the current Medicare system. So we are going to have further rationing of care, particularly for the seniors. So they are going to be told they can't get tests, they can't get surgeries, they can't get medications that they need, and it is going to be absolutely disastrous for seniors.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. If the gentleman would yield, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to have the opportunity to ask the gentleman to share with us a little bit. He is mentioning about this comparative effectiveness research council and how, based on, hopefully, Mr. Speaker, qualified, good, solid research, and to not only recommend to our doctors across the country, the 850,000 of them, many of whom are primary care doctors, and we will hear from another primary care doctor, JOHN FLEMING, with us tonight from Shreveport, Louisiana, in just a few minutes.

To suggest is one thing, Mr. Speaker, but to mandate based on comparative effectiveness research, which our hard-working men and women, taxpayers of this country, are paying for that, and many, many, if not most of them are making less than $250,000, by the way, Mr. Speaker.

But what I wanted to ask Representative BROUN to share with us is not only the fact that our seniors, as he suggests, Mr. Speaker, and I agree with him, could get thrown under the bus by this rationing that comes from this comparative effectiveness research study that says, oh, that won't work. Let's do something cheaper, and, you are too old and it is not going to be cost-effective so you don't get it.

But I would like for Representative BROUN, if he would, Mr. Speaker, to share with us about these pay-fors. Ms. PELOSI and President Obama says it has got to be paid for. He won't add one dime to the deficit. It has to be paid for. I would like for Dr. BROUN to talk to us a little bit about where some of this money is coming from, this $1 trillion so this health care reform is paid for.

I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Thank you, Dr. GINGREY. The pay-fors are through higher taxes, particularly on small business, as well as individuals who are considered rich. We are supposed to be treated equal under the law, but a lot of our colleagues on the other side don't think that is factual any more, that we need to be treated unequally under the law, which is totally unconstitutional and is against the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, basically.

But what it does is this is going to destroy jobs because of the mandates upon small business. There are a lot of taxes and a lot of fees, and there are even fees and taxes on individuals who don't take their employer-offered health insurance. So it is going to force everybody in this country basically to take whatever insurance is dictated by the health care czar panel here in Washington.

So taxes, the only way they get to any semblance of controlling the amount of money that this bill calls for, which is way over $1 trillion—and, in fact, I think that is going to be very low. When we saw Medicare presented, the Congressional Budget Office miscalculated. Their calculation was almost one-tenth of what the true cost was over the decade following passage of Medicare, and I think that is what we are going to see with the Pelosi health insurance bill, too.

But there are tremendous taxes on everybody in this country. And it is going to be a tax on the middle class, because they have got to tax durable medical equipment. That is going to go up. They are going to tax the Cadillac insurance plans. So that means people who have good insurance, privately provided today, that is going to go up. There are going to be taxes on small businesses.

Right now, the bill says if an individual makes over $500,000 or a couple over $1 million a year, that is adjusted gross income, that they are going to have a big tax on them. Well, a lot of those people are actually small business men and women, and that is their adjusted gross.

They are filing their personal income tax return as a Sub S corporation or as a limited liability partnership, like a lot of physicians, accountants, and lawyers have. Small businesses, they are going to be taxed, taxed, taxed, and that is the reason that the experts say 5.5 million jobs are going to be destroyed. People are going to lose their job because of this Nancy Pelosi health insurance plan.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. If the gentleman will yield back to me, Mr. Speaker, I thank him so much for bringing that factual knowledge to us.

Absolutely, this figure that he just quoted, Mr. Speaker, of 5.7 million, I think, additional jobs would be lost because of this bill, it is not something that Representative BROUN just pulled out of the air. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Chief of the Council of Economic Advisers to the President, Christina Roma, is the one that said that. That is where my good friend and colleague from Georgia, Representative PAUL BROUN, got those figures from.

He mentioned one other thing, before I go on to our colleague from Louisiana, and I am sure that we will talk about this as we go on this evening, the health choices commissioner, a very powerful new czar under this program, would say to the employers across this country, you can have anything you want. You can offer any health insurance policy plan you want, Mr. Speaker, as long as what Henry Ford said many years ago, you can get any color of T Model Ford that you want, as long as it is black.

□ 2145

I draw my colleagues' attention to this poster I have regarding that assembly line way back in the early part of the 20th century.

I thank the gentleman from Athens.

At this point I want to yield to a fellow member of the GOP Doctors Caucus from Shreveport, Louisiana, and that is my good friend Dr. JOHN FLEMING.

Mr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman, Congressman GINGREY, again, a physician colleague as well as a congressional colleague; of course Dr. BROUN as well and others. We have done this a number of times. It's always enjoyable and important for the American people to see the physician perspective.

What I would actually like to do is to go over the fact that it's been said many times by Democrats here and everywhere that we are the party of

''no.'' We offer no solutions. And I have to remind people constantly that I ran on a pro-reform campaign to be elected to Congress last year. So it's very important to me as a physician to see true reform, not a government takeover of health care, but reform of what is really an excellent system. And we have had several plans that we are ready to offer, but now that we are getting to a point where there is actually going to be a Democrat plan on the floor perhaps this week or the next week that will be voted on, we're now ready to offer our substitute. And I wanted to contrast and compare for a moment how these two plans differ, and I will just hit the high points.

Number one, the Pelosi plan cuts Medicare by $500 billion. That's a half trillion dollars. It cuts it out. No explanation. No plan. No strategy. We have had Medicare for 45 years. No one knows how to reduce fraud, waste, and abuse any more than it has. In fact, we know that the larger the entity, the higher the fraud, waste, and abuse is. Our plan does not cut a dime out of Medicare.

The CBO estimates in PelosiCare that it will cut over $150 billion to Medicare Advantage, the private option of Medicare, which 25 percent of Americans, seniors, if you will, have chosen. It will take that program out completely. That will knock about 6 to 11 million seniors off of Medicare Advantage. And not only will they lose preventative health, the eyeware, and all the other benefits that go with it and the efficiencies and the preventative health, as I say, but they will be required to go out in the market and buy Medigap coverage; that's additional coverage. Our plan does not touch Medicare Advantage. It keeps it fully intact.

Here's a very interesting one: the CBO says that under PelosiCare that part B premiums will increase by $25 billion, and part D, the medication part, will increase by 20 percent. Again, ours does not increase those costs one iota.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Reclaiming my time for clarification, in regard to the Medicare Advantage program that the gentleman from Louisiana was just talking about, I wanted to ask him, Mr. Speaker, if under those Medicare Advantage plans, which, by the way, some 20 percent, 11 million seniors, 20 percent of seniors under Medicare—for some strange reason, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, they pick that as their delivery system of choice because of some of the reasons the gentleman from Louisiana outlined. And I wanted to ask the gentleman, Mr. Speaker, if that in many cases does not also include prescription drug coverage, which would obviate their need for paying a monthly premium under part B.

And I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. FLEMING. Thank you. Yes, you're quite correct, many things that go beyond the standard Medicare. And Americans have learned that that is a good bill. It's private insurance using Medicare dollars. In fact, many of us would like to see us, instead of having more government running of health care, to actually have current government programs run in the private sector, where things can be done far more efficiently.

Also, there is a mandate, all employers, essentially all employers, will be imposed an 8 percent payroll tax under PelosiCare, absolutely. Under our plan, no mandate, no individual mandate, no employer mandate.

As pointed out, as many as 5.5 million jobs will be lost as a result of increased taxes, which will add to, of course, the overhead for average businesses.

Now, get this: currently businesses are at a marginal rate of 35 percent taxation. When the Bush tax cuts expire in the next year, that will jump to 39 percent. But added to it with the Pelosi health bill, there will be another surtax added of 5.4 percent, which will then take it up to 45 percent. So we're looking at a 10 percent increase in marginal tax rates. Now, tell me that that will not cause joblessness. There's no way around that.

Also employers will be required to pay at least 72.5 percent of the premiums. There will not be the flexibility that they have today to pay less if they can't afford more.

Will PelosiCare have medical malpractice reform? Not only will it not have it, but the so-called pilot studies that will be offered out there, a measly few million dollars to do that, the only States that can do that are States that do not have laws that restrict lawyer fees or awards or rewards—should I use the word ''rewards''—awards for damages. So that means that we can, of course, reform medical malpractice as long as we don't do anything to lawyers, which, of course, is the biggest interest group, I think, in this bill to begin with.

There are many things, Mr. Speaker, that are going to just blow the budget out. And I would say in summary that everyone, middle class and above, is going to be affected by this in a negative way.

And here's how they are going to be affected: they're either going to be paying higher insurance premiums, or they're going to be paying higher taxes or both. And the government will be deeply involved in every decision in life. Their lives will be managed by the Federal Government, micro-managed, if you will. And if you're a senior, you're going to have increasing difficulty in finding a provider, a hospital or a doctor. It's already true with Medicaid, the other government-run program, which, by the way, is going to increase to 25 percent of human beings in this country from where it is today.

And most people who are on Medicaid cannot find doctors as it is. Where are these doctors going to come from? Because you see, Mr. Speaker, the problem is, and again look at Cuba, look at North Korea, look at Canada, look at the United Kingdom, they all have universal coverage, but universal coverage doesn't mean you're going to get treated. Only one out of six people in Canada has a family physician. So the answer is always in these countries that are government-run systems, yes, you're not going to have to pay that; yes, it's fully covered; but you're just going to have to wait a couple of years to get it.

And some things that are common in the vernacular in Canada and the U.K. is, yes, you have cancer, but, no, we're not going to treat it, we're going to watch it. You will never hear a doctor say that in the U.S.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Reclaiming my time, before we go to the other doctor from Louisiana, I think the gentleman from Georgia wanted to engage maybe in a colloquy and ask a question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Thank you for yielding, Dr. GINGREY.

What I wanted to bring up, Dr. FLEMING, is that during the August break I went up to Canada and talked to folks about their universal health care system. And the American public need to understand what their situation is up there. I found women in their 40s and 50s who've never been told that they needed a pap smear, never been told they needed one. Never had one. Why? Because the doctors won't take the time to counsel with them and won't take time to do the pap smear because doctors have to rush people through the office so quickly just to see the capitated amount just to make a decent living.

The average time spent, I was told by many, many patients up there, was 5 minutes with a doctor, 5 minutes. I was told that if you have high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol, you have to make three appointments to see the doctor and they'll just give you medicines for those three things one at a time. You can't go counsel with your doctor for any period of time.

But most importantly, and back to the reason I asked you to yield a moment or two, is that in Canada they pay a tremendous amount of taxes. Even the lowest income people pay a tremendous amount of taxes to pay for their health care system. They have a provincial and national sales tax just to pay for their health care of 7 percent in British Columbia, where I was, a 7 percent sales tax just to pay for national health insurance. Plus on top of that, they have an income tax. I was told by a guy making under $50,000 a year, he said he paid 60 percent of his income, 60 percent of his income was paid in taxes to help pay for their national health insurance program.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I certainly know of what the gentleman from Georgia speaks.

I had an opportunity last year to visit in Taiwan, the country of Taiwan, our great friends. And they also, like the U.K. and Canada and some other countries, have this government-run single-payer, sometimes referred to as national health insurance. They have a very similar program, Mr. Speaker, to what Dr. BROUN was just referring to. And when I was visiting in Taiwan, I made sure that I had an opportunity to visit with the Minister of Health; and I asked them to describe the system to me, and Dr. BROUN has just done a great job of sort of a mirror image of what goes on in Canada. And I also had an opportunity to ask some of the Taiwanese citizens about the national health program and what they thought about it.

And, Mr. Speaker, here is just a little bit of what they said, their response. And I think my colleagues need to understand this so they can share this information, and I hope they will on both sides of the aisle, with their constituents:

They said we really like this system, this national health insurance system, here in Taiwan, which has been in place since 1997.

And I said, What's so good about it?

And, Mr. Speaker, their response was, well, kind of like what Dr. BROUN said, We only have to wait about 5 minutes. The queue is very short. They really get you in quickly, and you get to be seen by a doctor, and in general on average that visit takes about 5 minutes. And, Mr. Speaker, also they said almost every time you leave the office, you have a handful of several prescriptions, which is really good, according to them.

Mr. Speaker, of course I'm a physician and I know that in my practice, and my colleagues, I'm sure, experienced the same thing, people want to ask you questions. And a lot of time that's spent you can't charge them for and you don't want to charge them for it, but you want to be able to give them time to ask questions. I said, well, how about if you want to ask the doctor a question?

And, Mr. Speaker, the response was, Well, they don't really encourage that because they have a quota of seeing a certain number of patients a day, and if they sort of drag behind and take more than 5 minutes, then their evaluation at the end of the year, Mr. Speaker, is not so good.

So it's a mess is what it is. It's an absolute mess. And the reason, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues even bring it up is because this idea, in our opinion, in our humble opinion, of having a public option competing with the private market is so that the big arm—I should say the big foot—of Federal Government can get right there one step away from taking over the entire health care system in this country; and we then, within a very short period of time, 3 to 5 years, have a system very similar to the U.K. and Canada and Taiwan.

The American people don't want that, I submit to my colleagues; and that's why we're fighting this tooth and nail and will continue to until we defeat it.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I will yield to the gentleman, and then I will yield to Mr. FLEMING so he can finish up and then Dr. CASSIDY as well.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. I just wanted to come back to the point that I just was making so that the Speaker himself can understand and the American people who are listening here can understand that the lowest income workers who are trying to make a living, struggling today to make a living and make ends meet, maybe they do or don't have insurance today, they're going to pay a heavy, dear price in increased taxes by this bill, the Pelosi health care bill.

□ 2200

It is going to destroy their own personal budgets because of this bill if it ever gets passed into law.

I want to remind, Mr. Speaker, if I can speak out to the American public, I would tell them that the Republicans are the Party of Know, K-N-O-W, because we know how to lower the cost of health care. We have 53 bills that have been introduced. Some of them are comprehensive, such as my bill, H.R. 3889, which is totally private, doesn't increase taxes for anybody. It doesn't put mandates on anybody or anywhere and totally looks to the private sector and will lower the cost of health care. We have many Republican bills that will help lower the cost for everybody if our bills could just be heard on the floor.

But the American people need to demand that the Pelosi bill be defeated, destroyed, so we can go back to the drawing board, we can go back to the table and work in a bipartisan way and have Democratic and Republican ideas, and we can find something that is right for America that will lower the cost of health care.

The Pelosi health care bill will skyrocket the health care costs for everybody, skyrocket taxes, and we have to stop it.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I yield to Dr. FLEMING for any concluding remarks. I would welcome my colleagues to remain on the floor and let's continue this discussion. We have, I think, another 20 minutes.

Mr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman. To conclude my comments, I was comparing and contrasting the Pelosi bill with the Republican bill. The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is there are only two ways you can control costs. There is the Nancy Pelosi way where you have an extremely large governmental system that disconnects the patient and the doctor from the cost and it leaves it to the government, it leaves it to a very, very distant decisionmaker in the Federal Government to make decisions about our personal lives and put in force things that affect us that we have no control over. That is one way to do it, and that is ultimately leading to rationing and long lines, like Canada and the U.K. do it.

The other way is a patient-centered perspective, which is the way the Republicans address it, and that is to leave the decisions between the doctor and the patient.

If you stop there, you are not going to control costs. The way you control costs is to engage both the doctor and the patient into the cost. That is not to say that the patient pays all of the costs or even most of the cost. It is just to say through a health savings account and perhaps other methods, the patient is aware what is being spent and there is a certain reward for making good decisions as a consumer. And in order to do that, you have to connect the patient with the cost in some way, and that is where health savings come in, and you have to have transparency and clarity, which we do not have today. And if we do that, then we make very savvy consumers out of patients, and we have the doctors and patients do buy into it. All of the right decisions can be made in the exam room, and you don't need this giant bureaucracy to do that and create long lines. To sum it up, care delayed is care denied.

With that, I thank you.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, at this time I want to yield to our other colleague, a member of the GOP Doctors Caucus from Louisiana, the Baton Rouge area, a gastroenterologist, our good friend, Dr. BILL CASSIDY.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. Speaker, what strikes me about this process is there actually is common ground here. We can agree on the goals we want. We want to lower cost and increase access and have quality care; but I think the problem we are addressing is there is a philosophical divide as to how we approach that.

I liked what Dr. FLEMING said when he spoke about if we can empower patients, we can lower cost. One example of empowering patients and lowering cost is health savings accounts, which the Republican alternatives all strengthen and the Democratic alternative weakens.

A health savings account, imagine what is currently the case where a family of four puts up $12,000 a year. At the end of the year, if they haven't used any resources, they put up another $12,000, and the year after they put up another $12,000, but in a sense it is starting over every year. In a health savings account, you sluice off some of that money and put it into a banking account and the family controls that account. The patient is empowered to make wise financial decisions. If at the end of the year they have money left over in that account, it rolls over to the next year. They actually can hang onto it.

Two examples of how this works, a friend of mine back home, a woman

with some wealth, has a policy that pays for everything. As it turns out, she doesn't care what it costs because her insurance policy pays for everything. She said she doesn't look to see if her doctor gives her a generic or a name brand drug or what the bill is. She knows insurance will pay for it. She doesn't go through her itemized list to see if all expenses are appropriate.

Contrast that with another fellow. I mentioned to him about the power of health savings account. He says, I have a health savings account. My doctor writes me a prescription and I know from experience, I tell him that it costs me $159. Notice he didn't say $160; he said $159. Because it is his own money, he is looking at the itemized deductions. He said, I have a health savings account. Do you mind writing me something less expensive?

The doctor says, I'm sorry, tears it up, and writes him a generic that costs $20. The system just saved $139, not because a bureaucrat in Washington, DC said thou shalt, but rather because someone looking after his own financial interest made the best decision for his health care.

We know this works on a systemic basis. The Kaiser Family Foundation did a study. They compared a family of four, their expenses with a health savings account and a wraparound catastrophic policy, with a family of four which had a traditional insurance policy. The family of four with the HSA catastrophic, they paid 30 percent less for their coverage than the family of four with the traditional insurance policy, and both families, if you will, were equally likely to access preventive services.

So we see by controlling costs, we increased access to quality care, and we did it by bending the cost curve.

What concerns me about the bill advanced by Ms. PELOSI is, according to the Congressional Budget Office, the inflation rate for these bills is 8 percent per year. Now, President Obama says we have to have reform because costs will double in 10 years if we do not. As it turns out, with the reform we have been presented, costs more than double in 10 years. At a minimum, reform should not cost more than status quo, but actually it does. And if we don't control costs, we know that if we don't control costs, access is denied.

Now, we can always make that up by increasing taxes, but when you start off with a bill that increases taxes by $730 billion, it doesn't leave a whole lot of room, Mr. Speaker, for increasing taxes any more. At some point your increased taxes drive up costs, which decreases access, which means you have to spend more and you increase taxes even yet more. It is not wise public policy.

So in closing, I will yield back after saying that I think our Republican alternatives concentrate the power with the patient. It is patient centered, empowering patients. Contrast that with the bills that are before us which, frankly, concentrate power in Washington, D.C., by collecting taxes, 111 bureaucracies, boards and panels, which will again take power away from the woman with her doctor in the exam room in her hometown and transfers it to Washington, D.C., where someone will attempt to dictate how that interaction takes place.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments and for yielding back to me. I wanted to comment on one point he made in regard to the health savings accounts and the catastrophic coverage, the low monthly premium that is affordable, especially for a lot of young people in the job market for the first time and they are paying off their student loans and God knows what other debt they have got. It is a great thing, and it encourages personal responsibility.

□ 2210

Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure my colleagues know that one of the key components of the Republican alternative is to say that companies like Safeway that have these programs where if an employee shows personal responsibility and works very hard at wellness, at keeping themselves healthy—like if they're smoking, to stop, if they're overweight, to lose weight, if they have high cholesterol, to change their diet—to do things that would keep them healthy—as an incentive to them, Mr. Speaker—and this is part of the Republican alternative—the employer, like Safeway and other companies, is able to reduce the out-of-pocket cost to the employee; and the out-of-pocket cost could be the monthly premium or a reduction of the deductible or the copay.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, under current law—HIPAA I think is the law—you can't cut that out-of-pocket expense more than 20 percent. Well, why not? Why not? If you have employees that have skin in the game, so to speak—I guess that's certainly true in regard to the specialty of dermatology—but if they are taking personal responsibility, then we say that an employer ought to be able to increase that discount to those employees up to 40 or 50 percent. Why not? There is not one thing in H.R. 3962 in regard to personal responsibility.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana. Also, I see my colleague from Athens is still here. I think he probably, Mr. Speaker, wants to talk about something in the bill called the health choices administrator, a very, very powerful—yes, another czar created by this bill, the health choices administrator. I want to yield to Dr. BROUN and let him speak to that because I think he's got a slide that he would like our colleagues to pay attention to.

I yield to Dr. BROUN.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Dr. GINGREY, thank you so much for yielding.

This is the health care czar. The President said, if you have insurance and you like it, you can keep it. Nothing could be further from the truth; it's a boldfaced lie. The reason it's a boldfaced lie is because this bill requires the health care czar and his panel—this dude is going to be confirmed by the Senate, but the panel is going to be appointed by the President with no confirmation—they're going to be making health care decisions for everybody. And everybody, even private health insurance plans, have to be approved by the boss. So if you have health care insurance today and you like it, forget it because it's going away unless the boss says it's okay.

So the Democratic health care plan, the health insurance bill that NANCY PELOSI has given us, you can have anything that you want if the boss approves it. And I thank Dr. GINGREY because this is his slide here.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. If the gentleman would yield back to me for just a second.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. You bet.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I know the gentleman from Georgia knows of what he speaks because some of my colleagues may not be old enough to recognize that poster, that caricature of the health choices administrator; but, Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce you to Boss Hogg—H-o-g-g I believe it's spelled, from Hazard County, Georgia—or H-a-w-g, I'm not sure. But anyway, I appreciate the gentleman from Augusta and Athens, my good colleague, physician colleague and classmate from the Medical College of Georgia, sharing that poster with us. And I thank him for being with us tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that our time is drawing to a close. We've probably got about 5 more minutes. I'm going to be spending the rest of the time concluding tonight.

I also want to ask our colleagues to direct their attention to a few posters that I have, a few slides. This first one, of course, is—at the very outset what I wanted to emphasize was that the Republican Party, the loyal minority, if you will, does have a second opinion, and that's what we've been talking about here tonight.

I think the most important part of our second opinion—and we listened very carefully, by the way, during the August recess, during those town hall meetings when so many seniors turned out, many of them fragile, so many veterans, many of them of the Vietnam era, World War II, with just multiple health problems and disabilities. They were so concerned about getting their Medicare cut or being thrown under the bus, so to speak, when the government takes over and starts rationing. And what they told us loud and clear is patients don't want government-run health care. They don't want it. They've seen government-run Indian health care, as an example. They've seen many things that the government

has run and made a thorough mess of. And this is life and death, this is life and death. And that's why they don't trust the government to run it.

Mr. Speaker, our President, it seems to me, is not listening to the American people. In this next slide I want to point out that what they're saying and what they continue to say—in fact, this coming Thursday you're going to see—I don't know how many are going to come to Washington for what my colleagues refer to as a ''house call,'' a house call on Washington; but this is not the physicians making the house call. This is the American public, this is the patients, these are our constituents making a house call on Thursday at noon.

I'm not sure whether we are going to have the opportunity to have them gather on the east steps where they can be seen by all, and all Members coming and going as we come to the floor and debate and vote on this, the most crucial issue that's been before us, I don't know, maybe in the history of this Congress, certainly in the 7 years that I've been here. But we're going to see a lot of people coming from all across this country. Whether they're constituents from Democratic districts or Republican districts, they're going to be here, they're going to be here. My colleague is going to talk about that, I think, in this next hour.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to all my colleagues, you ought to tell your constituents to come. Get on a bus, drive up here, bring a caravan and tell the Members of Congress and the President and this administration what it is you want and what you don't want. And I know they're going to be saying no government-run health care. They're going to be saying don't cut seniors' care to pay for health reform. We can't even get an annual physical under Medicare. We don't have any catastrophic coverage. We have to pay a $900 deductible before we can even go in the hospital under Medicare. And they're going to say don't raise the deficit. I think they think that $1.4 trillion is quite enough deficit for 1 year.

And they're going to say, Mr. Speaker, give us choices, but don't give us mandates. Don't force our young sons and daughters who are straight out of college to have to pay $900 a month for health care they don't need. Allow them, health choices administrator, allow them to pick a high deductible, low monthly premium with catastrophic coverage during the years that they are taking care of themselves and taking personal responsibility.

And they're also going to say, Mr. Speaker, and I will say this in conclusion, they're going to say we want you Members of Congress, Democratic majority, Republican minority, we want bipartisan compromise. We think that you ought to go back to the table, take a clean sheet of paper, throw away these 1990 pages. We know you destroyed a lot of trees, but let's start over again with one sheet of paper and do it in a bipartisan way and think first and foremost about the American people and not the next election.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 2220

A TIME FOR AMERICANS TO RECLAIM THEIR FREEDOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate being recognized to address you here on the floor of the House.

This is a big night for a lot of Republicans across the country, and as we're watching things unfold, the American people have come out to the polls today across the eastern part of the United States, and their voices are being heard. As our voice has been heard sometimes in the echo chamber in the House of Representatives, now the real voices of the people have been heard through the ballot boxes in places like Virginia and in New Jersey, and we wait to see how it unfolds above and beyond that.

This is, Mr. Speaker, a time for choosing. This is a time for the American people to step up and to reclaim their freedom.

The American people understand what has happened in the last year, in a little more than the last year. They understand that there was a Secretary of the Treasury who came to this Capitol and who demanded a $700 billion TARP fund. A lot of us said ''no,'' and everybody here on the floor, I believe who I'm looking at, said ''no.'' Then along came the nationalization of three large investment banks—AIG, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac—and then General Motors and Chrysler. Then behind that came a $750 billion economic stimulus package that may have saved some government jobs but that hasn't created anything that has to do with the way you create wealth in a free enterprise society.

Right behind that came the very ill-thought-out, worst piece of economic burden that has ever passed the House of Representatives—cap-and-trade. The American people saw that go through them like a freight train—one car after another, after another, after another. At about the time they lifted their heads up to see what happened, another car hit them.

Then they looked around, and we had an August break, and this Congress went home to get away from the humidity and the heat in Washington, DC. When we went out, we had hundreds and hundreds of town hall meetings, and tens of thousands—in fact, hundreds of thousands—of Americans came out for their voices to be heard.

At the core of all of that—of all the squabble, of all the tension that we saw and heard and that a lot of us looked right directly in the eye—was the American people who wanted to preserve and protect their freedom—our freedom, Mr. Speaker.

They continually said, What can I do? What can I do?

I said, Come to town hall meetings. Pick up the telephone. Write letters. Go see your Member of Congress. Look him in the eye. Tell him that you want to hang onto your freedom.

If there was anything that I said in a town hall meeting that resonated with the people in the Fifth District of Iowa was that I will oppose any bill that diminishes our freedom. Well, we have a bill that looks like it's coming to this Congress very soon that diminishes our freedom. It's 1,990 pages.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KING of Iowa. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA).

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I thank my colleague from Iowa for yielding.

I think you've laid out very well at a macro level what we've seen happen over the last 9½ to 10 months as we've had a new administration, a new Senate, and a new House come into session. That's at the macro level.

I think the other thing that's really connecting with people is what they see happening at a grassroots level after Chrysler and General Motors went bankrupt and then after Chrysler and General Motors used the protection of bankruptcy to take away private property rights—to go into a whole range of dealerships without any transparency to their customers or to even the dealers, themselves.

They all of a sudden said, In 3 weeks, 5 weeks, you're no longer going to be a dealer for Chrysler.

GM had a nicer word for it. They said, You're going to be in a winddown.

Well, I was just in one of those winddown dealers last week. It's not a winddown. They're out of business. It was a loss of freedom. You know, many of these individuals had invested millions of dollars into the business, some of them within the last couple of years, believing that, when they were investing in the contracts that they had with these folks, the contracts protected their freedoms and that they protected their business relationships. All of a sudden, through bankruptcy, that freedom and that protection, under bankruptcy law and franchise laws, were gone.

That's exactly, I think, one of the reasons we're here tonight. We're talking now about the freedom, about the responsibility and about the opportunities that those car dealers lost when GM and Chrysler went through bankruptcy. It's the type of freedom that each and every one of us faces. We're going to lose that same kind of opportunity if we pass this massive health care bill because, when I look at it—you and I—we know what's wrong with health care. We've got to fix preexisting conditions. We've got to have

more competition. We need to do some of those things.

This is all about power and where that power will be. I started reading this health care bill over the weekend. I read 300 pages. Then you start going through it, and you start trying to figure it out, and you realize that what the Speaker and others have done is not what's going to be in health care. That health care bill simply says that it's no longer your decision and that it's not my decision. It's not your decision. It's not my decision. Those health care decisions are now going to be the decisions of the House of Representatives and of the Senate. More importantly, they're going to be the decisions of those buildings down the street—down Independence Avenue and down Constitution Avenue—which we call the ''Federal bureaucracy.'' We'll have a bureaucrat standing between you and me and our doctors and our health care decisions.

I think one of the things we're going to talk about tonight is the opportunity that the American people are going to have to come to Washington on Thursday to voice their opposition to this massive takeover through the Pelosi health care bill or to go to their congressional offices in their districts or to start calling Washington—to call those Members who are going to make a difference as to whether this Pelosi health care bill becomes law or as to whether we stop it dead in its tracks and we have a vote for freedom.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time and thanking the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate this: that the dye has been cast in this Congress for some time. The Speaker has been leveraging votes on this 1,990-page bill that may see a several-hundred-page manager's amendment drop in on us at any time. Even as we speak, it could happen.

With all that leverage that has been taking place behind the scenes and with all the negotiations that have taken place in the White House, in the Speaker's office and in Harry Reid's office, there has been no Republican at the table, not one.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Excuse me. Does the gentleman mean that this has not been a transparent process?

Mr. KING of Iowa. It has been completely opaque. It is not a transparent process, and it is not consistent with the word, with the pledged oath of the President of the United States, which was that there would be an open, transparent process that would be negotiated on C–SPAN.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Exactly how much of the economy are we going to reshape?

Mr. KING of Iowa. We're looking at 17.5 percent—round it up to 18 percent—of the economy swallowed up by the Federal Government—and the gentleman from Michigan didn't say it—under the thumb of the health choices czar, who is the guy who would write all the rules after the legislation would be drafted. The rules would be written after that, and he would then set the terms for every health insurance policy and company in America.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. How many times in this bill does it say the health care commissioner shall, will or must? Those are all decisions that will not be made here through the legislative process.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I happen to know the answer: 3,425 times.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. How many times?

Mr. KING of Iowa. It says ''shall'' 3,425 times, but the one time that it says ''may'' is quite interesting, which is that the Members may enroll in the Federal policy. It's not Members of Congress shall live under the laws they pass. They may if they choose.

The gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. AKIN. So the Members of Congress may, but everything else is ''shall.'' There are 3,400 ''shalls''——

Mr. KING of Iowa. And 25.

Mr. AKIN. Packed into a 2,000-page bill.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Those are decisions that the health care administrator, commissioner or czar will make. We transfer that authority. We've taken it from the American people. We've put it into Congress.

We've said, Those are no longer your decisions. We shall make those decisions. Then we say, No. Wait a minute. We shall not. We shall transfer that over to a commissioner because we sure don't want to have responsibility for it.

So it's kind of like a framework of health care reform, saying, You'll know the details later on as some appointed but not elected and not accountable commissioner makes those decisions.

Mr. AKIN. So, in coming back to the theme of freedom, every ''shall'' is just like another death bell which is tolling for a little freedom that just died. Every ''shall'' is one more little freedom that just died. It is one person with one's doctor who's making a health care decision but who won't make it anymore because there's not going to be an insurance person there, second-guessing. No. It's going to be worse than that. It's going to be a government bureaucrat saying, I'm sorry, Steve. You're just a little too old.

Just having a moment to join my friends here, I think that I would be derelict in my duty if I didn't recognize my good friends, Congressman HOEKSTRA and STEVE KING.

□ 2230

You have been one of the people that's called, it's called a House call, it's like a doctor going to a house call, except we are asking for the people who aren't sick to come to Washington D.C. and try to straighten things out on Thursday at 12 o'clock. You are one of the people organizing that, and PETE has been working on it too.

This is really kind of a grass-roots thing, isn't it. I mean, this is not something that the leadership has been pushing particularly or anybody said to do. This is just a sense that we want to allow the many people we know that love this country and love freedom to have a chance to in some way express their opinion about this subject, because this is like some train that's lost any kind of way to talk to it on the telephone; and it is just going with the Governors off of it, full steam, full throttle down a track that's disappearing in empty space. We are just going to jump into this abyss of the government can run it somehow.

When I think of the beginning of this country and I think about freedom, such a special place America is. You know, there are all of these crazy people that came to America.

One of my favorites is this group of pilgrims, 100 of them. They came over with a dream. People say they came for religious freedom. They didn't come for religious freedom; they had religious freedom in good old Holland.

No, they came here because they wanted to build a new civilization unlike anything history had ever seen before. These people were nuts. Within the first couple of months, half of them died. When the *Mayflower* captain said it's time to go back to England in the spring, half of his crew was dead and he told his bosun to wind in that anchor cable and set the yardarm square to the wind, and that *Mayflower* sailed over the horizon and disappeared as a speck.

There are these 50 people or so standing on the shore, on the rocky shore line of cold, old Massachusetts, New England, because they had a dream in their heart. They had a dream of building a new nation. A number of years later you have Bradford writing that perhaps we have kindled a candle that will light up even as a candle could light other candles, can light up even a light to a new nation.

All these other crazy people, this one guy started building light bulbs and he built a couple hundred of them and nothing worked. He was just crazy enough to keep on doing it until Thomas Edison built it. America has been built, one idea at a time, by the people who had freedom.

Mr. KING of Iowa. It's the vitality in America that we want to preserve here. There is something unique about being an American. We aren't just an extension of Europe; we aren't just an amalgam of all the donor cultures that are here. We got the cream off the crop of every one that sent people to America.

That vitality that comes from having a dream, that gave them the vision to find a way to get on a ship to come here, and they didn't all stay here. Some of them couldn't cut it in this competitive meritocracy that we have created. Some of them went back, not very many. But the ones that stayed were the best that any of the donor countries had to offer.

That dream of freedom, founded upon the rule of law, the right to property, the constitutional foundation, the pillars of American exceptionalism, is

what is at stake here in this Congress this week in the biggest way that I can remember in my lifetime.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, we have called for the American people to come to this city, come to this Capitol. We are gathering together at noon on Thursday, and we are asking everybody in America that can get here, if you are close enough to drive, they need to drive.

If they need to get on a plane, do that, and join us at noon, in the afternoon and thereafter go find Members of Congress, look them in the eye. Let them see the whites of your eyes. Let them look into your pupils and look into your soul.

Tell them don't take away our freedom with this 1,990-page bill, the one that there is no one can understand; but it's noon on Thursday. Those that can't make it here need to go to the district offices as close to their home as they can or into the districts of the people that are sitting on the fence and tell them, save my freedom, or I will take your job. That's the message that needs to come.

Those that can't go out that day need to pick up the phone and jam the phone lines. This can be done. This bill can be killed. It needs to be killed for the sake of freedom, for the freedom that was found with the pilgrims when they came here, for the freedom that was fought for with every generation of Americans, for those that are buried out at Arlington and around the world. We can't be turning America into a socialist state.

Those companies that I mentioned at the beginning that have been nationalized, that's one-third of our private sector. If that 18 percent of the health care industry, one-sixth of our economy is added to that, we are at or over half of the private sector nationalized in the last year. We can't stand that.

By the way, there are flash cards that are there, that are put out by USCIS, Citizenship and Immigration Services. In those flash cards you will have to learn this if you want to become an American. One will be Who is the Father of our Country? ''George Washington'' on the other side.

You can go down through the list. But there is one that has a question that says, What is the economic system of the United States? Back side, ''free enterprise capitalism.'' I would like to see if many of those in the administration today could actually pass that test.

I am convinced they don't believe in it. This is about freedom, and we need to gather here in this Capitol Building on Thursday, at noon, at the building, around the building, around the grounds, in the congressional offices. The call needs to go out to everybody in America.

For 2 months they said, what can I do? What can I do? The answer is, Come to this city. Help us all out.

The gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. AKIN. You know, there are different sorts of levels of threats that we run into in Congress. You are an expert on the intelligence community. You take a look in the Midwest, you have these big towering cumulus that come across in June and July and you say is this something that's dangerous or whatever it is, and you take a look, Do we have threats from terrorists? Is that a problem? Is North Korea a problem? We sort of weigh these things.

I would have to say that so many people back in my district and so many of the people that I respect here in the floor would rate where we are right now, Steve, they would rate this as probably the biggest internal threat to America since the Civil War. That's kind of where I have come down. I mean, if you want to talk about American danger, I might say go back to the Cold War and Ronald Reagan and whether the Soviets are going to push the button.

But if you talk about internal threats to America, this idea of the government taking over these sectors, one of the things, there is a couple of things chilling about it. One of the things is tell me any time in the history of America when the Federal Government has taken something over that we have ever backed up from it. We never go backwards.

As soon as something gets socialized, it's permanently built into our culture. We can never get rid of it.

If we ever allow the Federal Government to run that sixth of the economy that's health care, how are we ever going to get back from that?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I think you have got three examples here exactly building off of your point: 1956, the country and Congress decides that we are going to do the interstate highway system. You know what? I think that actually worked. We now have an interstate highway system that works for the country.

But over the last 53 years, the system has become corrupted. Why? Because it's now Washington getting in.

In my district, with Michigan's money, they say, oh, by the way, on average for the last 53 years, we are going to take a dollar of your money, and we are going to give you 83 cents back.

Mr. AKIN. Bargain.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. What a great bargain. It's a great bargain for West Virginia because they are getting $1.74 back, but that's our money.

Now they are coming into Michigan and they are saying we are not building interstate highway systems any more. We are telling you to build bike paths; we are telling you to do this. So in the last couple of years what have we had to build, a crumbling infrastructure, we have had to build a turtle fence, rest areas.

Mr. AKIN. Wait, there has got to be a story here. A turtle fence. I assume this is to keep stampedes of turtles off the roads?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. It's to keep stampedes from crossing the interstate. Like I said, our infrastructure in Michigan is not that great. We need to rebuild it.

Mr. AKIN. Is it environmentally acceptable to have a turtle fence, do you think?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. We allow them to get to the creeks and the rivers, but again it's this loss of freedom. It's Michigan's money coming to Washington, then coming back and saying you are going to get less of what you sent, and then we are going to tell you how to spend it. We are now building a bicycle path, a bike path over an expressway; and it's kind of like, that's nice to have, but it's not an essential.

The second example is, and you and I are here, you like this one—

Mr. AKIN. The turtle fence, was the bridge for turtles too or not?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. No. The bridge was for bicyclists, and I have not seen a lot of bikes on that road.

Mr. AKIN. The reason I am hung up on this is because I keep a record in my mind of some of the dumbest ideas that I see legislatively. This health care bill has got one, actually. It's the wheelchair tax. Now, what person that ran for public office would want to do a wheelchair tax?

We will get to the turtle fence.

□ 2240

Mr. HOEKSTRA. That is a bad idea. So we found a system that worked for the interstate highway system, but over 53 years it has grown into this bureaucracy that no longer works to build what it was intended to do.

The second example, as you and I were here, 2001, it is kind of the same debate we had on health care. We had a President who came in and said, My number one priority is what? Education. No Child Left Behind. And who could argue with that? Who wants to leave any child left behind?

Some of us had a vision that said, you know, the most effective way to make sure we don't leave a child behind is not to give the authority, but to return the authority that is inherent with parents to raise and educate their kids. But we had a President who had another idea.

He said, well, the way we are going to make sure we are not going to leave any child behind is that we are going to take that authority from parents, we are going to take that authority away from local school districts, we are going to take that authority away from the States, and we are going to move it all here to Washington.

I think about 390 people voted for it, because how could you vote against No Child Left Behind? Everybody was scared, you know. We are going to have to go home and people are going to say he voted to leave a kid behind. You and I voted ''no.''

Mr. KING of Iowa. When you name it ''No Child Left Behind,'' then it gives it momentum. But what could you possibly name a 1,990-page socialized medicine bill to convince the American people it is a good idea?

Mr. AKIN. I can tell you what it was named by the Democrat Governor of Tennessee, because his State has tried this whole idea of the government running health care. So this is the Democrat Governor of Tennessee called it ''the monster of unfunded mandates.''

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Which is exactly what we found with No Child Left Behind. It became a huge power grab to Washington, a huge unfunded mandate, and, most importantly, it didn't work. And this is the exact model that we are now following with health care, except we now have a new President who says, My legacy is I am going to do health care.

Again, he is not enabling people to exercise the freedom and authority that the Constitution has given them. He is taking that freedom and authority from them, just like No Child Left Behind, moving it to Washington, and saying, Don't worry, Washington will take care of your health care. Everything will be fine.

Mr. KING of Iowa. It is pretty hard to take this President seriously when you look at a quote like this. This is a quote from the President. ''Here is what you need to know. First, I will not sign a plan that adds one dime to our deficits, either now nor the future. Period.'' Date, August 9, 2009. I was watching the town hall meeting.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Actually, he was right. This plan will not add a dime. It will add $1.2 trillion. I am not sure to the deficit, but it is $1.2 trillion of new spending. He is right. It is not a dime; it is a whole lot more than that.

Mr. KING of Iowa. The gentleman from Michigan could be completely in tune and understand political speak so precisely. Not one dime. It could be 11 cents, 9 cents, or $1.2 trillion, but not a dime.

Mr. AKIN. The question I have for my good friend from Iowa, how many dimes do you have to stack up to get to $1.2 trillion? Could you get to the Moon?

Mr. KING of Iowa. I could tell you how much corn.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. He can tell you how many bushels of corn it will take, but don't ask him about dimes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Here is the corn. One trillion dollars of corn is this. We will raise about $10 billion of corn in Iowa this year. If we can get it out of the field, we will have $10 billion worth. One hundred years is $1 trillion worth. One hundred years, all the corn we can raise, is $1 trillion. The Obama deficit is $9.7 trillion. That is all of the corn we can raise in 1,000 years.

So you can look at it this way: The deficit created by this bill, the $1.2 trillion, would be about 120 years of all of the corn that we could raise in Iowa if we committed the entire amount, at today's market prices, marked up just a little because they have gone down over the last few weeks. That is what $1.2 trillion is. We could pay this thing off in 120 years in Iowa if we gave you all the proceeds from our corn crop.

To put it into that kind of magnitude, for the national debt, the Obama deficit is 1,000 years of all of the corn we can raise in Iowa. And the overall national debt, national deficit added to the Obama deficit, is over $20 trillion. That is all the corn we can raise from the time of Christ until today if we had today's yields and today's market prices.

That is what we are looking at. We are looking at something that is unsustainable, and the children and grandchildren yet to be born will be paying the interest, and maybe their children will start to pay the principal on this debt that is created.

Mr. AKIN. First of all, though, you've got to remember the Governor of Tennessee said this is a monster of unfunded mandates. So it is really not $1.2 trillion, is it, because a lot is going to be passed on to the States. So it is really more than $1.2 trillion. Then we are going to collect that with taxes, isn't that right? Like the wheelchair tax. I am still marveling at the political audacity.

Mr. KING of Iowa. A tax on oxygen bottles and all the medical equipment is there, but the tax on small businesses approaches half a trillion dollars too.

Mr. AKIN. $500 billion on small business. And, of course, we are going to do that at a time when employment is strong, right?

Mr. KING of Iowa. We are doing this at a time when the economy is as wobbly as it has been in our adult lifetimes, and we have been adults for a while, the three of us.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. We have to put this, again, in focus. What taxes are we already looking at? They have said we are not going to extend the tax cuts that were done in 2001 that led to economic prosperity. Those are going to expire. There is a whole range of taxes that will go up for all Americans when those expire at the end of 2010–2011. We then have all of these taxes that they have put together.

Mr. AKIN. Is that dividends and capital gains? Are you talking about dividends and capital gains?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Dividends. I think the marriage penalty comes back. The adoption tax credit goes away. This is Adoption Awareness Month. We have wisely put in tax policy that encourages and facilitates and provides a financial assist for families who want to adopt. That goes away, because that is a bad tax cut, according to folks, because everything that was done from 2001 through 2008, any type of tax adjustment was a terrible tax. So they want to get rid of that.

Then you put that with cap-and-trade, the carbon tax that has created a tremendous amount of uncertainty on business. Then, like you said, you put this new health care tax on top of small and medium-size business, and you put all the other taxes in place, there is no wonder why the economy is in such turmoil today, because every business person today, if they are taking a look at whether they are going to invest or hire someone, they are going to be very, very reluctant to do it because they are seeing all of these taxes on the horizon and there is so much uncertainty.

Again, what is every tax? The same thing as in health care. Every tax is taking freedom away from the three of us, from our constituents, and moving it to Washington, because we then can no longer direct that spending. Washington politicians can.

Mr. AKIN. Now, Congressman, you are talking to a guy who made his whole life as a small businessman, Congressman KING. Let's just take a look at what we are piling on him in 10 months.

First of all, as you say, we are having all of these different taxes that had been cut are all going to be raised, but particularly for small businesses, dividends and capital gains. So if you are a small business man, you have to have some cash to run your business, especially if you want to add any new jobs. You have to be able to afford a new piece of heavy equipment. That is what you were doing, Congressman KING.

Now, what we are going to do is we are going to slam them with what—you call it cap-and-trade, I call it cap-and-tax, but it is one of the biggest tax hikes in the history of the country. But also included with it are all of these regulations about the carbon footprint of your building.

So now you have got all of the tax things that are expiring. You get cap-and-tax coming. So energy, you are going to get hammered on that. We say, but don't you worry about anything, because we have got some more taxes in this government-run health care system.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, to take us back and put this in a perspective, in 2006, Speaker PELOSI became the Speaker with a Democrat majority in this Congress. CHARLIE RANGEL became the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. We had this whole series of Bush tax cuts that went into law May 28, 2003, that stimulated the economy, and they were the right thing to do to bring us out of the downward decline that we were in.

And the chairman, CHARLIE RANGEL, went before news media after news media, pundit after pundit, and they asked him a whole series of questions: Which one of the Bush tax cuts will you save? Which ones do you want to eliminate? Which ones do you like? How would you configure these taxes?

There never was a straight answer out of the whole bunch. But in the process of elimination, over a period of about 5 weeks, it was determined that CHARLIE RANGEL didn't support any of these taxes. And in that period of time, by February, we saw industrial investment drop in this country dramatically, and that, I believe, was the first indicator of what was going to happen to our economy.

Since that period of time, capital is smart. It will always do the rational thing. Well, when capital sees that it gets a tax increase, it invests less, takes less risk, because there is less return on that investment.

That started in 2007, February 2007, and it has been in a decline ever since, until such time as we end up with the Henry Paulsen $700 billion TARP money in this government that decided they want to borrow trillions of dollars and buy up the private sector of the United States.

□ 2250

By the way, one can go to the Web site, the socialist Web site, dsausa.org, the Democratic Socialists of America, and there's the playbook for much that's happened, and that's been posted and hanging out there for some years now. But they'll argue that, first, they're not communists. There's a difference. Socialists don't want to nationalize the barbershop. They just want to nationalize the Fortune 500 companies, the oil industry, the refinery industry, and the energy industry. And they don't need to do it all in one fell swoop. They can do it incrementally. A lot of Americans think it's happening almost in one fell swoop. But the playbook's there on that Web site.

The people that are running this country do not believe in free enterprise. They believe in a managed economy that's run, and it's on the Web site of the socialists, companies run for the benefit of the people affected by them. Guess who that is? That's the workers or the customers, not the investors. That's why the investors got aced out in the car companies, as we heard from Mr. HOEKSTRA earlier.

That's the backdrop, Mr. AKIN.

Mr. AKIN. Just going back to what I'm saying about some poor guy that's a small businessman out there in this environment, and you see this wave after wave of tax increases, and you don't know when the waves are going to stop, and you don't know what's going on and how you're going to run your company. It reminds me of an expression from a State right next door to yours. You're from Iowa. We're just a little bit east over in the State of Missouri. But we have an expression that I think adequately expresses if I were a small businessman in that Missouri. We say, ''hunker down like a toad in a hailstorm.'' And I think that's where our small business people are. They're not thinking about building that addition or adding that extra machine tool or coming up with an innovative new process. They're thinking about how am I going to survive this storm?

Mr. KING of Iowa. Speaking of the turtle and the toad, the fence for the turtle, there's a reason and we've seen the film on why you can't supposedly put a fence on our southern border, and that's a little video of this toad that hops along and hops up and bumps his little nose on a fence, and, therefore, we surely couldn't have one to protect America because this toad can't figure out how to hop around it.

So hunker down like a turtle in a what?

Mr. AKIN. ''Hunker down like a toad in a hailstorm.''

Mr. KING of Iowa. Or a turtle that's lying up against a fence.

The gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. You put it all together, and I think this is what we started seeing in August. In August we had people who were frustrated about programs that had been around like No Child Left Behind, massive amounts of money but also massive amounts of unfunded mandates that weren't working, and parents recognizing that, wow, now Washington's telling me which schools are good, which ones are bad, which teachers are good, which ones are bad. It's kind of like I knew that before. I didn't need Washington to tell me that.

Then they saw what you articulated, Mr. KING, so eloquently earlier where we did this massive stimulus bill that's not creating jobs. You've got cap-and-trade. You've got this health care. And I think this is why they came out in droves during August and saying stop, we want our freedom.

And this is why we need people to do one of three things or four things on Thursday at noon. Number one, if you can be in Washington and join us, come here and stand up and express your vote for freedom. And I think it's happening tonight in Virginia, and it happened in New Jersey, and I'm not should exactly what happened in New York, but in those two States that's exactly what people did. This Tuesday they stood up for freedom in Virginia, and they stood up for freedom in New Jersey.

Join us here on Thursday. If you can't come here, go visit your Congressman's district office and express in person your vote for freedom. And if you can't go there, then get on the phone and, you're right, target those Members who are on the fence and say we need your vote for freedom and not for massive new government bureaucracy.

And I think as we were talking and organizing this session for Thursday, someone came up and they gave us the fourth idea that says if you can't do one of those three and you're driving, and we don't want you to get on your cell phone and call your Congressman, then at least what you can do at noon on Thursday is start honking your horn for freedom. So do one of those four things on Thursday afternoon, and people will start getting the message.

But it's not only Thursday. This vote may happen Friday. It may happen Saturday. We're not sure exactly when. But keep that effort going and build the momentum that we started in August, that you started in August at the grass-roots level. It has been reinvigorated. It's been going on for the last couple of months, but now we need to accelerate it back up. Get it going again on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday until we come back and we do a sensible, commonsense reform of health care that says for the 85 percent of us who have health care and are relatively happy with it, we're really not going to mess with that. We're going to focus on those problems that we have identified in health care for those 10 to 15 percent of the American people who can't get health care. We're going to address those problems. But we're not going to mess with the rest of the system.

Mr. AKIN. It just seems like the problem is just like the cap-and-tax. I mean, that was the one that had the 300 pages of amendments passed at 3 o'clock in the morning. And I remember from this very podium that I'm speaking from our colleague, Congressman GOHMERT from Texas, with his droll sense of humor inquiring of the Chair. He said, Madam Chairman—there was a lady in the Chair at that time—is it customary that there be a copy of the bill in the Chamber when we're debating it and discussing it? So there was a discussion with the Parliamentarian who said, yes, there is, it's common that there is. He came back about four times and said, Could you tell me whether to go north, south, east, or west? I can't find a copy of the bill here. And, of course, the bill was still being collated at the time.

Now, that was another example of we have got a solution and we're just going to use the excuse——

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I'd like to——

Mr. AKIN. But this is the same thing. This is just like that. If really CO_2 were the problem, we could have fixed the problem easily.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I don't think it really does justice to what actually happened on this floor. It has to be brought to a close, and that is to give full credit to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT). He took that Parliamentary inquiry with the Speaker to the point where he said, Madam Speaker, if the House of Representatives passes a bill that doesn't exist, then is it possible to message a bill that doesn't exist to the United States Senate? And apparently it was, because that is what happened. A bill that didn't exist was passed. That was cap-and-trade. It was messaged to the United States Senate. Not one person in this Congress read that bill, let alone understood it. I know. I don't have to ask because it didn't exist at the time it was passed on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Now I yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. AKIN. Well, I guess my point was the objective was already predetermined. It's a massive takeover of all kinds of basically building code stuff, telling you you've got to have an electric outlet in your garage. You know, this sort of incredibly detailed stuff that the Federal Government thinks

we much better know how you ought to build your garage and have an electrical outlet in it. But the objective was all of this controlling stuff and a huge tax increase, which was the objective all along.

This health care situation strikes me as the same thing. The objective from the beginning is get the government to run it, and we'll use any excuse that we can to justify the fact, but we already know the solution and the destination, and that is we just believe in the government running this thing.

And there are a lot of people on the Democrat side that are completely open and honest and say that's their objective, and there are other people that are trying to obscure the fact that that's where they're going. We'll do it in some incremental steps, or we'll make it so that you can opt out. You can't opt out of the taxes, but you can opt out of the health care or whatever. But the bottom line is we want the government to run it.

That kind of reminds me of something. And I know that a couple of you are historians. There was a country that believed, and we heard it argued on this floor, that health care is a right, and there was a country that took a look and said, you know, you ought to have a right to shelter because in the cold, harsh climate of this country, if you don't have shelter, you will die. And you ought to have a right to food because you'll starve to death if you don't have food. And you ought to have a right to health care and you ought to have a right also to education. So that country, because they thought those were fundamental rights, had the government providing those things for their citizens.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Was there a right to escargot?

Mr. AKIN. I don't know whether that might kill you or not, but the point is that country is out of business. It was called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the USSR. But that was their basic philosophy, that the government should do housing and food and health care and education. And here we are going along after we laughed at them and watched that complete mess that they made of their country, the poverty it left people in, and we say, well, now we want the government not to do just food stamps and housing but we want the government to do all, all of medicine in America.

Mr. KING of Iowa. The thing that's forgotten by the other side is that they're creating a dependency society, a society that the more dependent people can be, the more government can grow, the stronger their political power is, Mr. Speaker. That's a piece over here.

□ 2300

We are about independence and the vitality of that. You can't beat the guy that has a vested interest. The entrepreneur who started a business, who risked their capital. Like me, I had a negative net worth of $5,000. There was a way to go down from there. I had to make it work. I made no provision for failure. A lot of nights I worked all night and the next day to hold it together. When that happens, you can't beat that person that is determined that way. But if government replaces all of the needs and all of the wants and sets the safety net out there and turns the safety net into a hammock, the vitality of a nation is diminished.

We have, if this bill should pass, it takes away another incentive for personal responsibility and it says to the person who is not responsible, you don't need to figure out how to climb up from here because we will deliver. We will do a delivery of anything it is that you want.

It reminds me of FDR's ''Four Freedoms'' speech, and that is cut into the wall down at his monument, and I don't go there very often. And he got it a little wrong, four freedoms: Freedom of religion, freedom of speech. They are freedoms. They are constitutional freedoms. But the other two were freedom from want and freedom from fear. Freedom from want and freedom from fear, and some of America has been duped into thinking somehow those are rights. They are not rights at all; those are wants. Now we have gone to the point where we have catered so much to the people of this country and the lust for political power that we have said to people, You should have a constitutional right to freedom from fear of want. So don't worry, we'll give you everything you want. You don't have to fear not having what you want, a complete nanny state being created in this great gulp of socialism of one-sixth of our economy, 17.5 percent of our economy, and the freedom not just from cradle to grave, from conception to the grave. That is because this bill funds abortion. I don't think there is any way that the Speaker allows an amendment to come to this floor that will pass because you can't create a whole national health care act and make this thing work the way things are scenarioed today.

This bill funds abortion. This bill funds illegals, gives them a health insurance policy, and it takes care from the time people are conceived, if they are fortunate enough to be allowed to be born, even though the subsidy will be there to promote abortion, it takes care all of the way up and makes children out of us all. A great diminishment of American freedom.

And it would, if the Founding Fathers could stand in here tonight, the tears would be running down their cheeks thinking of what is staged to happen in this Congress. That is why we need the American people to come to this city and be here by noon on Thursday, gather together, come to the Capitol, surround this place, bring your passion and your love for this country, bring your patriotism, and bring your signs while you are at it.

Mr. Speaker, the American people need to come here, to this Capitol, and we do the press conference at noon on Thursday. It will have a list of people that have migrated from across this country. People are coming from the Pacific Ocean. There are buses are coming in from State after State, converging on this city. People are dropping what is important. It is as if Paul Revere had ridden across America and said, Here is the call. Here is the call of your country.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. The gentleman was with us in one of our colleague's office's an hour ago, and one of the other Members answered the phone and said, You know what? That was two people from Oregon and they thought they got the wrong office because they were calling at 9:30 at night and someone actually answered.

Mr. KING of Iowa. And it was a Member of Congress.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. And it was a Member of Congress. And they said, We were talking about this House call on Thursday, and we are coming. We think it is important to be there. Where do we need to be?

So I think you are absolutely right. We have heard about people coming from New Jersey. We know there are people coming from the area here. As people start thinking about this—and it is encouraging that people in Oregon are getting the message. They are going to take the time. They will probably have to leave Wednesday. They will have to leave tomorrow to be here Thursday at noon. They will be out there on the east front. I guess we have to call a press conference, although some might call it a rally, although I guess the speech police here on Capitol Hill and the House of Representatives forbid us to use the term ''rally''; is that correct?

Mr. KING of Iowa. There has been a little bit of that PC speech police effort, but I submit that this is a free country and we do have First Amendment rights. If we want to call it a rally, we can call it a rally.

We can call the American people to come to this city and listen to the model of the people from Oregon who are willing to drop everything and head to the sound of the microphone, some would say head to the sound of the call to this mission to save freedom.

At the core of everything that we have said here tonight is the threat to American freedom, and it can be saved by the American people and no one else. And nothing that we say in the debate, no Member of Congress can come up with a new argument that is going to sway the people that have gravitated towards their power and their political base, or their fear perhaps of maybe losing a chairmanship, or their desire to get a gavel and be a Chair, or somebody who needs a project in their district, all of those things have to be taking place.

But what can happen is real American people can let these Members of Congress know that they want to hang onto their freedom. If they are willing

to come from the Pacific Ocean, from the Midwest, from Michigan, across, up and down the Atlantic seaboard, to come into this city, the Members of Congress are going to have to hear and they are going to listen.

And, by the way, I don't believe it will be something that a bill comes to the floor with the American people all around the outside of this Capitol and that the bill gets voted down on this floor. It doesn't really work that way. It would be more likely the majority leader coming to the microphone and saying, We have a few technicalities to work out on this bill, please stay tuned, and he will walk off the floor.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. If the gentleman would yield, the real sign of success is that the bill doesn't come to the floor. The real statement of success is that we do have a bill that comes to the floor.

Mr. AKIN. A good bill.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. A good bill that recognizes the ultimate and the necessity that we give freedom and power back to the American people and that we don't take it from them.

If you are doing 1,900 pages, that is saying we are taking your freedom. You don't need 1,990 pages to say, You know what, we are going to make it easier for you to exercise your freedom in these areas.

Mr. AKIN. Would it be okay, I would like to come back to that call just an hour or two ago from the people in Oregon.

I am thinking, you know, there are not that many people out there that can afford to just drop whatever they are doing, cancel their plans, buy an expensive airplane ticket, come to a strange city, figure out if you are going to get a rental car and survive the traffic.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Take the subway.

Mr. AKIN. You know, that is a pretty high threshold. And yet the thing that I love about this country is all across America when you fly back at night in those airplanes and you see those lights across the countryside, all of those lights of people who love freedom in this country, and they are willing to just do that and say, Stop. And they come down here and they feel powerless and they feel small, and yet they come down here and they want to say, Don't you guys remember about freedom? And don't you remember what this country is about? Why is it that you have this absolute, instinctive desire to always build more government and take our freedom away? When has that ever produced good results?

I just think that is why Ronald Reagan loved this country, because he saw all of those different people that were Americans that loved freedom. He didn't see all of the political shenanigans, the false promises. I won't spend a dime more, I will spend $1.2 trillion more instead. He didn't see that. He just saw all those freedom-loving people out there just chasing the dream that was in their hearts.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. The other thing that they are telling us, they are saying before you take on health care, why don't you fix what you have already taken and figure out, you know, No Child Left Behind, the way it was designed and implemented, after 8 years, more people here believe it doesn't work, but a whole lot of people in the grass roots America are saying, That doesn't work.

It is kind of like why don't you go back and maybe devolve the authority of No Child Left Behind and let's take a different approach and do some of the things with some of these other programs. You know, before you take on this massive responsibility, fix what you have already put into place.

Mr. AKIN. But government never gives up power, though.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. That is the problem. And before you take this on, why don't you get back to a balanced budget.

You know, it is the commonsense things that people, it gets to be a phrase that is overused, but it is the things that people are doing around their kitchen table.

□ 2310

Today, I ran into some friends of mine from the company where I used to work, and there the industry is down about 30 percent, the office furniture industry. What they have done is the workers at the company, they have all had to sacrifice. They work 9 out of 10 days, and the 10th day is a day off. It's a day that they don't get paid for. That is an automatic 10 percent reduction in their pay. At the same time, they are also not getting the same level of profit sharing, contributions to 401(k)s, their health care premiums or their deductibles have gone up. They're figuring that they maybe have lost 15 to 20 percent of their discretionary income over the last year. Do you see that in Washington? We haven't made those decisions to get back to a balanced budget.

Mr. KING of Iowa. We have grown government instead.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. We have grown government. We are a growing industry, and we're growing it on the backs of our kids and grandkids.

So my constituents are saying—and all across the State, because we tried this in Michigan, we tried to grow Michigan's economy and make us more competitive by increasing taxes, increasing regulations and all those types of things. And guess what? Mr. President, you don't have to go talk to your economist to figure out if your strategy is going to work. All you need to do is look at Michigan. It doesn't work.

What we now need to do is we need to get back to the basics here, that's what my constituents are telling me, get back to the basics, don't try to take on more, because you can't even handle what you've got.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I just went in and looked at a Web site, Constitution Daily, and it has on it this: 682 Federal agencies. Now, think about what that means. You have subagencies, departments of 682 regulators. And one thing that you will never see is a single company, not one company, a Fortune 500 company, a small little business, not one company in America would be foolish enough to put on their Web site or announce that they are in compliance with all the regulations that can be generated by 682 Federal agencies, let alone the State agencies that are there, plus the taxes that are on top of that and all the bureaucrats that have to be paid for out of the profit of the private sector companies.

There are two sectors to this economy. There is the private sector that produces goods and services that have value. And the way you determine that value is, are people willing to pay for that service and it is essentially rooted in the necessities of life. And then the surplus income goes to recreational and those kinds of investments. That's the private sector.

The other sector, the government sector, is—and that's where I am not very charitable—I say that's the parasitic sector. It drains the vitality off the private sector. And this government has been growing and growing the public sector, the government part, increasing taxes, hiring more regulators for the 682 agencies, and they want to create new agencies. There are 111 new agencies. So our 682, what would that be, 793 agencies? I have the list here of 111 new Federal bureaucracies created by the Pelosi health care bill. It's on both sides.

Mr. AKIN. Is that a record?

Mr. KING of Iowa. The Committee for the Establishment of the Native American Health and Wellness Foundation, that's the last one.

Mr. AKIN. I've got to believe that's a record, isn't it? Have we ever passed a bill that created 1,100——

Mr. KING of Iowa. I would submit that no one has ever conceived of a number this big before or a bill this big before. I think it's not only a record; it's beyond the imagination of anybody at this point.

Mr. AKIN. On Thursday at 12 o'clock, Congressman KING, are you going to be out there on the steps of the Capitol?

Mr. KING of Iowa. I will be on the steps of the Capitol at noon on Thursday. I will be there with a large group of patriots, yourselves, gentlemen—Mr. HOEKSTRA and Mr. AKIN—myself, MICHELE BACHMANN and others. We will be there standing up for freedom, Mr. Speaker, and so will the American people, and so will Jon Voight and so will Mark Levin. We are going to see a gathering of patriots that speak up and speak out to preserve and protect the freedom that our Founding Fathers and everyone who has put on a uniform to defend this country has defended in one way or another, and many patriots that didn't put on a uniform that stood up for America.

And I can imagine blue collar people, white collar people, retired people,

young people looking across at Washington, D.C. that have been wondering, what can I do, what can I do, and deciding, I'm going to climb in my car, my Detroit-made car or Michigan-made car——

Mr. HOEKSTRA. We hope so.

Mr. KING of Iowa. And drive that across the countryside, whatever it takes, park here and take the Metro in because parking is going to be hard, but join these people coming here to the Capitol here in Washington, D.C. And some of them will decide they can't quite afford the time and they will go to district offices, inside the offices, out on the streets. I know that there is going to be a ceremonial reading of the bill in at least one location outside a district office. That will take at least 48 hours for anyone to fast read through this 1,990-page bill.

Mr. AKIN. But if you do, there are a lot of interesting trap doors, smoke and mirrors in that bill, a lot of very interesting things. One of them that I thought was absolutely amazing, we talk about tort reform, that is, limiting the punitive damages. Different States have passed that and have the effect of dropping their medical insurance costs in the State by as much as 20 percent is my understanding. At least Texas had a very good effect by dropping that.

This bill has a different kind of tort reform. It says any State that has done tort reform, you can't have any of the medical benefits that your taxes are going to go for. So it's a reverse tort——

Mr. KING of Iowa. Well, furthermore, if I could just briefly, and then yield back to the gentleman from Michigan, but it also says in tort reform that if States are going to try any of these pilot projects, they can't limit attorneys' fees or impose caps on damages. So how are you going to reform tort if you can't limit attorneys' fees or impose caps on damages? It is: you can fly, but we're going to cut your wings off.

The gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. One interesting thing, they talk about this being a national health care bill, and we know all the gyrations that the Speaker is going through right now to get those last few votes. Can the gentleman from Iowa tell me how they got the votes of the Congress persons from Hawaii?

Mr. KING of Iowa. I do not know, and I would be happy to yield.

Mr. AKIN. That sounds like a good—you got me. What's the story?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. The bill doesn't apply to Hawaii.

Mr. AKIN. It doesn't apply to Hawaii?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. It doesn't apply to Hawaii. Hawaii is exempt.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Hawaii is exempt from 1,990 pages?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. It is within the first couple of hundred pages because Hawaii has done kind of their own thing. But go to the bill, I believe it's in the first 300 pages. I read it over the weekend.

Mr. AKIN. I wonder what Hawaii real estate is going to do if this thing were to pass?

Mr. KING of Iowa. You know, I may just go to Hawaii if this thing passes.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Remember, they may have done some bad things at the State level, but Hawaii is exempt.

Mr. AKIN. So the only people exempt from the bill then is Congress and Hawaii.

Mr. KING of Iowa. That would be it, Mr. AKIN. I mean, I don't know if that's all the answers; but that comes to mind for me, too.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. But these are the kinds of surprises that you will find as you read through 1,990 pages. Because, again, this is not about the quality and quantity of health care; this is about getting the votes to grab that from the American people.

Mr. KING of Iowa. But is Hawaii also then exempt from the tax increases? And are they exempt from the lack of tort reform and exempt from all of these pieces that are bad?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I think that's on page 492, and I haven't gotten there yet.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Are they exempt from funding for abortions? Are they exempt from funding for illegal aliens? Are they exempt from lawsuit abuse, tax increases, or Medicare cuts?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. The commissioner shall decide that.

Mr. KING of Iowa. The commissioner shall decide, one of 3,425.

Mr. AKIN. Is it commissioner or czar? Did they change that? Is it a czar or a commissar or a commissioner? What are they calling this one?

Mr. KING of Iowa. I call him a commissarissioner. I think that's the appropriate name for someone like that.

Mr. AKIN. That covers them all, yes.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I thank our colleagues for doing this and remind the American people, this is the opportunity on Thursday on a number of different levels to make their voices heard.

I thank my colleague for yielding and leading this Special Order tonight.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentlemen from Michigan and Missouri.

Mr. AKIN. And also, Congressman KING, thank you for being part of calling the invitation, taking the initiative just as a Member of Congress to call the people of America to come to their Capitol Building and express their opinion.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Well, we stand together in our call for freedom and the call for the American people to exercise that freedom and come to this Capitol. And that is Thursday at noon, day after tomorrow. Let your voices be heard. And if thousands of Americans come to this city, we will be able to save our freedom and be able to own the health insurance policy that you choose and keep the government's hands off our health care. And those that can't come to this city, we ask them to come to district offices or pick up the phone. The American people shut down comprehensive amnesty 3 years ago twice; we can shut down socialized medicine. We can do it, and it starts on Thursday.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the gentlemen that have joined me tonight, and I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. HOLT (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. ENGEL) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SESTAK, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MASSA, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POE of Texas) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mrs. BACHMANN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. BIGGERT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. BLACKBURN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. BONO MACK, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. CAPITO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. EMERSON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. FALLIN, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. GRANGER, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JENKINS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MYRICK, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. SCHMIDT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. POE of Texas, for 5 minutes, November 10.

Mr. JONES, for 5 minutes, November 10.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, November 4, 5, and 6.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia, for 5 minutes, November 5.

SENATE ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The Speaker announced her signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 475. An act to amend the Servicemembers Civil relief Act to guarantee the

equity of spouses of military personnel with regard to matters of residency, and for other purposes.

S. 509. An act to authorize a major medical facility project at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Walla Walla, Washington, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 19 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, November 4, 2009, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of Rule XXIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4424. A letter from the Secretaries, Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services, transmitting the Departments' report on Thefts, Losses, or Releases of Select Agents or Toxins for the period January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008, as required by the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-188; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4425. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo that was declared in Executive Order 13413 of October 27, 2006, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4426. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 118-09, certification of a proposed amendment to a manufacturing license agreement for the export of defense articles and defense services, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4427. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 109-09, certification of a proposed amendment to a manufacturing license agreement for the export of defense articles and defense services, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4428. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 121-09, certification of a proposed permanent export license for the export of defense articles and related firearms, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4429. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 091-09, certification of a proposed technical assistance agreement to include the export of technical data, and defense services, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4430. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 115-09, certification of a proposed technical assistance agreement to include the export of technical data, and defense articles, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4431. A letter from the Staff Director, Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting notification that the Commission recently appointed members to the Indiana Advisory Committee; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4432. A letter from the Staff Director, Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting notification that the Commission recently appointed members to the Arizona Advisory Committee; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4433. A letter from the Staff Director, Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting notification that the Commission recently appointed members to the Hawaii Advisory Committee; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4434. A letter from the Staff Director, Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting notification that the Commission recently appointed members to the Utah Advisory Committee; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4435. A letter from the Staff Director, Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting notification that the Commission recently appointed members to the South Dakota Advisory Committee; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4436. A letter from the Staff Director, Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting notification that the Commission recently appointed members to the Nebraska Advisory Committee; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4437. A letter from the Staff Director, Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting notification that the Commission recently appointed members to the Michigan Advisory Committee; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4438. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Upper Mississippi River, Mile 699.8 to 702.5 [COTP Sector Upper Mississippi River-07-012] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4439. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone Regulations; Gasparilla Pass, FL [COTP Sector St. Petersburg 07-185] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4440. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Homosassa River Raft Race, Homosassa, Florida [COTP Sector St. Petersburg 07-198] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4441. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Roma Lodge Italian Festival, Racine, Wisconsin [CDG09-06-138] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4442. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; St. Marys River, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan [CGD09-06-140] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4443. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Nissan Xterra Midwest Championship, Milwaukee, Wisconsin [CGD09-06-142] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4444. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; 2006 Great Lakes Water Cross Tour, Sheboygan, Wisconsin [GD09-06-145] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4445. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Bay City Air Show, Saginaw River, Bay City, MI [CGD09-06-149] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4446. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Private Party Fireworks, Webster, NY [CGD09-06-150] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4447. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Security Zone; General Motors (GM) Style Event, Detroit River, Detroit, MI [CGD09-08-001] (RIN: 1625-AA87) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4448. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Missouri River, Mile 300.00 to 000.0 [COTP Sector Upper Mississippi River-07-013] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4449. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Upper Mississippi River, Mile 454.0 to 456.0 [COTP Sector Upper Mississippi River-07-014] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4450. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Upper Mississippi River, Mile 178.0 to 184.0 [COTP Sector Upper Mississippi River-07-015] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4451. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Missouri River, Mile 615.0 to 615.6 [COTP Sector Upper Mississippi River-07-016] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received Otcober 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4452. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Upper Mississippi River, Mile 742.7 to 743.3 [COTP Sector Upper Mississippi River-07-017] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received October 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4453. A letter from the Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board, transmitting a copy of the National Transportation Safety Board's response to OMB's request for views on H.R. 3619, the ''Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010''; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. PERLMUTTER: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 884. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3639) to amend the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009 to establish an earlier effective date for various consumer protections, and for other purposes (Rept. 111–326). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 885. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2868) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to extend, modify, and recodify the authority of the Secretary of Homeland Security to enhance security and protect against acts of terrorism against chemical facilities, and for other purposes (Rept. 111–327). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia (for himself, Mr. NADLER of New York, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. WEINER, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas):

H.R. 3986. A bill to amend title 28, United States Code, to clarify the availability of Federal habeas corpus relief for a person who is sentenced to death though actually innocent; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. BARTON of Texas, Mr. BURGESS, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. GINGREY of Georgia):

H.R. 3987. A bill to amend titles XI and XVIII of the Social Security Act to promote the use of health information technology to better coordinate health care; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BOCCIERI:

H.R. 3988. A bill to amend section 313 of the Tariff Act of 1930 to specify articles that qualify as commercially interchangeable merchandise for purposes of certain duty drawback; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. LUMMIS:

H.R. 3989. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of adding the Heart Mountain Relocation Center, in the State of Wyoming, as a unit of the National Park System; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. RUSH:

H.R. 3990. A bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal to John H. Johnson in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the United States; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California (for himself, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. WOOLSEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HARE, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. PIERLUISI, and Mr. SABLAN):

H.R. 3991. A bill to ensure that American workers are able to follow, without financial harm, the recommendations of their employer and public health authorities to stay home when they have symptoms of a contagious disease that may put co-workers, customers, or the public at risk; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. DRIEHAUS:

H.R. 3992. A bill to amend the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 to provide compensation for certain persons injured in the course of employment at the Feed Materials Production Center (commonly referred to as ''Fernald'') or the Piqua Organic Moderated Reactor in Ohio; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Education and Labor, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 3993. A bill to require accurate and reasonable disclosure of the terms and conditions of prepaid telephone calling cards and services; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself and Mrs. SCHMIDT):

H.R. 3994. A bill to establish a program to reduce injuries and deaths caused by cellphone use and texting while driving; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. KAPTUR:

H.R. 3995. A bill to provide additional resources for Federal investigations and prosecutions of crimes related to the 2008 Financial Crisis, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts:

H.R. 3996. A bill to improve financial stability, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Agriculture, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California):

H.R. 3997. A bill to permit each current member of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance to serve for 3 terms; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. BRALEY of Iowa:

H.R. 3998. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the service treatable as service engaged in combat with the enemy for utilization of non-official evidence for proof of service-connection in a combat-related disease or injury; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CARDOZA (for himself, Mr. COSTA, and Mr. RADANOVICH):

H.R. 3999. A bill to direct the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation to initiate consultations under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 on the Central Valley Project and the California State Water Project, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. RUSH:

H.R. 4000. A bill to provide assistance to local educational agencies for the prevention and reduction of conflict and violence; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Ms. BERKLEY, and Ms. TITUS):

H.R. 4001. A bill to provide for environmental restoration activities and forest management activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, and Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HENSARLING:

H.R. 4002. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to clarify that any delay in changes to terms applies only to increases, not decreases; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. HINCHEY (for himself, Mrs. LOWEY, and Mr. ENGEL):

H.R. 4003. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to evaluate resources in the Hudson River Valley in the State of New York to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the site as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. RUSH (for himself, Mr. HARE, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. SHIMKUS, and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois):

H.R. 4004. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of designating the study area as the Black Metropolis National Heritage Area in the State of Illinois, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. HOLT:

H.R. 4005. A bill to place reasonable safeguards on the use of surveillance and other authorities under the USA PATRIOT Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, and Intelligence (Permanent Select), for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona:

H.R. 4006. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for Indian veterans health care coordinators, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. LEE of New York (for himself and Mr. HUNTER):

H.R. 4007. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to make grants to 5 States to establish medical malpractice tribunal pilot programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. MYRICK:

H.R. 4008. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1639 Dickerson Boulevard in Monroe, North Carolina, as the ''Second Lieutenant Samuel I. Parker Postal Carrier Annex''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 4009. A bill to amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to establish the Office of the District Attorney for the District of Columbia, headed by a locally elected and independent District Attorney, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. SCHRADER:

H.R. 4010. A bill to amend the Act of August 9, 1955, to authorize the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon to obtain 99-year lease authority for trust land; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. SMITH of Texas (for himself and Mr. GOODLATTE):

H.R. 4011. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, with respect to organized retail theft, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TIAHRT:

H.R. 4012. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a 5-year recovery period for new nonresidential real property, and a 10-year recovery period for qualified leasehold improvement property, placed in service after December 31, 2009, and before January 1, 2012; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TIAHRT:

H.R. 4013. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a 5-year carryback of operating losses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. BARTLETT, Mr. INGLIS, Mr. COBLE, Ms. FOXX, Mr. CALVERT, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. JENKINS, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. LATTA, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. WAMP, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mrs. MYRICK, and Mr. WOLF):

H. Con. Res. 207. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the victory of the United States in The Cold War and the Fall of the Berlin Wall; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. CHILDERS (for himself and Mr. HARPER):

H. Res. 886. A resolution supporting the goals and purposes of National Teach Ag Day; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. ANDREWS (for himself, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. SCALISE):

H. Res. 887. A resolution recognizing the World Trade Organization member, Chinese Taipei's, accession to the Government Procurement Agreement on July 15, 2009, and extending hope and good faith that this will promote its domestic economy and position in the global economy; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 24: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia and Mr. MCNERNEY.

H.R. 43: Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. WALZ, Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee, and Mr. GERLACH.

H.R. 235: Mr. PIERLUISI.

H.R. 268: Mr. LATTA, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. CONAWAY, and Mr. PENCE.

H.R. 406: Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 558: Mr. KENNEDY and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.

H.R. 571: Mr. STARK and Mr. SCHRADER.

H.R. 613: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 716: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.

H.R. 855: Mr. BACHUS.

H.R. 932: Mr. ARCURI.

H.R. 1086: Mr. SIMPSON.

H.R. 1126: Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut.

H.R. 1132: Mr. MACK and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 1175: Mr. BROUN of Georgia.

H.R. 1177: Ms. KOSMAS.

H.R. 1182: Ms. BERKLEY and Mr. TIERNEY.

H.R. 1220: Mr. MURTHA.

H.R. 1240: Mr. EDWARDS of Texas.

H.R. 1250: Mr. SIRES and Mr. WILSON of Ohio.

H.R. 1326: Mr. CLEAVER.

H.R. 1362: Ms. MCCOLLUM.

H.R. 1441: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.

H.R. 1521: Mr. PENCE, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, and Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky.

H.R. 1526: Mr. BERRY, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H.R. 1548: Mr. CASTLE.

H.R. 1557: Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. POMEROY, and Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona.

H.R. 1597: Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona.

H.R. 1704: Mr. FILNER.

H.R. 1745: Mr. FORTENBERRY.

H.R. 1751: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 1770: Mr. MOORE of Kansas.

H.R. 1784: Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado.

H.R. 1816: Mr. MOORE of Kansas.

H.R. 1826: Mr. MCNERNEY.

H.R. 1829: Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee.

H.R. 1835: Mr. HARE, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. SIMPSON, and Mr. SHUSTER.

H.R. 1837: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.

H.R. 1866: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 1884: Mr. HODES, Mr. CARNAHAN, and Ms. SCHWARTZ.

H.R. 1925: Mrs. HALVORSON.

H.R. 1941: Mr. WATT.

H.R. 1948: Mr. SHIMKUS.

H.R. 1977: Mr. MCNERNEY.

H.R. 2089: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 2160: Mr. YOUNG of Florida and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 2243: Mr. MCINTYRE.

H.R. 2246: Mr. CARNAHAN.

H.R. 2256: Mr. MINNICK.

H.R. 2365: Ms. SHEA-PORTER and Mr. HODES.

H.R. 2372: Mr. KLINE of Minnesota and Mr. OLSON.

H.R. 2377: Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H.R. 2378: Ms. KAPTUR and Mr. ROGERS of Alabama.

H.R. 2446: Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN.

H.R. 2477: Mr. STEARNS.

H.R. 2607: Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. PITTS, Mr. BARTLETT, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. CONAWAY, and Mr. HASTINGS of Washington.

H.R. 2619: Mr. BARTON of Texas.

H.R. 2698: Mr. HALL of New York.

H.R. 2699: Mr. HALL of New York.

H.R. 2708: Mr. MATHESON.

H.R. 2709: Mr. HARE.

H.R. 2717: Mr. HALL of Texas.

H.R. 2737: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. LARSEN of Washington.

H.R. 2766: Mr. SARBANES and Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 2831: Mrs. HALVORSON.

H.R. 2866: Mr. ROSKAM.

H.R. 2897: Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 2941: Mr. INSLEE.

H.R. 2946: Mr. SPRATT.

H.R. 2999: Mr. MICHAUD and Mr. MORAN of Kansas.

H.R. 3078: Mr. SCHOCK.

H.R. 3104: Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 3116: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY and Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 3217: Mr. GERLACH, Mr. ROYCE, and Mr. PLATTS.

H.R. 3251: Mr. MACK.

H.R. 3266: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 3339: Mr. SABLAN.

H.R. 3353: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 3401: Mr. LARSEN of Washington and Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 3454: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 3464: Mr. BLUNT.

H.R. 3486: Mr. PASCRELL.

H.R. 3511: Ms. LEE of California and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.

H.R. 3554: Ms. KOSMAS and Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut.

H.R. 3560: Mr. BAIRD.

H.R. 3564: Ms. DELAURO.

H.R. 3608: Mr. KAGEN.

H.R. 3623: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.

H.R. 3644: Mr. MCNERNEY and Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 3656: Mr. HARPER, Mr. MASSA, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. EHLERS.

H.R. 3660: Mr. DENT.

H.R. 3715: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 3728: Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 3735: Mr. ROONEY.

H.R. 3742: Mr. PALLONE, Mr. WU, and Mr. MELANCON.

H.R. 3745: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois and Mr. STARK.

H.R. 3752: Mr. OLSON.

H.R. 3786: Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 3787: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 3806: Ms. JENKINS.

H.R. 3822: Mr. GOODLATTE.

H.R. 3824: Mr. GOODLATTE.

H.R. 3845: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY and Mr. HOLT.

H.R. 3851: Mr. RANGEL, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. PAYNE, and Ms. GIFFORDS.

H.R. 3855: Mr. FILNER, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, and Mrs. CAPPS.

H.R. 3904: Ms. CHU and Ms. SUTTON.

H.R. 3922: Mrs. MYRICK.

H.R. 3926: Mr. DINGELL, Mr. MASSA, and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 3943: Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. EDWARDS of Texas, Mr. BACA, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. REHBERG, and Mr. PLATTS.

H.R. 3948: Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. MICA, and Mr. MICHAUD.

H.R. 3952: Mr. WITTMAN.

H.R. 3965: Ms. CHU.

H.R. 3970: Mr. PLATTS, Mr. GOODLATTE, and Mr. TIBERI.

H.R. 3983: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 3984: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H. J. Res. 11: Mr. TIAHRT.

H. J. Res. 42: Mr. SIMPSON.

H. Con. Res. 49: Mr. NYE.

H. Con. Res. 168: Mr. LAMBORN.

H. Con. Res. 206: Mr. LAMBORN.

H. Res. 542: Ms. JENKINS.

H. Res. 615: Mr. LUCAS.

H. Res. 664: Mr. AKIN, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. SKELTON, and Mr. BARTLETT.

H. Res. 700: Mr. SNYDER and Mr. TOWNS.

H. Res. 708: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas and Mr. LIPINSKI.

H. Res. 711: Mr. MARKEY of Massachusetts.

H. Res. 752: Mrs. BIGGERT.

H. Res. 762: Mr. ARCURI.

H. Res. 803: Mr. MAFFEI.

H. Res. 835: Mr. WAMP.

H. Res. 867: Mr. FLEMING, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. LEVIN, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. COSTA, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. INGLIS, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. WAMP, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. OLSON, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. BOREN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. MCCARTHY of California, Mr. SPACE, Mr. SHADEGG, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. SCHAUER, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, Mr. HERGER, Mr. HALL of Texas, Mr. SCHOCK, Mrs. EMERSON, Mrs. HALVORSON, Mr. LATOURETTE, Mr. HOYER, Mr. PIERLUISI, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. HARPER, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mrs. SCHMIDT, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CHANDLER, Ms. KOSMAS, Mr. CULBERSON, and Mr. SULLIVAN.

H. Res. 869: Mr. CAO and Mr. ROSKAM.

H. Res. 870: Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. TIAHRT, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. DEAL of Georgia, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. COBLE, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. MICA, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. DREIER, and Mr. WITTMAN.

H. Res. 874: Mr. HERGER.

H. Res. 877: Mr. HERGER, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. WELCH, Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. ISSA, Mrs. BONO MACK, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey, Mr. FARR, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. SNYDER, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. MAFFEI, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. SCALISE, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. RADANOVICH, and Mr. HILL.

H. Res. 879: Mr. ARCURI.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MR. RANGEL

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

OFFERED BY MR. TOWNS

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

The amendment to be offered by Representative THOMPSON of Mississippi or a designee, to H.R. 2868, the Chemical Facilities Anti-Terrorism Act of 2009, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

The amendment to be offered by Representative HENSARLING or a designee, to H.R. 3639 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of rule XXI.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 3691: Mr. LINDER.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2009 No. 162

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ROLAND W. BURRIS, a Senator from the State of Illinois.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal One, we adore You. You have been the great companion and teacher of humanity, lifting us from the depths and permitting us to share in Your glory.

Today, fill our lawmakers with greater trust in You. May that trust bring them to a wholehearted surrender to Your will. Lord, help them to see in every sorrow and joy the stately footprints of Your loving providence, enabling them to say to the mountains of difficulties, ''Be removed.'' Renew the strength of our Senators so that they will mount up with wings like eagles. Remind them that security and esteem come not from titles, positions, or power but from being Your servants, working for Your glory and the good of humankind.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable ROLAND W. BURRIS led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 3, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, section 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ROLAND W. BURRIS, a Senator from the State of Illinois, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BURRIS thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I assume the majority leader will be here momentarily. I have a brief statement. I think I will go ahead and make that.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator may proceed.

WELCOMING GERMAN CHANCELLOR MERKEL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we will all have an opportunity to hear German Chancellor Merkel speak to a joint session of Congress later this morning.

We welcome her to the Capitol. It is always an honor for us to welcome a head of state to this great symbol of democracy in which we all have the privilege to work.

We look forward to hearing Chancellor Merkel's words, and we wish her a very pleasant and productive stay in Washington.

HEALTH CARE: HIGHER PREMIUMS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Americans have always had a healthy skepticism about government. But the health care bill that Democrats in Congress have put together this year would surprise even the wariest of citizens about government's potential to misread its mandate.

At a time of near 10-percent unemployment and a staggering $12 trillion Federal debt, this bill proposes to spend at least another trillion dollars to extend the reach of government in the health care decisions of every single American.

What's worse, a bill that was meant to control costs is expected to increase them. One independent study after another has shown that the bills we have seen wouldn't make health insurance premiums go down, they would actually drive them up.

You would think this would be enough to send the bill writers back to the drawing board. After all, the primary argument that was used to marshal support for these bills was the unsustainable cost of health care. Unfortunately, it hasn't. Frankly, it is an absurd spot in which we now find ourselves.

For months and months, we heard that certain reforms were needed to drive down costs. Yet now, after analysts have concluded that these proposals would actually increase costs, the people who were arguing for them are trying harder than ever to get these proposals approved, as quickly as possible.

The irreducible fact is this: while Americans have been saying we need more affordable health care, the Democrat plan makes it more expensive—and that is not reform.

We have the testimony of the Joint Committee on Taxation, the Congressional Budget Office, the administration's own Office of the Actuary at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and separate analyses by many others that say so. Each has said that the proposals we have seen would lead to higher premiums. And these higher premiums would especially hit the young, the healthy, and small businesses owners.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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Here is the breakdown. Premiums for young people could go up nearly 70 percent, and even more than that in places such as Kentucky. And millions of Americans who have chosen a plan that fits their needs and their budgets will be forced to buy more insurance, at a significant cost. Like most of my colleagues, I am particularly concerned about what these plans will mean for the families I represent. And what I have seen so far from these reports is disturbing.

As a result of all the various new rules, regulations, and tax increases that would come about as a result of the Democrat health care plan, a family of four in Kentucky that earns $66,000 a year is estimated to see their insurance premium double—from $355 to $787 a month.

The other side will say that they intend to provide subsidies for families like these, and they do. But those subsidies would only cover about half the increase. So even after these subsidies are applied, this family ends up paying an extra $180 a month. As any family will tell you, that's $180 that will not go to the college fund, to the retirement account, or toward a family vacation.

New taxes on medical devices would also contribute to higher premiums.

Same goes for new taxes on life-saving prescription drugs and new taxes on insurance providers. One independent study shows that the new taxes and fees would add nearly $500 a year to the cost of insurance for American families.

The Congressional Budget Office also predicts that a new charge to participate in so-called exchanges would lead private health plans to increase their premiums by about three percent. That is on top of all the other forces in this bill that work to drive up Americans' health insurance premiums.

The testimony of these groups is clear: the Democrat plan would not only raise taxes and slash Medicare, it would also raise health insurance premiums. This is not reform, and it's certainly not what the American people were told they could expect.

Republicans have proposed a different approach, one that responds to today's needs and one that respects the challenging economic environment we're in.

We are for helping small businesses find affordable health insurance options for their employees. We are for providing individuals the same tax benefits for purchasing insurance that businesses get.

We are for protecting doctors from frivolous lawsuits, so they can focus on treating patients—and lower their costs. We are for cracking down on the rampant waste and fraud that drive up the cost of care. And we are for the kind of wellness and prevention programs that have worked at places like the Safeway grocery chain.

Contrast that with the other side's plan. A reform that was meant to cut costs has been shown to increase them. As I said, that is not reform. But it is also not too late. It is not too late for the parties to get together and deliver the reforms Americans really want.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have had, during the last 6 months, extended hearings on the need for health care reform. Every Member in the Democratic caucus believes the present system of delivering health care in America is in trouble. It is not fair to patients or to physicians. Certain classes of people are being damaged. Medicare recipients are hammered every day.

What we are doing is presenting to the American people alternatives to the insurance industry running the world of health care. We cannot continue the way we have been going. That is what the Republican plan is—to continue more of the same, with the health insurance industry controlling everything, not professionals.

We are going to continue working on this with the CBO, which now has the plan we have sent to them with different alternatives, and they will report back as to the numbers on that. We will have in the near future a program that will be open to the American people that will show that is what we are doing. We are returning the health care to the people who can do the best job in health care. Rather than the doctor having to go through some bureaucrat working for an insurance company, he or she can make a decision on their own. This is what the nurses want, this is what the physicians want, this is what the patients want, this is what the hospital administrators want, and this is what the teaching hospitals want.

Health care in America is not in good shape. All you need to do is read any fair discussion of the health care system, recognizing now that one-sixth of every dollar is spent on health care in America today. If we don't bend that curve, it will be up to 35 cents of every dollar. America cannot continue this. We are lagging behind the rest of the world, and that needs to change.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, at 10:30 a.m., Chancellor Angela Merkel will address a joint meeting of Congress. Senators are encouraged to come to the floor now so that we may proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Senate will recess from 10:15 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. for that joint meeting. At 11:30 a.m. the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3548, the Unemployment Benefits Extension Act of 2009, postcloture. I hope after the vote yesterday, we will not be required to use the 30 hours. It will run out sometime before midnight tonight. We should move on. We have other things to do. I have spoken to my counterpart, the Republican leader. We have a number of things we need to do before we leave here next Tuesday for the Veterans Day holiday. We can finish that now. Each thing we need to do can be done very quickly. If not, we will have to work through the weekend. I hope that is not necessary.

Again, at 11:30 a.m., the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3548, the Unemployment Benefits Extension Act. It is my hope that we will be able to yield back some of that postcloture debate time and proceed to the bill this afternoon.

The Senate will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 to allow for the weekly caucus luncheons.

Mr. President, there is something wrong with the system, so the bells and lights and whistles we normally hear around here won't be heard. We are going to have to go the old-fashioned way of looking at the clock.

I ask the Chair to recess 3 minutes early.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

JOINT MEETING OF THE TWO HOUSES—ADDRESS BY CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 11:30 a.m., following the remarks of the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 10:13 a.m., recessed until 11:30 a.m., and the Senate, preceded by the Vice-President, JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr., the Secretary of the Senate, Nancy Erickson, and the Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Drew Willison, proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives to hear an address to be delivered by Chancellor Angela Merkel of the Federal Republic of Germany.

(For the address delivered by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, see today's proceedings of the House of Representatives.)

Whereupon at 11:30 a.m., the Senate, having returned to its Chamber, reassembled and was called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. GILLIBRAND).

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2009

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3548, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3548) to amend the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008, to provide for the temporary availability of certain additional emergency unemployment compensation, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid (for Baucus-Reid) amendment No. 2712, in the nature of a substitute.

Reid amendment No. 2713 (to amendment No. 2712), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2714 (to amendment No. 2713), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 2715 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2712), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2716 (to amendment No. 2715), of a perfecting nature.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, shortly, we are going to be voting on the unemployment compensation bill. I have already taken to the floor to urge my colleagues to pass the underlying bill, which provides 14 weeks of additional benefits to those who will exhaust their unemployment compensation. This is an insurance program. The funds are there, assessed through the compensation system of our country in order that we have money available for those who have lost their jobs during a recession, and that is exactly what has happened.

These are extraordinary times. I know the Presiding Officer will agree with me that we have been to our States, and we know there are people who are unable to find jobs. This past week, I was at the employment office in Baltimore and saw people coming into that office in large numbers and asking for jobs. I talked to individuals, saw the faces of people who want to work but who can't find jobs. So it is critically important for the system to work, and that means we need to provide the safety net of unemployment compensation during these times, and we need to extend it to all States.

The bill before us will provide those additional 14 weeks in every State. In my own State of Maryland, we have many counties that have unemployment rates far in excess of the 8½ percent, which was the trigger number used in the House bill. So it is appropriate we pass this bill for the people who will benefit by it, and it is also appropriate we pass it to help our economy. We know the dollars that are provided through unemployment compensation work their way back into our economy, very quickly helping our economy.

I wish to talk also about the leader's amendment that will extend to first-time home buyers a tax credit that would expire at the end of this month. I had introduced legislation, along with Senator ISAKSON, to extend the credit for an additional 6 months, and I am pleased that provision is included in the leader's amendment that also expands the credit for an additional 6 months.

According to the IRS, 1.4 million people used the credit as of September 2009. As many as 40 percent of all home buyers this year will qualify for the credit. It has clearly worked according to its intended purpose; that is, to get potential home buyers off the sidelines and into the market and buying a home. It is estimated that the credit is directly responsible for 200,000 to 400,000 purchases this year. According to the National Association of Realtors, those additional sales have pumped approximately $22 billion into the economy. It is getting our economy back on line.

The credit has succeeded in reducing the glut of homes for sale, but it needs to be extended. We still have too much inventory that is out there, and it is affecting new home starts, which are critically important for our economy. We know the real estate market was the spark that put us into this recession. We know that. We know what happened to home values. We know what happened to people who were unable to sell their homes. We know what happened with foreclosures. We know we need a healthy real estate market to get us out of this recession.

We have seen some signs of improvement and stabilization in the market, but we are certainly not out of the woods yet. Inventories are still way too high. Dean Baker, codirector for the Center for Economic and Policy Research, notes that price declines could resume later this fall.

Quoting Mr. Baker:

The uptick in sales driven by the credit has led to a substantial increase in the number of homes offered for sale at just the time that the boost from the credit is dwindling. The inventory will also be a much larger drag in the slow-selling winter months.

We know winter is notoriously a slow season, but we have too much inventory that is out there. This would be the wrong time for Congress to allow this credit to expire.

Other economists, such as Mark Zandi of Moody's, and James Glassman of JPMorgan Chase, support extending the credit.

The substitute amendment, which I have cosponsored and which is similar to the bill I introduced—S. 1678—extends and expands the credit to April 30, 2010, for binding contracts and then allows 60 more days to close. I think that makes sense. The closing period sometimes hampers the use of the credit. For example, if someone was to enter into a contract today, even though the credit is there, it is highly unlikely they could settle by the end of the month, taking advantage of the $8,000 credit. It makes sense to say that as long as you have a binding contract by April, you have 2 months later to close in order to get the credit.

The amendment keeps the $8,000 credit for the first-time home buyer and then provides a $6,500 credit available to other home buyers who have lived in their current homes for at least 5 years. These are the step-up sales. These are people who currently own homes, who have lived in their home for 5 years, and are now trying to buy another home. You can't buy a house and try to flip it to take advantage of the $6,500 credit. It is a smaller credit than the first-time home buyers', but it is still a significant credit and it is available for homes costing up to $800,000.

I don't think there are many homes in the area that will qualify under the income limits, but it does allow those to qualify. The income limits have been lifted slightly from $75,000 to $125,000 for an individual and from $150,000 to $225,000 for joint filers.

So it takes care of where the market needs help, where there is too much inventory, and will allow the credit to, again, tell people: Look, the economy needs your help. This is a good time to buy. The government is going to be your partner with this $8,000 credit for the first-time home buyer and a $6,500 credit for the person who has lived in their house for 5 years.

There are a couple more points that I think need to be underscored. The credit is fully paid for. It will not add to the deficit. That is an important point, but I would also point out that this credit will help stimulate our economy, which will generate economic activity, which will help us on our budget deficit. It really does help our economy, and it is fully paid for, so it doesn't add to the deficit, and that is one of the points I mentioned when I first introduced this bill with Senator ISAKSON—we were going to look for a way to make sure it is paid for.

I thank the chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator BAUCUS, for coming forward with an amendment that is fully paid for, that is offset. I believe that is the way it should be.

The second point I want to bring up is it includes tough antifraud language and ''math error'' authority for the IRS to ensure that only those individuals and families who qualify for the credit take advantage of it. I know we are all concerned about reports we read in the paper about potential fraud on this credit. Any fraud is wrong, but we know if we set up a new credit there are those who will press the point more than they should. We have to make sure the antifraud provisions are in this bill so those entitled to this credit are those who take advantage of it and it is not used inappropriately. Language is included in this amendment to

make sure that, in fact, happens. It is a bill that is properly balanced.

I wish to make one other point. I heard the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee said this, and I agree completely. Senator ISAKSON and I talked about this. The credit will end. This is not an extension because we believe this is a credit that should be there indefinitely. We do not. This credit is to help bring real estate back to where it needs to be for our economy to recover. We give until April so that people can take advantage of this credit during this tough economic time, knowing full well that the winter is going to be a slow season, normally, for home sales and in the spring people are more likely to start again looking at home sales. We want people to take advantage of this now, recognizing that come April this credit will not be extended. This is the time to take advantage of this government credit that helps you in buying a home.

As I said earlier, the slump in housing led us into this recession. A rebound in the market will lead us out of this recession. Extending the credit is a prudent and fiscally responsible measure.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of the leader's amendment, and I hope we will shortly have an opportunity not only to pass this amendment but to pass the underlying bill that will extend unemployment compensation to literally, in my State, the tens of thousands of people who otherwise will lose their benefits by the end of this month and the 1.4 million Americans who will lose their unemployment compensation benefits by the end of this year if we do not act.

For all those reasons, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, any day now the Senate will begin to debate a single bill affecting the lives, the wallets, and the health of all Americans. Three Senators from the other side of the aisle have been working behind closed doors, trying to stitch together yet another health reform bill—a bill that will restructure 17 percent of the American economy. It is unclear when the other 97 Senators will get to see the majority leader's bill.

As we wait for the opportunity to read the bill, to examine the bill, to see what is in it—and the American people are waiting as well—I am reminded of a book that I believe still has much to teach us, ''The Federalist Papers,'' particularly Federalist 62 authored by James Madison. He says this:

> The internal effects of a mutable policy are still more calamitous. It poisons the blessings of liberty. It will be of little avail to the people that the laws are made by men of their own choice—

Let's get that over again.

> It will be of little avail to the people that the laws are made by men of their own choice if the laws be so voluminous—

You have seen this 1900-page House bill—

> That they cannot be read, or so incoherent that they cannot be understood; if they be repealed or revised before they are promulgated, or undergo such incessant changes that no man knows what the law is today, can guess what it will be tomorrow.

That is what we are looking at. The quote strikes a chord with everyone who hears it because it summarizes so very well what we are facing today in the Congress—in the Senate, in the House—as we are dealing with health care and health reform. The House health reform bill is nearly 2,000 pages long. The Finance Committee bill is over 1,500 pages. The HELP Committee bill is over 1,000 pages.

Some in Washington may believe that drafting a bill in secret and then rushing to enact it into law with little debate is the perfect way to avoid tough questions and public scrutiny. That plan has not gone as intended. The American people are much too smart. As the American people began to understand the details, they began to ask the tough questions. They know what the Democrats in Congress and the administration are trying to do. The American people are not buying it. They are not convinced that we should turn over the Nation's private health care system to Washington, to bureaucrats, and to the Federal Government.

Of course the American people want reasonable, commonsense health insurance reform. We need that. But the American people do not want a bill that limits their freedom and bankrupts the country. Fortunately, the American people see that the numbers simply do not add up. They know that if the reform bills we are debating become law, the health care costs are going to go up.

I go home to Wyoming every weekend. I was there yesterday. People continue to ask me: How will all of these health care bills affect me and affect my family? Inevitably, the question is followed by a statement. It says: Tell those people back in Washington that I want them to fix what is wrong with our health care system, but whatever they do, that should not make things worse for me and worse for my family. I can't afford to pay more for my family's health care.

I agree completely with the people of Wyoming. Health care costs today are rising three times faster than inflation. Especially during these economic times, rising health care costs stretch family budgets to the limit. It also makes it harder for employers to keep offering health benefits to their employees.

Now the Congressional Budget Office, the Joint Committee on Taxation, and the Health and Human Services Office of the Actuary are all telling us what the American people already know. They are telling us that if we pass the health reform bill that is coming before us, we are going to make things worse.

What exactly did all of these nonpartisan organizations say? On September 22 of this year, the Congressional Budget Office sent a letter to the Finance Committee chairman, to Chairman BAUCUS. In the letter, the CBO said two important things. No. 1, premiums in the new insurance exchanges would tend to be higher than the average premiums in the current individual market. This was a bill that was supposed to lower costs. No. 2, people with low expected costs for health care would generally end up paying higher premiums. Again, that is not where we are supposed to be heading. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the Baucus bill actually causes many individuals and families struggling today to afford health insurance to end up paying more.

In the same letter, the CBO also indicated that tax increases in the Baucus bill will make monthly health insurance bills go up, not down.

During the Finance Committee debate, my friend from Texas, Senator CORNYN, asked CBO Director Doug Elmendorf a specific question. He said: ''Would the new fees on health insurers be passed along to health consumers?''

Dr. Elmendorf responded. ''Our judgment,'' he said, ''is that the new fees would raise insurance premiums''—make them go up.

The Joint Committee on Taxation confirmed exactly what the CBO Director had said because during the same Finance Committee debate, the Joint Committee on Taxation Chief of Staff said:

> Basic economics is that the fee will be reflected in higher premium costs.

Who pays the premiums? Obviously the people who are being insured or their employees.

I wish to point out that, like many things in this Baucus bill, this new insurance tax system, the new taxes begin in the year 2010—next year—a full 3 years before Americans see any benefits, any coverage benefits. So they are going to start paying for this years before the benefits actually arrive. I thought the goal of health reform was to lower the cost for hardworking Americans, not to raise the costs. Instead, the respected economists who looked at this are telling us that monthly health insurance costs will go up for every single American starting next year.

Next, the Health and Human Services Office of the Actuary, which is another nonpartisan, highly respected scorekeeper, took a look at this Democratic health reform bill. On October 21, they released a memo analyzing the House bill, at the time H.R. 3200. Unfortunately for the Democratic leadership and the White House, the news was not good. The House bill bends the cost curve up. The expenses go up. According to their memo, health care spending will increase if the House bill becomes law.

Here is what they said:

In aggregate, we estimate that for calendar years 2010–2019, National Health Expenditures would increase by $750 billion or 2.1 percent over the updated baseline projection.

Often the government uses fancy, complex language, so let me be very clear about this. They are saying that as national spending on health care increases, American families will see their monthly health insurance premiums go up.

My friends on the other side of the aisle will try to tell you the data is meaningless. They will try to tell you the taxpayer-funded subsidies included in the bill will make the health care premiums more affordable. It is fascinating to me that the Democrats do not even try to deny that premiums will go up. They admit it. Instead, they tell us not to worry about it.

We should worry about it. The people of Wyoming worry about it. The people of America are worried about it. Why? Because hard-working American taxpayers and the generations to follow will be forced to pick up the tab. I want everyone who is listening to know that the American people are not being fooled. They understand that subsidizing something does not make it cheaper.

Not only do the proposals in front of us raise taxes, they slash nearly $500 billion from Medicare, from the hard-working Americans who have given and sacrificed and who rely on Medicare for their health care, and they raise premiums, they raise the cost for people who have insurance. They are doing it not to save Medicare but to create an entirely new entitlement program.

Again, my friends on the other side never seem to mention that most Americans will not even qualify for these subsidies that are being promised. About 160 million Americans get their health insurance through an employer. Under the Democratic health reform plans, they will not qualify for a Federal Government subsidy. You have to take the health insurance your employer gives or buy a policy on your own, whether you can afford it or not. That is going to be the law. Either way, it will cost you more if this bill becomes law.

We have not even gotten into the issue of the quality of the care you will receive under this new government-run system. The Congressional Budget Office also confirmed that almost 5 million American people who buy insurance through this new government exchange will not receive any help to pay for their insurance. What good are taxpayer-funded subsidies to help pay for premium increases when most people don't actually qualify for the promised help?

It sounds to me as if the Baucus bill will stick people with higher taxes, will take away their choices, will remove personal freedom, and will implement changes that increase their monthly health care costs. This is not reform; it is a blatant effort by Washington to take over health care in America.

It is important that Members of Congress and the American people fully understand how the Democratic health bills will increase costs, so let's go through the list one by one.

We have already talked about the new tax on health insurance providers. Experts tell us this tax will be passed on to patients. BlueCross BlueShield of Wyoming tells me this tax will raise monthly premiums of families in my State by $500 a year.

Then there are the new requirements. The Democratic bills all have the Federal Government defining what kind of insurance can be sold and must be purchased. Well, this makes it illegal for insurers to sell certain policies that many people have today, that many people like, and that many people want to keep.

How do they accomplish this? The Democratic bills require most health plans to offer products that meet new, higher, specified what are called actuarial values and cover an exhaustive list of mandated benefits. If you do not know what the term ''actuarial values'' means, you are not alone. I have been in the practice of medicine for 25 years taking care of families all across Wyoming. I had never heard of it.

''Actuarial values'' is a technical term. It stands for the total amount of health spending paid for by an insurance plan. In other words, the actuarial value of a health plan depends on all of the benefits, on any cost sharing that the health plan covers. Actuarial values are represented by a percentage. In insurance plans, they can range anywhere from 55 percent to 90 percent. Typically, as these values increase, the cost increases.

Well, the health care bill raised this so called actuarial value minimum to a standard of 65 percent, which actually is much higher than many policies that are sold on the market today. As a result, experts tell us that people who buy insurance will pay at least 10 percent more just to meet the new standard.

I am sure the other side of the aisle will try to say: Do not worry. We will protect you.

You know, the idea was that you should be able to keep the insurance you have so that your premiums will not go up. But what they do not tell you is that you are out of luck if your insurer stops offering coverage or if you want to change your policy in any way.

How might you change your policy? Well, you might add dental care or vision benefits. If you want to do any of those changes, you are out of luck. Any change to your current insurance policy and the promise that ''you get to keep what you have if you like it,'' well, that promise will not come true.

Finally, there are some new rules called age rating. They are going to drive up the premiums specifically for younger folks. The age rating rules limit the amount premiums can vary between healthy younger Americans and older individuals. Experts tell us that the Finance Committee bill, for example, will cause monthly insurance premiums for younger, healthier people who are then going to be subsidizing older folks who are sicker—to drive up the premiums of younger folks by 69 percent. These extreme price increases will force young healthy people out of the market. A young person will see that it is cheaper to pay a $750 fine annually, what they call a tax penalty, and forget about having health insurance than it is to pay $5,000 a year for health insurance when, as many young people believe, they will never need it. Besides, if this young person does get sick, he or she can always buy health insurance later without facing a penalty.

That is exactly how this bill is written. Without a doubt, the policies I have described will cause health insurance costs to go up for millions and millions of Americans, and specifically so very much for young Americans.

Plans that the President promised the American people that they could keep if they liked, well, we all know the President cannot and will not keep that promise. I will give a specific example. In Wyoming, a healthy 35-year-old man can go out today and buy a high-deductible health insurance policy for about $90 a month.

Scorekeepers at the Congressional Budget Office estimate this level plan in the Finance Committee bill will cost $392 a month. That is a huge increase because that is what they are going to be mandated to buy. Not one of my constituents can afford to pay 329 percent more for their health insurance than they can pay today.

We can solve the problem of rising medical costs without a government takeover of health care. I struggle with the assumption that people generally can be trusted to do the right thing and society prospers when government has less to say about how people run their lives. Others start by assuming that Washington knows best and should take more authority over all of us.

There are better ideas that improve our Nation's health care system, commonsense reforms on which all of us can agree. Having practiced medicine, taken care of families in Wyoming for 25 years, I would prefer a step-by-step approach to reform—simple, commonsense, affordable changes that we can implement right away. And all of those ought to be centered on the patient, patient centered, not government centered: Giving people incentives such as lower costs when they engage in healthy behaviors; prohibiting the use of preexisting condition clauses; allowing people to take their health insurance with them if they change jobs; allowing Americans to buy insurance across State lines, to shop for a policy that is best for them, best for their family; giving people the same tax breaks that big companies get when

people buy their insurance policies individually; dealing with abusive lawsuits and the situation there that involves doctors ordering many tests that do not necessarily help the patient stay healthy but help protect the doctor in case of a suit; and allowing small businesses to pool together in order to offer health insurance to their employees at a more reasonable cost to the employees as well as to the business.

The time has come to work together for meaningful reform. I think most Americans would prefer that we get these reforms right than pass a 2,000-page bill—a bill that raises taxes, a bill that cuts Medicare, a bill that costs $1 trillion, and a bill that represents a Washington takeover of health care.

The American people want better. The American people deserve better. The American people deserve nothing less.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, I would like to talk about health care as well, and I brought a few pages that the American people would be interested in. This stack closest to the podium is actually the House bill, the 2,000-page House bill. On this side is what we are working off of so far on the Senate side because what has been put together has been put together behind closed doors, and it has not been released yet. I assume that is because they do not know the cost and what adjustments will have to be made in order to meet the cost requirements, although it is an extension of cost of probably $1 trillion.

I wonder if there is anybody in America who believes we can expand programs by $1 trillion and it will not cost a dime for the rest of us. But at any rate, the stacks over here are the ones from the Senate side. The little bottom stack down there is the Senate HELP bill. Then this is the Senate Finance bill, the 1,600-page bill, although when we were actually debating this bill in committee, we did not know how big the bill would be because we worked off a 220-page summary and did summary amendments.

So this is the first time we have actually got to look at a final product. What is interesting about doing a summary bill is that the amendments are done in summary. If an amendment does happen to pass by the minority, then it is written by the majority, and the devil is always in the details. So we are very anxious to see, although there were not a lot of amendments that we got passed there.

What I mostly want to talk about today is the impact on small business. The status quo in health care is unacceptable. Health care costs are skyrocketing, insurance premiums are increasing, and too many small businesses can no longer afford to offer health insurance to their workers.

While I agree we need to change our current system, the approach reflected in the current health reform bills is the wrong answer. That is these bills. Quite a stack of papers. Very encompassing. Very comprehensive. This is going to affect every single American. We have never had a bill that affected every single American, and that is why it is so complicated. That is why it is so large. That is why it is so hard to deal with. That is why there will be so many mistakes as we go through a pile like that trying to make a few amendments that will improve the bill. They need a lot of amendments that will improve the bill.

So while I agree we need to change our current system, the approach reflected in the current health reform bills is the wrong answer. I object to the current health care reform bills not because I support the status quo but because the bills do nothing to address the problems of increasing costs and premiums. These bills will not reduce health care costs and will actually increase insurance premiums for most Americans.

I have fought for years to enact commonsense reforms that would help slow health care cost growth and make the insurance market work better, particularly for small businesses. Before I entered politics, my wife and I ran a small business. We had shoe stores. We know firsthand how hard it is to meet payroll and provide meaningful benefits to employees. I understand how the current insurance market fails to meet the needs of many small businesses.

That is why I fought for real reforms that will actually help small businesses. In 2006, I introduced a small business health plan bill that would have saved the taxpayers about $1 billion and would have provided health insurance to almost 1 million people.

The bill would have made commonsense reforms to the insurance market and given more leverage to small businesses to help them negotiate lower insurance premiums. The insurance industry, working closely with many of my Democratic colleagues fought to defeat my bill. Unfortunately, they were successful. We could not pass the cloture motion to proceed; we were short about three votes. Had we been able to get those three votes, we would have been able, with one amendment, to clear up the objections that were made during the cloture debate.

Since 2006, little has changed in the insurance marketplace. Health care costs and premiums continue to spiral upwards. The Kaiser Family Foundation reports that costs for small businesses with less than 200 employees—I consider that to be a pretty big business—rose by 4.7 percent from 2006 to 2007, 2.2 percent from 2007 to 2008, 5 percent from 2008 to 2009, and they are expected to rise next year.

Small businesses cannot continue to sustain these types of price increases. They need and want reform and Congress should deliver reform. Congress should pass a bill that decreases the cost of health care and reduces insurance premiums across the board, not just for the poor, not just for the uninsured.

Unfortunately, the bills that Speaker PELOSI and Leader REID and President Obama are pushing through Congress will do little to address spiraling health care costs and will actually increase the insurance premiums most Americans pay for their health care.

Even worse, increases in premiums will come at a time of rising unemployment. The 2,000-page Pelosi bill and the 1,500-page Senate Finance bill will drive up costs, increase taxes, and expand the size of government. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, the administration's own official actuaries, the National Association of State Insurance Commissioners, and at least six other private studies have all reported that the Democratic leadership bills will drive up costs.

Actuaries at the consulting firm, Oliver Wyman, which did one of the studies, estimated these bills will increase premiums for small business by at least 20 percent. WellPoint, the largest Blue Cross Blue Shield plan in the Nation, looked at their actual claims experience in the 14 States in which they operate and concluded that premiums for healthier small businesses will increase in all 14 States; in Nevada by as much as 108 percent.

Even the Congressional Budget Office has said:

> Premiums in the new insurance exchanges would tend to be higher than the average premiums in the current-law individual market.

Let me say again what the Congressional Budget Office said:

> Premiums in the new insurance exchanges would tend to be higher than the average premiums in the current-law individual market

When the 85 percent of Americans who already have health insurance hear the term ''health care reform,'' they want Washington to do something that lowers the cost of their health insurance premiums.

Unfortunately, the bills Congress has developed will do the exact opposite. Our economy can't take the higher taxes, higher unemployment, and higher mandates these bills impose. Taken together, the new taxes, mandates, and regulations in these bills will cumulatively increase health insurance premiums for millions of Americans who currently have health insurance. These higher taxes, higher premiums, and higher costs are not the change the American people voted for. Unemployment is higher than it has been in decades. The housing market is in distress, and more and more middle-class Americans are feeling squeezed by irresponsible decisions being made in Washington. We all agree the health insurance market is broken and needs to be fixed. Everyone who wants health

insurance should be able to get it. They should not have to spend all of their hard-earned savings to do so. No American should be denied health insurance because they have cancer, diabetes, or some other preexisting condition. No one should be denied health insurance, period. These reforms are very important and long overdue.

We also need to enact commonsense reforms similar to the reforms I advocated in 2006 with small business health plans and then in 2007 and 2008 with my plan for 10 steps to transform health care in America. That was a step-by-step process that would get us to where all the promises are being made. It is on my Web site.

I urge the Democratic leadership to go back to the drawing board to develop bipartisan health care solutions that will actually reduce costs and make health insurance more affordable for small businesses and most Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION ACT OF 2009

Mr. WEBB. Madam President, I rise to give my colleagues a progress report on the National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2009, the goal of which is to create a blue ribbon national commission to take a long overdue and comprehensive look at our criminal justice system. This week the full Judiciary Committee is scheduled to consider this bill, and the markup would not have taken place without the strong support of Chairman LEAHY and Senators HATCH, GRAHAM, DURBIN, and SPECTER, all of whom have championed this bill. I express my appreciation to them and to other Members for all of the input and cooperation they have given.

I wish to begin by revisiting the problem that drove this legislation. This is a chart that shows the incarceration rate in the United States compared to other countries. I don't think a lot of Americans are aware that we have 5 percent of the world's population but 25 percent of the world's known prison population. When I wrote about the Japanese prison system as a journalist 25 years ago, Japan, with half our population, had only 40,000 people in prison. At that time, we had 580,000. Today we have more than 2.38 million prisoners in our criminal justice system and another 5 million involved in the process either on probation or parole. That is 7 million Americans involved in the criminal justice process.

It is important for us to understand, as we think about a way to fix it, that this is a relatively recent phenomenon in American history. We have not always had this type of incarceration rate. It stems from about 1980. Before that time—this chart goes all the way back to 1925—we had a fairly consistent incarceration rate. In this period, for a number of reasons—one of them being the fact that as we changed a lot of our policies toward mandatory confinement of the mentally ill; our prisons have absorbed a tremendous population of mentally ill—we have four times as many people in prison in the United States who are mentally ill than we do in mental institutions today. They are not getting the care they need, and they are also clogging up the prison system. Also if we go back to 1980, when I showed on the chart the beginning of this dramatic escalation of people in prison, we only had 41,000 people in our prison system for drug offenses. Today that number is up to 500,000. This is State prisons, a comparison from 1980 to today. These are local jails, and these are Federal prisons.

At the same time—and it is important for us to say this—as we look at our criminal justice system, people don't feel any safer. This chart shows the percentage of Americans who believe crime is more prevalent than a year ago. In 2009, more than 70 percent in this country believe crime is more prevalent than it was a year ago. We have two phenomena here. We are locking up more people on a percentage basis than anyone else in the world. We have 7 million Americans involved in the criminal justice process, yet we don't feel any safer.

I have two theories about why this fear is prevalent in America's neighborhoods. Both of them speak for the need for this type of commission. The first is that we have been locking up far too many people, people whose transgressions could have been dealt with in more creative ways. As a result, we have hundreds of thousands of people who have been released from prison each year and are reentering American society hardened by their prison experience and without the kind of structured programs that would allow them to become productive citizens. They become recidivists. So we have more people involved in the criminal process than we would otherwise, and they are threatening our neighborhoods.

The second is that gangs have grown in size and impact, including sophisticated transnational drug cartels operating in cities across America. It is estimated that Mexican drug cartels alone are operating in at least 230 American cities and not simply along the border. Incidents on the border illuminate the severity of the problem, but clearly it is not a border problem. It is a national problem, and it is not simply a problem with Mexican gangs. In northern Virginia alone, it is estimated there are 4,000 members of MS–13, a Central American gang; 4,000 members is about 3 battalions of marines. Gangs are estimated to commit 80 percent of the crime in some locations. They are in many cases the primary retail distributors of drugs. Gang violence that affects so many of our communities speaks to the need to make sure our law enforcement officials have the time and the energy to dedicate to going after the major problems that threaten communities—resources and the policies they need to go after violent crime.

The hundreds of thousands of men and women leaving prisons and jails today to return to our communities speaks volumes about the need to reexamine the availability of and the support for community corrections programs, including reentry programs, probation, and parole policies.

Once we started talking about these issues on my staff, as part of the Joint Economic Committee, holding hearings over the past more than 2 years, we began receiving messages, communications, and having contact with people from all across the country, people from every different aspect of the political and philosophical arenas that come into play wherever we talk about criminal justice and incarceration. It is an emotional issue from across the philosophical spectrum. I heard personally from Justice Kennedy of the Supreme Court, from prosecutors, judges, defense lawyers, former offenders, people in prison, police on the street. All of them agree we need an interrelated examination, a national commission to examine the criminal justice system and to come up with different types of approaches.

As former Los Angeles Police Chief William Bratton noted in his testimony in support of the commission:

> We cannot use arrests as our only tool to deal with the crime problem . . . our problems are systemic, widespread, and growing, and only a singularly focused blue ribbon commission comprised of informed practitioners, scholars, policymakers and civil rights activists can adequately address the calculated formation of intervention and prevention strategies. Formation of this important commission is a major and essential step in the right direction.

That was from Los Angeles police chief and one of the most highly respected law enforcement officials in the country, William Bratton.

I introduced the National Criminal Justice Commission Act in March. The criminal justice commission would examine all of the elements involved in criminal justice in those specified areas which could then be voted on by the Congress. When this legislation becomes law, the first step for the commission will be to address a series of specific findings and to recommend policy changes. The commission will bring the greatest minds in the country together with a specific timeline to make specific findings and then give those recommendations regarding the entire gamut of the criminal justice system.

Since I have introduced the bill, we have gained the support of 35 Members of this body. We have also engaged in a dialog with more than 100 organizations across the political and philosophical spectrum, as diverse as the Heritage Foundation, the Sentencing Project, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National District Attorneys Association, the Cato Institute, the

NAACP, the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Correctional Association, the Prison Fellowship, the American Probation and Parole Association, and many others across the entire political spectrum. We have listened. We have learned. We have incorporated many suggestions and modifications to the bill.

For example, in the initial findings of the bill, we incorporated suggestions that we include the number of crime victims, advances in policing policies, decreases in violent crime and property crime, and the protection of civil rights and liberties. We added an examination of changes in policing as a result of 9/11, the cost and benefits of prevention and diversion programs, and an examination of the availability of reentry programs. We also added requests that the commission identify effective practices in reducing crime and assisting victims; that it decrease, where possible, racial, ethnic, and gender disparities; and that it help law enforcement address the challenges stemming from combating terrorism and promoting homeland security.

We also expanded, importantly, the number of commission members to ensure better representation of State and local government. I wish to spend a minute on this for the understanding of my colleagues. This commission is designed to be bipartisan. It is to be composed of 13 members: the chairman, appointed by the President; four members coming from State and local governments, appointed by the President in agreement with the minority and majority leader and the Speaker of the House; 2 members appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, in consultation with the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary; 2 members appointed by the Speaker of the House with the same process; 2 members appointed by the minority leader of the Senate; 2 members appointed by the minority leader of the House. It will be a 7–6 commission.

Through the course of many meetings, we found a solid consensus in support of a comprehensive review of the system. This represents our best effort to set politics aside and to find solutions that will allow us to ensure the safety of our communities while being smart about how we deal with crime in America.

Again, I appreciate the chairman of the Judiciary Committee scheduling a markup on this bill. I commend it to my colleagues and hope we can all join together in passing it this year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. BOND. Madam President, yesterday Afghanistan's Independent Election Committee announced that a runoff election is no longer necessary, which means Afghan President Hamid Karzai has secured a second term.

Whatever your feelings about President Karzai, this peaceful resolution of Afghanistan's electoral mess should have brought a sigh of relief for anyone waiting with bated breath for our own administration's decision on whether to support General McChrystal's troop request, whether to support the President's plan for Afghanistan.

After all, according to the White House, President Obama's decision was ''weeks away'' because he was waiting to announce a decision until after the Afghan election was decided. But yesterday I read in the New York Times that the White House Press Secretary said the President's announcement was, once again, ''weeks away.'' This is beginning to sound a little bit like Charlie Brown and the football, only the game the White House is playing has deadly consequences.

While the White House continues to dither and delay in Washington, American heroes and our Afghan allies are dying on the battlefield.

Last month was the bloodiest month in Afghanistan since the war started. As the people of Afghanistan see America's will waiver in Washington, the terrorists gain strength.

General McChrystal said last July we have only about 12 months to get in the troops necessary to reverse the momentum the Taliban has gained because their forces overwhelm the number of ISAF and trained Afghan troops we have on the field.

It is going to take some time, once a decision is made, to get the troops we need there to support General McChrystal's implementation of the President's plan.

So I call on President Obama to end this deadly indecision. Mr. President, please recommit to the very strategy you announced in March. Recommit to the ''war of necessity,'' as you so eloquently—and rightly—called by name the conflict our troops are engaged in, in the villages and mountains of Afghanistan.

In addition to calling on the President to end the delay, I call on the pundits here in Washington to abandon their excuses to justify further delay. We have heard excuse after excuse, constant attempts to justify delay by some in the media and some on the far left. The latest red herring was the Afghan elections. Now that the election is resolved, the next excuse is corruption in Kabul.

Don't get me wrong. I agree that corruption must be tackled. In fact, I outlined the need to take on corruption in the ''Roadmap to Success'' for the region that I sent to then President-elect Obama, the Defense Department and the intelligence agencies and his national security team last November. But don't forget this critical truth: ''All politics is local,'' and so is security.

Everyone in Washington is all too familiar with that truth, but it is undeniable in the mountains and villages in Afghanistan. The Taliban is not waiting for a Jeffersonian democracy to flourish in Kabul as they continue to kill our troops and attack the people of Afghanistan.

Yes, we must tackle corruption at every level. There are lots of other challenges we must take. But security in Afghanistan will not come from Kabul. It has to be built village by village, valley by valley. The knowledgeable professionals who advise us in public and in classified sessions have told me, time and time again, that security must come first.

I have spoken on this floor many times about the need for smart power. That is military power backed by economic development, better governance, the provision of basic services. But that additional element—all the other things besides military force—awaits the establishment of security so the people we are working with can feel secure and not be subject to intimidation by the Taliban.

For too long, the international community has been too fixated on the machinations of Kabul and questions about various leaders who have been elected by the people of Afghanistan and not focused enough on the fights in the villages and the valleys.

I am proud to say our brave American National Guard units in provinces in Afghanistan are showing what can be done when you provide security, along with the economic development tools to provide a better life and a way forward without the Taliban control over their communities.

We will only succeed when the people of Afghanistan feel secure from the intimidation and violence of the Taliban, when Afghan forces can be developed to the point where they can protect the population for good, when local governance begins to deliver schools, wells, and fundamental institutions for economic development and justice.

These institutions, from national security forces to economic development, to the institutions of justice—courts, jails, cops—will only stay if Kabul organizes itself to support them. But the progress we must commit to now is a necessary precondition. It is imperative in the rural areas now and all the regions to establish that security. Then it is important for them to work from the bottom up to secure the government they want in the capital.

The time for excuses is over. Every day we delay, the enemy grows stronger. Our troops and allies, who are beginning to be dispirited by our delay, are essentially being told: Wait. We are not sure what you are doing is worthwhile. The people of Afghanistan whom we are counting on to side with us rather than the Taliban are beginning to wonder: Is the United States going to pull out again, like we have done too often in the past?

The President and this Congress need to send a signal today to the Afghan people that America will not abandon them in this critical fight against terrorism. Our allies need to know we will remain by their sides to defeat this

enemy together. Our enemies need to know they cannot wait us out, that America will be strong.

If we fail to deliver this message and to commit the troops General McChrystal has asked for, the dangers are very real. Let there be no doubt, from everything we have heard, everything we have learned, if we do not send the additional troops, if we try to stand off and use a fire-and-fallback policy—that failed in Iraq until we brought in the counterinsurgency strategy that our NATO allies tried without success in Afghanistan—not only will the Taliban come back in, they will come over the mountains, and Taliban rule will be established in Afghanistan. With Taliban rule comes their sometimes witting, sometimes unwitting allies—al-Qaida—which will use it to establish the same kind of base they had in Afghanistan prior to the 9/11 attacks. Failure will embolden the enemies of freedom who launched the attacks of 9/11 from Afghanistan.

I call on President Obama to end this indecision, commit to his own strategy—which he announced so powerfully last March and which I was proud to support on the floor—and show the American people and our allies the same resolve and determination I heard in his words this past spring. He said:

> Our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken; you cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you.

It is time we delivered on that promise.

CZECH AND SLOVAK REPUBLICS

Madam President, I also have a statement in recognition of the tremendous success that has occurred in the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic since 1989. When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1989, the people of Czechoslovakia joined together to oust communism and adopt democracy.

We have seen tremendous success in the past 20 years. Remarkable changes have taken place, as both the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic have sought and achieved membership in NATO and moved to the kind of progress and peace we expected for them.

In 1989 the former Soviet Union was in the final throes of a slow demise which concluded in 1991. Many of the former Soviet republics were in a state of uncertainty as the situation deteriorated further.

In the fall and winter of 1989, the people of Czechoslovakia joined many other recently separated republics and chose to oust communism and adopt democracy through the Velvet Revolution. Twenty years ago the country then known as Czechoslovakia freed itself of communist control, instituted democratic elections, and set out to adapt its command economy to the free market.

The remarkable swiftness which ushered out the former government while maintaining relative order and peace was inspiring to the world as we watched apprehensively the events unfolding. Czechoslovakia's move away from communism and toward greater political independence, led to the eventual separation of the country into the current Czech Republic and Slovak Republic.

During the past 20 years, remarkable change has taken place as both the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic have sought and achieved membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO. The Czech Republic was accepted as a member of NATO in 1999, as was the Slovak Republic in 2004. Both nations are now formal members of both NATO and the United Nations, and their military units now contribute to important missions throughout the globe and continue to play a strategic role in the region.

Furthermore, the Czech Republic has a local tie near to my heart associated with its NATO admission. The documents of admission were signed at the Presidential library of Missouri's own President Truman in Independence, MO. As we work to pursue our mutual interests, I wish both the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic continued success and prosperity as we work toward mutual goals.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:39 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CARPER).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2009—Continued

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I wish to speak both about the substance of the amendment in front of us that I understand Senator REID and the distinguished chair of the Finance Committee, Senator BAUCUS, have put forward, the substance of it and supporting it, and also on the time it has taken us to get to this point, which is of tremendous concern to me. I know it is also to many other people, certainly people in the great State of Michigan, which I represent.

I believe we are on week 5 of trying to extend unemployment benefits for people who, through no fault of their own, have lost their jobs, are looking for work, trying to hold things together, trying to keep a roof over their families' heads and keep food on the table, and Michigan is getting cold, so the heat is coming on. They are trying to do that while looking for a job.

People want to work. People in Michigan work and they want to work. They are skilled and they are ready to work. We know that for every one job available, there are six people trying to get that job. So we are in an extremely difficult time. That is why we extended unemployment benefits in the Recovery Act. I thank our President. We had challenges under the previous President in being able to do that. President Obama put that forward, and I am grateful for his continual support and all of our colleagues who supported that.

But now we find that even as things very slowly begin to turn in the economy, every day we still have 70,000 people who are going off of their unemployment insurance benefits and they still cannot find a job. These are middle-class Americans who have played by the rules, and what is happening is not their fault. They are trying to keep things going until they can find a job.

We have now spent weeks and weeks trying to get to this bill. Since we started debating this on the Senate floor, as of today, 186,000 more people have lost their benefits and are trying to figure out what in the world they are going to do for their families. That is the situation we are in.

We have in front of us a very important amendment that has been worked on on a bipartisan basis. I congratulate everyone who worked on this together. I hope we will pass this quickly and move on and send the right message to people in this country that we get it, that we understand what is going on for families.

Let me speak about the amendment, and then I will speak about the process.

The amendment would allow an extension of 14 weeks for anyone who is currently unemployed in their State and qualifies for unemployment insurance and an additional 6 weeks, totaling 20 weeks, for people in my great State who have been hit too hard for too long. So we need to get this passed.

There are other provisions that have been combined with this. One of the other successes—in fact, I am proud, as the original author of cash for clunkers, to have Congress talk about that and the first-time home buyers tax credit. That has helped the economy. We know there is an expiration of the first-time home buyers $8,000 tax credit, so we extend that. There are other provisions in there as well.

There is another provision I am proud to have helped champion in the Finance Committee and now in this legislation, which is to allow companies that are struggling in this economy to keep themselves going, to keep people employed, to keep their lights on, and to be able to get immediate help with the net operating loss carryback—it is the way they calculate their losses—which will allow capital to immediately flow for small, medium, and large companies that are cash-strapped. That capital will help businesses be able to hire people, purchase equipment, or to turn their businesses around to be able to keep things going and keep their businesses going. That is in this provision as well. It is an important bipartisan effort.

According to a study by the National Bureau of Economic Research, the expansion we are talking about would inject $34 billion into businesses and our economy immediately.

This is about jobs. This is about supporting our small businesses that are having a very tough time getting capital. The CEO of the Home Builders Association claims that tax credits from the tax provisions would provide midsize and larger homebuilders enough funding to save 30,000 jobs that would have been lost without this change. So we have an important provision that has been worked on in a bipartisan way.

These items were something that we as a majority—our leader had come to the floor to support now for some time, to say let's get on with it; we need to support these provisions for homeowners, businesses, and help those who are currently unemployed. Let's get on with it. We are now at a point to vote on this amendment. What concerns me is the time it has taken us to be able to do that.

Over and over again, we have seen a pattern this year. In fact, we have seen 85 different times that the party of no has objected over and over to bringing up legislation—to even bringing up the unemployment legislation. It is a very simple thing for the leader to come to the floor to ask unanimous consent to go to a bill. But we are seeing objections over and over. Every time there is an objection, we are required to go through our own process. We find we have to file a motion called a cloture motion. You have to wait 2 days, and at the end of that 2 days, you vote. If there are 60 people who vote to proceed, you do that. We are finding over and over that we are getting overwhelming support to proceed.

At different times, we object to things with which we substantively disagree. That is our right as Senators. But we got to this cloture vote, and 87 people voted to go to the unemployment benefits legislation and to this amendment. So there is not an objection. This is about winding out the hours on the clock so we cannot get to health care, we cannot get to other jobs measures. And health care is about jobs, certainly in my State. When you lose your job, you lose your health care. We have seen that over and over.

Now we are in the process of this 30 hours. We voted to bring the debate to closure on this amendment we have, which is bipartisan, dealing with housing and support for businesses and the unemployed. Yet we have to go another 30 hours, which won't end until about midnight tonight, before we can actually vote. Then we will turn around and again there will be something else. The next move the leader tries to make, there will be an objection and we will have to wait 2 more days. We will vote on whether to proceed. Most of the time, everybody votes to proceed. Then we start a 30-hour clock, and then we vote on it. It goes over and over. Eighty-five different times, we have either had this process or an objection.

Mr. President, I just wanted to raise this for the American people as we move forward now. Everyone knows we have big problems. We can have honest differences about how to address those. That is our job. But we are seeing over and over a party of no, no, no stopping things. Heaven forbid that this President be successful or this Congress be successful. That is of great concern to me, in a State with the highest unemployment in the country, where every day we have people saying: Why in the world can't you act? Why can't you get things done?

The reason we are finding ourselves in this position now is an effort to slow-walk the entire year. It is amazing. We have actually gotten more done in this year than at any other time since FDR and the Great Depression despite all of this. Now we have come to a point where, by the end of the year, we want to have something extremely important accomplished on health care, and that relates to jobs and the economy. We are seeing objection after objection.

I am hopeful there will be a willingness to step up and debate our differences and have a vote. Let's just have a vote and work together to be able to solve problems. The American people are very tired of this. They want us to get something done. We want to get something done. We are committed to it whether it takes 30 hours and days and objections or whether we can just do this and come together. Either way, we are going to get this done. It is important to understand that real people are being impacted every single time there is an objection. Right now in this economy, the American people deserve better than what has been happening.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I wish to talk this afternoon about health care and specifically the impact of some of the proposals we have on the cost of health care insurance. Before I do so, I think I must respond to some of the comments that were just made by the Senator from Michigan accusing the Republican Party of being the party of no. It seems we are starting to get to a point here where bipartisanship is not being achieved. But it seems the definition of bipartisanship is becoming ''either do it our way or you are the party of no.''

It seems to me what we need to really do is step back and take a couple of deep breaths and start working together on legislation. I will use the example the Senator from Michigan used, the unemployment insurance compensation legislation. As she correctly indicated, there were 87 votes to move forward with this legislation. This is not an effort to obstruct the legislation. The effort that caused us to slow down a couple of days on this legislation was an effort to improve it. In fact, had we not slowed down a couple days, the bill would have gone through and would have been passed, but it would not have the home buyer tax credit in it for the purchase of homes. It wouldn't have the net operating loss carryback provisions in it. They are both important provisions for creating jobs rather than just providing a safety net for those who lost jobs. The bill has been improved, and I think it will be further improved by the time we have the final vote.

It is that process of give-and-take, trying to work on and improve the legislation, that occasionally causes the Republican side to say: No, we are not going to move forward until we have an opportunity to present some amendments and until we have bipartisan work to help improve the legislation. That is what happened in this case.

In reality, the majority party has 60 votes. If they want to proceed on anything, they can do so. In this case, on the unemployment insurance bill, they did stop and allow us another couple of days to work on it and improve it with the home buyer tax credit and the operating net loss carryback provisions.

Mr. President, I will now address the question of health care. It is interesting. One of the comments the Senator from Michigan also made was that we cannot get to the health care bill because we are spending our time on the unemployment compensation bill. The reality is that we don't even know what the health care bill is yet. The bill was crafted behind closed doors in the Capitol Building, and it is being scored by CBO. We don't know when CBO will have the full bill to score or whether the full bill has even been drafted. We don't know what it contains.

That is in stark contrast to the President's commitment on how this process would proceed. The President stated in the San Francisco Chronicle in January of last year:

> These negotiations will be on C–SPAN . . . and the public will be part of the conversation and we will see the choices that are being made.

He indicated that everybody should be in the room and it should be broadcast on C–SPAN. Instead, there is a very small group of people from the White House and the majority leader's office and probably a couple of senior Senators he is working with who know what is in the bill. The rest of us don't know.

Frankly, the reason we are not moving to the bill has nothing to do with procedural maneuvers on the floor. It has to do with the fact that the bill is not drafted yet or prepared and ready to bring forward.

Let me move to the actual bill itself. In this context, I have great concerns

with the legislation that is being brought forward on many different fronts. It expands the Federal Government by about $1.2 trillion, depending on how you count it; some say up to $1.8 trillion. It imposes massive new taxes and cuts in Medicare of equal amounts to balance it off and make it appear it is not increasing the deficit. By cutting Medicare, it seriously jeopardizes the quality of health care we provide to our seniors in this Nation and, as I indicated, the massive new taxes that are involved, which fall squarely on the backs of the middle class, violating another one of the promises President Obama made. In doing so, it does not achieve the very objectives our citizens in the United States ask of us in health care reform.

What am I talking about? That is what I want to focus the rest of my remarks on today.

When you ask most Americans, Do we need to reform health care in the United States, they will say yes. What they mean when they say that is they are tired of the double-digit, skyrocketing inflation of the cost of their health insurance and the cost of medical care in the United States, and they think Congress should do something about it, that Congress should ''bend the cost curve down''—that is the phrase that has been made popular—and they believe Congress can do something about it and help control these skyrocketing costs of health care.

They also believe we should try to find a way to get access to those who are needy and unable to purchase their own insurance. They know we are providing for the cost of health care for those who do not have insurance and they do get it in a much more expensive way and in a way that does not give them the quality of health care they should get. That is what Americans think of when they are asking for health care reform. But center in the focus of the American people out of what they want out of health care reform is control of the costs of health care and control of the skyrocketing costs of the insurance they pay.

On that issue, the bills before us fail dramatically because not only do they grow the Federal Government, not only do they increase taxes, and not only do they deeply cut Medicare, they will increase the cost of health care insurance and increase the cost of medical services in our country beyond what growth they would have seen without the legislation.

I will go through a couple of examples, focusing on the bill that went through the Senate Finance Committee. It includes, as I have indicated, significant amounts of taxes and different kinds of taxes on different parts of the economy. Both the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation have stated that a number of the taxes included in the Senate Finance Committee bill will be passed on to consumers in the form of higher premiums.

During the Finance Committee markup, CBO Director Douglas Elmendorf stated:

> Our judgment is that that piece of legislation—

Referring to the provisions increasing taxes in this legislation—

> would raise insurance premiums by roughly the amount of the money collected.

Meaning in one of the particular cases there is a $6.7 billion tax imposed on insurance companies. His point is that $6.7 billion tax is going to raise the cost of insurance.

Another example in the bill, there is a tax on medical devices. Both CBO and JCT have said this tax on medical devices will be passed on to patients, increasing their health insurance premiums and increasing the prices on everything from powered wheelchairs to pacemakers.

Another example is the tax on insurers. I mentioned the tax on insurers is what generated this answer. CBO and Joint Tax have said this tax will be passed through, and some estimates on this passthrough show this tax on insurers could raise premiums for American families by as much as $500 a year.

The Congressional Budget Office sent a letter to Senator GRASSLEY last week in response to his inquiry about this provision and stated:

> While uncertainty exists, we assume that a very large portion of this excise tax on purchased insurance will be borne by consumers in most markets, including in some markets with a high level of concentration among market participants covered by the proposed excise tax.

Still quoting the letter:

> While consumers or employers may respond by changing their insurance coverage from more expensive coverage to less expensive plans to offset any potential price increase, this behavior, too, is properly characterized as the consumers bearing the burden of the excise tax by accepting lower quality (for example, a more restricted physician network) for the same price rather than paying a higher price for the quality [that they would have had had there been] no tax.

Again, still quoting from the letter:

> Our estimate is that the premiums for purchased health insurance policies, including the tax liability, would be between 1.0 and 1.5 percent greater than they otherwise would be as a consequence of the industry fee for calendar years 2010, 2011, and 2012.

Joint Tax did not estimate the years beyond that and were not able to do a distributional analysis based on income as to where those with higher premiums would most likely fall. But we know, again, it is almost certain it will hit those in the middle class.

Premiums are also going to rise because of the new excise tax on so-called Cadillac health plans. Many believe that companies will respond to this new tax by either passing the costs on to consumers or cutting benefits so the plan can avoid the tax. Inevitably, like the AMT, the alternative minimum tax, the impact of this tax will be passed along to more and more people, not just those with Cadillac plans, either in the form of higher costs or lower benefits.

That is how the tax-and-fee provisions portion of the bill impact health insurance. And there are many more. But what other provisions in the bill impact the cost of insurance? The insurance mandates in the bill will have similar impacts on raising the cost of health care insurance for Americans.

The Finance Committee bill also contains a number of market reforms that will result in these higher premiums. For example, the new federally mandated rating rules will result in a huge premiums increase for younger and healthier individuals.

In my home State of Idaho, studies have shown that a 20-year-old male can go out today and buy a policy in the individual market for $67.63 a month. A 20-year-old female can buy a policy for $94.35 a month. If the insurance rating reforms in the Finance Committee bill are enacted, those exact same policies would rise to a level of $166.75 per month. That is a 147-percent increase for a 20-year-old male and a 77-percent increase for a 20-year-old female.

These figures, frankly, are optimistic for several reasons. They assume that the young and healthy will continue to purchase insurance. If they do not continue to buy insurance, the premiums would likely be even higher than those which were shown in the studies.

In addition, these rate estimates assume a 4-to 1 age rating band. The House bill introduced last week contains a 2-to-1 age rating band mandate, meaning that the rates for the young and healthy, again, would be made significantly worse.

In addition, many of the proposals in Congress contain mandates about what an insurance policy must include. Here is an example of what we can see in that context: An older gentleman wanting to purchase insurance in the new exchange to be created may not be able to save money by enrolling in a more basic plan. Instead, it would not be possible for him to enroll in a policy that does not include maternity care and newborn care, something he may not want or need to purchase.

The actuary firm of Oliver Wyman, in a study commissioned by Blue Cross/Blue Shield, concluded that insurance reforms in the bill and the minimum required benefit levels in the Baucus bill could drive up family premiums for new coverage by as much as $3,024.

My point is, both the taxes and fees and the insurance mandates will generate higher premiums, not lower premiums, for Americans, exactly the opposite of what Americans are asking for in health care reform.

Similarly, both the House bill and the Baucus bill, and what we expect to see in the Senate bill when it finally comes out, will have a significant expansion of moving those in lower income categories into Medicaid rather than providing a way for them to obtain insurance.

The Baucus bill contains an enormous expansion of Medicaid, up to 133

percent of poverty. That means 14 million more people are going to be enrolled in the Medicaid Program, the largest expansion since it was created in 1965, a program that financially is going to hit the cliff soon. We know we are undercompensating for medical services in Medicaid, which ultimately results in those undercompensated costs of health care being borne by the rest of the insuring population in the United States with higher premiums.

So what are we going to do? We are going to expand a program that drives a lot of its costs off onto the private sector so we can avoid the need to identify the way to move forward and develop a true reform that will enable those who are needy and uninsured to be able to obtain insurance. Instead, we are going to push them onto the Medicaid system and, again, drive up premiums.

Those who are pushing this legislation have responded to some of these arguments by saying: The subsidies we are providing in the bill for those with lower incomes will help to reduce insurance costs. If you focus on those who receive the subsidies, of course, their insurance costs may go down. But this is true for only a very small number of Americans.

The reforms in the Finance bill will raise health care costs for most Americans while lowering them for some through subsidies. But there are several important points to make on the subsidy argument.

First, the credits and subsidies are only available for those who receive insurance through the new exchange. In other words, if you get your insurance through your employer, which most Americans do, you do not qualify for any subsidy support.

CBO has estimated that only 23 million Americans will receive insurance in that fashion. If you do the math, that represents 8 percent of the 282 million nonelderly Americans. Why do we take the nonelderly number? Because elderly Americans are covered by Medicare.

Let's put up a chart. The subsidies are not available for individuals who get insurance through their employer and, instead, those individuals will pay higher premiums for those who receive the subsidies. Here is the way it works out. You have about 185 million Americans who will be paying more taxes and higher health care premiums, and about 18 million Americans who will actually see their health care premiums go down because they will receive a Federal subsidy.

While it is true that the subsidy will help reduce the health care costs of those who receive it, it is not true that the health care costs for every other American are going to go up, again I want to point out, in two significant ways. The 185 million Americans who are not participating in the subsidy will pay more in taxes—and significantly more in taxes—and will pay more in their health care insurance premiums. That is not the kind of reform, again, that the people of the United States are asking for.

One last point, and that is about this proposal to have the Federal Government step in and create a government health care company. A government-run health care insurance company is promoted by saying we need a competitor for the private sector. I think most Americans see through that. But last week, CBO released their score of the House bill which creates just such a government-run health care company. Their score shows that the new government plan would typically have premiums that are higher than the average premiums for private plans.

What is CBO saying? The CBO letter then states that although the government plan would likely have lower administrative costs than the private plans—which is one of the key arguments that is often made—the government plan would—and I am quoting from CBO—''probably engage in less management of utilization by its enrollees and attract a less healthy pool of enrollees,'' resulting in higher premium costs in the government plan.

So now what do we have? We have a government plan into which we are going to push a lot of Americans, unwillingly, which will charge higher premiums than the private sector. We have taxes, penalties, fees, and mandates being imposed on the private sector that are going to drive up their premiums as well. It is all justified by the argument that we need to somehow create a government control of health care so we can reduce the costs. There are other ways to reduce the costs. I don't have time in my remarks today to get into those, but there are a number of proposals we do know about for which we have bipartisan support that will help us address that cost curve.

It is my hope we will reject these proposals that take us down the wrong path and result in the wrong solutions for Americans in health care reform and begin focusing on what I started out with—that cost curve about which most Americans are so concerned. We can drive down that cost curve without raising taxes, and that is where this Congress ought to be spending its attention.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no order on time, so the Senator is free to proceed.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Presiding Officer.

I noticed the Senator from Michigan was on the floor earlier, and she had a chart which said: ''85 Times No.'' I think she should have turned it around and faced it toward the Democratic leader. That means that 85 times the Democratic leader has said no to Republicans: No, you can't offer amendments and we are going to cut off debate. We have had this discussion many times. The Senator from West Virginia, Mr. BYRD, is the expert on this. There are two things that make the Senate unique. One is virtually unlimited debate and virtually unlimited amendments. So if you are from a smaller State, such as Tennessee or Delaware or anywhere in this country, your citizens can send you here and, even if you are in the minority, you are allowed to speak. Your voice can be heard and you are allowed to offer amendments.

We have procedures for cutting that off, but we only do it on rare occasions. So what the Senator from Michigan is basically saying is—and I don't believe I would bring this up, if I were she—that 85 times the majority leader has cut us off and said: We are not going to hear from you. So I think that argument is an argument we should have at the appropriate time, but I have a different point I would like to make.

I would like to continue the health care discussion because I think we are making some progress. One of the most eloquent and effective speakers on the Democratic side of the aisle is the assistant Democratic leader, the Senator from Illinois, who is a good friend and a person I admire a great deal. Yesterday, he came to the floor and asked: Where is the Republican alternative on health care and how many pages does it have? He heard me say the other day that the era of the 1,000-page bill is over because we have a 2,000-page bill from the House of Representatives on health care. So he says: Well, where is the Republican health care plan? How many pages in it?

The Senator from Illinois was quite proud of the fact that I couldn't say how many pages were in the Senate Democratic plan, but of course I haven't seen it. Almost no one has seen it. It is being written behind closed doors. This was supposed to be the era of great transparency; that we would all know what was going on. President Obama, to his great credit, said: We will have all this on C–SPAN so you will know if the drug companies or if the insurance companies or if the lobbyists are in there writing the bill. So what do we have? We have the majority leader and two Democratic Senators and some people from the White House behind closed doors writing the health care bill.

Of course, we don't know exactly how many pages it will have because we aren't let in the room. We can't see the bill. We can't count the lobbyists, if they are there; we can't count the companies with which deals might be made, if they are there. We don't know. But here is what we do know. We do know the HELP Committee, on which I serve, passed an 839-page health care bill. We do know the Senate Finance Committee passed a 1,502-page bill, and we know the House of Representatives is working on a 1,990-page bill, not counting the physicians reimbursement fix, which is bound to push it over 2,000 pages.

The pages in these bills are going up faster than the national debt, and it is an issue with the American people. So until the various writers emerge from behind closed doors, we are going to have to go with what we have, which is a 2,000-page congressional Democratic health care bill, of which the Wall Street Journal editorial said yesterday, when fully implemented, would cost $2 trillion over a 10-year period of time.

Here is what else we know about the 2,000-page bill. It will raise premiums. The Senator from Idaho just spoke to that. It will cut more than $500 billion in Medicare, and it will cut it from Medicare to spend it on a new entitlement program, even though the Medicare trustees say Medicare is going broke in 2015 to 2017. The Senator from Kansas said it is akin to writing a check on an overdrawn bank account to buy a big, new car. The banker wouldn't let you do it, and the American people shouldn't let us do it.

There will be higher taxes. Everyone understands that the $1 trillion, fully implemented over 10 years, will mean higher taxes. Who is going to pay those? Not the medical device companies, not the insurance companies. They are going to pass them right on to whom? The American people—the 250 million of us who have health insurance premiums. So our premiums are going to go up.

There will be more debt. Fortunately, on the first vote we had on health care the other day, 13 Democrats, with all 40 Republicans, said: No, we are not going to start off this debate by adding $¼ trillion to the national debt, even for the worthy purpose of fixing the physicians reimbursement problem, which we all want to fix. We are going to have to find some way to pay for that within the health care bill, within the spending we have.

We now have a government-run plan. I have always thought that was a little like President Obama saying: In order to keep Ford Motor Company honest, I am going to put the government into the car business. Well, we nearly have, but that usually isn't the way we do things in the United States. But we are going to have a government-owned, government-run health care plan. Of course, we already have two—one is Medicare for seniors, and we have a government-run plan that States can ''opt out of'' called Medicaid.

The Presiding Officer, the former Governor of Delaware, and I both know from our previous experience it is a big problem. Medicaid and Medicare have been going up at the rate of 8 or 9 percent a year for many years. State budgets dealing with Medicaid only go up 2 or 3 percent for schools and roads and universities. So what happens is, when the Governor of Delaware or the Governor of Tennessee or the Governor of California sit and make up the budget, you get to the end of the line and there is no money left for higher education because we put it all into Medicaid. That means tuition goes up or services go down.

With a government-run plan—and this is something the American people are just now beginning to realize—millions of people who now get their insurance from their employers are going to lose it. They are going to lose it because their employer is going to look at this big, new bill and say: I can't afford this. I am going to pay the penalty. I am out of the health care business, and you can go into the government plan. So all 177 million people who have employer health care insurance run a risk with a government plan—under this framework we are discussing, that we haven't been able to see yet—that an increasing number of employers will say: I am out of here. We will let the government provide the insurance. Suddenly, you will find yourself in the government-run plan.

What happens in the government-run plan? Some things are good about Medicare—the government-run plan for seniors—and some things are bad about Medicaid, which is the largest government-run plan. One thing bad about it is, 50 percent of doctors will not see new patients because their physician reimbursement is at about 60 percent of what physicians make when they go to a private insurance company. In Medicare, it is not as bad as that. It is about 83 or 84 percent of doctors are paid what they would get paid if they saw a patient with private insurance. So if you lose your insurance and you end up in the government-run plan, you may end up in a plan such as the Medicaid plan, a government-run plan where 50 percent of the doctors will not see new patients.

The Governors of the States are in a state of apoplexy—would be about the only word to describe it—because they are in the worst shape they have been in dozens of years. I know in the State of Tennessee there are $1 billion in just cuts. Everything has been cut, prices are going up, and people are being laid off, even though we have a very conservative, well-managed State. Yet one of the ways being proposed to pay for this bill is to shift some of the cost—about $34 billion at least—to States. Governors—both Democratic and Republican—are saying: Please don't do that to us. We can't afford that. We don't have the money for it. We have to balance our budget. If Washington wants to expand Medicaid, Washington should pay for Medicaid.

Higher premiums, Medicare cuts, higher taxes, more debt, government-run plan, millions losing coverage, inevitable rationing, States complaining, some going bankrupt, and a $2 trillion cost is not health care reform. But the assistant Democratic leader asked a good question. He asked: What is the Republican plan? If our plan has 2,000 pages, how many pages does your plan have? Well, I would say, with all respect for him, that if he is looking for someone with a wheelbarrow to wheel into the Senate Chamber a competing 2,000-page Republican bill costing $2 trillion, he is never going to see it. He will be looking in vain because that is not what we propose. We have been saying, over and over again on the Senate Floor and in other places, we are going in the wrong direction; we need to start over; our goal should be to reduce costs—the cost to each of us who pay premiums, the cost to all of us who have to pay the Federal Government debt. We should set a clear goal of reducing costs and move step by step toward that goal of reducing costs to regain the trust of the American people.

Americans instinctively distrust these comprehensive, change-the-world, never-mind-the-cost, 2,000-page risky schemes, one of which is the health care plan that is coming toward us. We have proven in this Chamber we don't do comprehensive well. We had our best Senators on both sides of the aisle working hard on immigration—Senator Kennedy, Senator MCCAIN, Senator KYL, Senator Martinez—and what happened? It fell of its own weight. We bit off more than we could chew. The economy-wide cap and trade is running into the same problem. So is health care.

With taxes, mandates, surprises, debt, and more Washington takeover, we are scaring the daylights out of the American people with these proposals. Instead of that, we on the Republican side believe we should have health care reform, but its goal should be reducing costs, and we should go step by step toward that goal. Going step by step in the right direction is one good way to get our country where it needs to go.

So instead of a 2,000-page congressional Democrats' health care plan, here is the Republican plan, and I have counted the pages. No. 1, small business health care plans. This leverages the number of small businesses and allows them to pool their resources and offer health care to more Americans. That is 88 pages, proposed by Senator ENZI. No. 2, allow Americans to purchase health care across State lines to encourage competition—30 pages, proposed by Senator DEMINT. No. 3, reduce junk lawsuits. Medical malpractice lawsuits drive up the cost of health care. There is some question how much it drives it up, but there is no question it drives up the cost. That is Senator GREGG's bill on that, and it is 19 pages. No. 4, equal tax treatment for health care. That is Senator BENNETT's bill, which is 21 pages. No. 5, health information technology—a subject we should be able to agree on in a bipartisan way—is 13 pages, by Senators COBURN, BURR, and ENZI. No. 6, health care exchanges, creating more of those for people to look for the lowest cost insurance. That takes eight pages in the bill, proposed by Senators COBURN and BURR. No. 7, Senator LEMIEUX, one of our newest Senators, proposed a bill on the subject of waste, fraud, and abuse. We know that is a scandal, particularly with Medicaid and Medicare.

The Government Accountability Office has said that $1 out of $10 in Medicaid is waste, fraud, and abuse, accounting for $32 billion a year, which is $320 billion over 10 years.

So there are seven steps in the right direction of reducing cost. Taking just one of those steps—the small business health care plans, S. 2818, leveraging strength in numbers—here is what the Congressional Budget Office says about the small business health care plan: 750,000 more Americans would be covered. These would be people working for small businesses. It would lower the premium costs for three out of four employees. It would reduce Medicaid spending—and that is the program that is causing the States so many problems—by $1.4 billion.

So why don't we pass that? Why don't we pass it? Why don't we take that one step toward reducing costs and then take a second step and a third step and a fourth step? Gradually, as we reduce costs, as the small business health care plans will do, we can add uninsured people to the rolls. That would reearn the trust of the American people. That would be something we could actually get done. That would be something that would be bipartisan, would create confidence, and help us reach the goal we have set for ourselves.

We have clear choices. We have 2,000-page bills or the bills I just added up—those seven steps proposed by Republicans, many of which have Democratic support as well—that would be 200. So 2,000 pages or 200 pages; reduce premiums or increase premiums; reduce debt or increase the debt; reduce Medicare or make Medicare solvent; higher taxes or no tax increase.

The American people want real health care reform. They want to reduce costs and add coverage, as we can afford it. They are properly skeptical of grand and risky schemes that claim we in the Senate and the House are wise enough to solve everything at once. They know if we try to do that, we are more likely to mess up everything at once. They know about the law of unintended consequences.

To re-earn the trust of the American people, we should set a clear goal. That goal should be reducing the cost of health care; the cost of health care when you pay your premium and the cost to your government, the cost of its debt. We should move step by step in that direction. That is the Republican health care plan.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of Colorado). The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I again rise to urge my colleagues, particularly from the other side, to join us in passing the extension of unemployment insurance, without delaying action through more procedural votes. We are in the midst of a very complicated and important debate on health care and we are being urged to move forward on that. But something that is pressing, in my view, is the need to extend benefits to the people who are running out of the ability to support their families. By my count we on this side of the aisle have been trying for days to do something that the other body did, with bipartisan cooperation, in a vote of 331 to 83 under Suspension of the Rules.

As the President of the Senate knows, this is the way the House moves noncontroversial legislation forward without any delay. It is not used for major legislation such as this, typically, so that underscores the bipartisan solution the House proposed to us more than 25 days ago.

To compound matters, the other side is now doing more than just delaying unemployment benefits for millions; they are also needlessly delaying tax cuts for small businesses and first-time home buyers. This is a very disturbing precedent. The American people, as my colleague was talking about, want to see some results. They want to see us move on issues that are critically important to them. What could be more critical and more important than extending unemployment benefits to those who have lost their jobs and are in a very difficult economy? What could be more important to our economy, and to so many people, than extending the further benefits of the tax treatment of new home buyers, which has produced an increase in sales and investment? This is the time to move forward and to also help small businesses. The legislation before us includes not only the extension of unemployment benefits and the tax break for home buyers, but also the preferential tax treatment for small businesses in terms of their ability to access losses in the past.

With the winter and the holidays approaching, this legislation cannot come soon enough for millions of Americans who are feeling the effects, not of the last 8 months but of the last 8 years, of the Bush economy. This legislation will help people literally put food on the table. It will give them a sense of support and substance as they go forward. It will also help continue the expansion of the economy we have seen. Last quarter for the first time in a year we saw growth in the American economy—3.5 percent GDP. To sustain that we have to keep incentivizing our economy in many different ways. Two of the provisions included—again with bipartisan support—provide those incentives. Small business will get relief in terms of net operating losses. Individual purchasers in the real estate market will get the stimulus of the addition and extension of the tax treatment of purchase of homes.

But we could anticipate another cloture vote this week, another procedural burden to do something that everybody says we should have done weeks ago. My colleagues on this side have suggested amendments that are not germane—some that we have repeatedly taken up already, indeed have passed. But this should be something more than about messaging. This should be about helping the American people. We have legislation before us which incorporates, as mentioned, not just unemployment extension but two other benefits, for small businesses and for new home buyers. This compromise before us should not face these delaying tactics. The reality is that 4,000 people in my State need this help right away. They need the unemployment benefit extension. There are thousands more Rhode Islanders who will exhaust their benefits in the next several weeks. Indeed, 3,000 Rhode Islanders are receiving extended benefits, which is the final tranche of unemployment benefits for most. They will be without any real support if we do not move this week, if we do not move promptly, in a timely fashion.

The latest compromise provides 14 weeks of unemployment insurance for jobless Americans in all States, and 20 weeks in those States that have the highest unemployment rates, above 8.5 percent. As I mentioned before, it also provides help to the home market and help to the small business community.

These are amendments that are important. They are important to all of us. We can look back with some sense of progress on our recent GDP numbers. But you cannot feed your family on GDP. When you are unemployed, looking for work, not finding it, you need unemployment compensation benefits. You cannot keep this recovery in the housing market going, as robust as it has been, without some further assistance. You have to create further benefits for small business so they can begin once again to hire Americans. The key to our economic crisis is not growing GDP, it is growing employment. These latter efforts will be pointed in that direction as we help people who are without jobs today.

This crisis is nationwide. It is not a red State, blue State problem. It is our problem. Too many Americans will exhaust their benefits by the end of the year. Hundreds of thousands have already exhausted benefits. So this delay has real consequences in the lives of all of our constituents in every part of this country. It has already been over a month since the House passed their legislation. We could have passed this promptly. In fact, if you look at the record, the number of cloture votes and everything else, we passed yesterday a cloture vote on a substitute amendment by 85 to 2. Typically when we have 85 votes we do not go through further procedural amendments. We, by unanimous consent, take up the measure and pass it routinely. What is lacking here is not the 60 votes for cloture, it is unanimous consent; i.e., the consent of our Republican colleagues to move forward.

They are not denying us, they are denying the American people. We should take this measure up immediately. With 85-to-2 cloture votes, 85 people

will come down, perhaps even all 100, and vote for this bill. But it will be a month after we should have accomplished this task.

While we wait, our economy suffers and thousands of Americans do. So I urge passage as quickly as possible. I hope Leader REID would propose that we move to the measure as quickly as possible, that we could avoid another cloture vote, another 85-to-2 vote confirming what we all know, that eventually when we are allowed to vote on final passage, this measure will pass overwhelmingly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. ENSIGN. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. ENSIGN pertaining to the introduction of S. 2724 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions''.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ALASKA NATIVE PEOPLE

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I rise today to honor thousands of our fellow citizens who do not receive adequate recognition for their enormous contributions to our nation, Alaska Natives and Native Americans.

President Obama has declared this month Native American Heritage Month. He also hosts an important summit Thursday with our Nation's tribal leaders.

I salute the President's initiative, which is designed to strengthen the special relationship between the Federal and tribal governments.

This week, many Alaska Native leaders have traveled long distances to participate in this summit because they recognize the great significance of the Obama administration's historic initiative.

These events are especially important to Alaska because we proudly claim the highest per person number of Native Americans in the Nation.

Nearly 20 percent of Alaska's population, about 120,000 Alaskans, are Alaska Natives.

From time immemorial, Alaska's Native people have developed a rich cultural heritage and sustained themselves by living close to the land in some of the most challenging geography and climate on Earth.

Today, the diversity in Alaska's Native community is broad.

In scores of tiny villages in some of the most remote regions of our Nation, Alaska Native people feed their families with subsistence hunting, fishing and gathering. This is a way of life practiced by their ancestors for generations.

At the same time in downtown Anchorage, prosperous Alaska Native corporations help fuel our State's economy and employ thousands of Alaskans and other Americans from gleaming modern office buildings.

This is thanks, at least in part, to actions taken by Congress to help lay a foundation for success by America's first people and to provide the opportunity for self-determination.

The story of Alaska's Native people is one of great success against enormous odds.

For me, this story is also personal because I was born in Anchorage barely 3 years after Alaska became a State in 1959.

In that era, the status of Alaska Natives was bleak. Fewer than 20 percent had a high school diploma; less than 1 percent a college degree.

Half lived below the poverty line. Fifty percent of Alaska Natives lived without indoor plumbing, collecting their waste in what we call a ''honey bucket.''

And nearly two-thirds lacked what we define today as a job. Most hunted, fished and lived off Alaska's land and waters to feed their families.

Today, the lives and achievements of Alaska Native people have improved dramatically. The 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was a completely different model than the reservation system of the lower 48.

It established 13 regional for-profit Native corporations, hundreds of village non-profit corporations and empowered Alaska's Native people to take their destiny into their own hands.

Subsequent amendments to the act, such as those permitting Alaska Native corporations to participate in the SBA's minority business 8(a) program, helped even more.

I am proud to note that the Settlement Act was among my dad's proudest accomplishments during his single term in the House of Representatives.

Now, educational attainment is growing, with about half of Alaska Natives earning high school diplomas and nearly one-third with at least some college.

Less than 25 percent now live below the poverty line. Three-quarters live in homes with the basic clean water and sewer facilities we all take for granted.

What is most impressive to me is the success of Alaska Native corporations and tribes. They were formed to help fulfill the Federal Government's obligation to Alaska's indigenous people.

After struggling in their early years, all 12 of Alaska's in-state regional profit corporations are profitable, generating about $4 billion in revenues for their Native shareholders.

ANCSA corporations are among our State's top employers, providing jobs for more than 30,000 people. And I submit that these companies are among the most socially conscious in the world.

Alaska's Native non-profits and tribal organizations partner to enrich our State and their members in many ways.

They provide the resources that help schools, families and individuals preserve 10,000-year-old languages, values and ways of life.

They help address the health needs of Alaska Natives through local clinics and hospitals, research centers and by building coalitions with local, State and Federal partners.

They empower self-sufficiency with short-term financial assistance when it is needed, helping low-income families afford heating fuel and electricity, nutrition services for elders and even burial assistance so that family members are treated with dignity and respect.

Through increased self-governance, Native tribal organizations in Alaska can provide even more essential services, from law enforcement to tackling crippling social problems.

One of my most rewarding moments so far as a member of this body was making sure that two dozen brave members of the Alaska Territorial Guard all distinguished Alaska Native elders, finally got the recognition they earned for their courageous service to this Nation more than a half century ago.

Long before Alaska was a State and our country was engaged in World War II, men like Wendell Booth of Noatak, Paul Kiunya, Sr. of Kipnuk, and Victor George of Nulato answered their Nation's call on America's most remote front lines.

Last month, the Senate approved an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act of 2010 I sponsored with my colleague, Senator LISA MURKOWSKI.

With President Obama signing that bill into law last week, these 25 surviving Territorial Guardsmen finally will receive the retirement pay and recognition they earned so many years ago.

Great progress has been made over the years in helping establish the means for rural and Native Alaskans to succeed. Yet much work remains to be done.

At the top of my Senate agenda are three specific areas of focus to ensure Alaska's Native people continue to flourish.

First, we must make energy affordable for rural Alaskans.

Some residents of my State pay the highest energy prices in the Nation. Electricity in some Alaska villages exceeds $1 a kilowatt hour, compared to just a dime here in Washington.

When east coast residents complain about high gas prices, consider that a gallon costs $11 in Noatak, one of Alaska's villages.

This is a bitter irony when you consider that Alaska has long prided itself as America's energy storehouse, providing the lower 48 States up to a quarter of their domestic oil production.

We are working to address these problems here in Washington.

My off-shore oil development legislation is unique by providing that local governments and tribes get a share of any revenues from Federal Outer Continental Shelf Development. Also try-

ing to kick-start the Alaska natural gas pipeline with Federal loan guarantees and other provisions in the Senate energy bill.

Fortunately, local Alaska leaders are not waiting around for Washington to act.

Regional leaders like Ralph Anderson of Bristol Bay Native Association, Tim Towarak through his position with the Bering Straits Native Corporation, and Michelle Anderson of Ahtna Development Corporation, already are developing comprehensive, regional tribal energy plans.

A second major issue facing Alaska's Native people is subsistence, the time-honored practice of harvesting Alaska's rich fish and wildlife resources to put food on the table.

For the last 10,000-plus years, Alaska's Native people implemented a subsistence model that worked to create abundance for subsistence users. That system is now in disarray.

The Obama administration announced plans just last month to revamp that system and I welcome their initiative.

We must preserve the rural subsistence priority in Alaska at all costs.

Finally, a continuing major issue in rural Alaska is the lack of basic infrastructure. This includes water and sewer systems, so Alaskans don't have to live in Third World conditions.

It includes expanded broadband technology, so all Alaska children have equal access to the educational wonders of the Internet.

We are working to address these needs in Congress. One model for economic development in rural Alaska is the Denali Commission.

For more than a decade, this innovative agency has been addressing vital needs from health facilities and energy to roads and water and sewer systems.

I will be seeking the continued support of my colleagues for the Denali Commission.

Mr. President, the largest annual gathering of Alaska Native people convened in Anchorage just last month as the Alaska Federation of Natives convention.

Thousands of Alaska Natives from across our State met in Anchorage's new Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center, named in honor of the first people of that region.

Their theme spoke to the historic journey of Alaska's Native peoples. A journey of overcoming enormous obstacles; a journey full of accomplishment and pride.

I am honored to join my fellow Alaskans on that journey, and to salute the enormous contributions of Alaska's Native people on this, the first week of Native American and Alaska Native Heritage Month.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip is recognized.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I want to speak briefly to the issue of the unemployment extension, the benefits that would be provided to those who find themselves unemployed today. I note that as we speak, the rate now stands at 9.8 percent and climbing toward 10 percent or double digits.

Those are the latest numbers we have in September, and it is pretty clear there have been more people laid off since the end of September. There were about 15.1 million unemployed persons in September, and that number has risen by 7.6 million since the start of the recession.

In Arizona, my own State, 77,300 jobs have been lost just since the so-called stimulus package was passed. Overall about 2.7 million jobs have been lost in the United States since the stimulus bill. Yet Dr. Christina Romer, the Chair of the President's Council on Economic Advisers, predicted with the stimulus bill unemployment would never exceed 8.1 percent; and, further, that without the stimulus bill unemployment would reach a peak high of 9.1 percent in the first quarter of 2010.

Obviously, unfortunately, both predictions were far too rosy. As Robert Samuelson wrote in the Washington Post:

> The rap on stimulus one is that it hasn't yet, as promised, reduced unemployment.

I found it interesting that President Clinton's Labor Secretary, Robert Reich, recently wrote:

> Obama's focus on health care, when the economy is still so fragile and unemployment is moving toward double digits, could make it appear that the administration has its priorities confused.

That is precisely what public opinion surveys show, as the majority of Americans wish that we would address the problem of joblessness and the economy first and worry about doing something about health care after that is fixed.

It is interesting that one of the President's economic advisers, Jared Bernstein, was asked recently on ''The Early Show'' on CBS by Harry Smith:

> When does this country start to create jobs on its own?

Here is what he replied:

> As far as the overall economy is concerned, private sector forecasters tell us that by the second half of next year, net job growth should be positive. Unemployment should be coming down.

I hope this is ''expectations management'' because the beginning of the second half of next year is still 8 months away. So this is one of the reasons I support the extension of unemployment benefits. We are going to continue to see unemployment increase, as I said, undoubtedly to get above the single digits up into the double-digit atmosphere.

There is a problem that makes this worse, and it is one of the reasons Republicans have been seeking to have the authority, the ability to offer an amendment to this legislation. So far, even though this is supposed to be the world's greatest deliberative body, a body in which members of both parties get to offer amendments to legislation, not one Republican amendment has been allowed on this legislation.

The majority leader makes the call. He says no, I guess; I do not want to hear any Republican ideas on how to deal with the problem. The reason this bothers me is because I think at least one of those amendments is a very good Republican idea on how to deal with the problem.

The problem is doing something about unemployment. How could we best deal with the problem of unemployment? Obviously, put people back to work. What are some of the reasons it is hard for businesses to put people back to work? One of them is that we have a tax on an employer putting people back to work. It is the unemployment tax itself. How do we pay for the extension of benefits in this legislation? We extend that tax. So what we are doing is, in order to pay for the extension of unemployment benefits, we tax the very employers when they hire someone and tax them for keeping on their rolls the workers they currently have. We continue that tax in existence in order to pay for the extension of benefits.

Republicans had a better idea. Let's find another mechanism to pay for an extension of benefits. But no, the majority leader says, you cannot offer that amendment.

This hurts workers in a variety of ways. Let me explain briefly how the FUTA surtax actually works. This is a $2.6 billion extension that is used to pay for the extension of unemployment benefits. It is a tax amounting to 0.8 percent of payroll that applies to the first $7,000 of a worker's wages. It is a direct payroll tax. The revenues are then deposited into the Federal unemployment trust fund. It is composed of two parts: a 0.6-percent permanent tax rate and a 0.2-percent temporary tax rate. FUTA only hurts unemployment and job creation since it taxes employers for each employee they hire.

According to Mark Wilson of the Heritage Foundation:

> Legally mandated benefits like unemployment insurance are not ''free'' to workers.

He goes on:

> Studies indicate that, on average, over 80 percent of the cost of all employer-paid payroll taxes is shifted to workers in the form of lower real paychecks.

So who is going to pay for the cost of extending the unemployment benefits? The workers themselves.

Republicans had a better idea, but we have been prevented from offering that idea in the form of an amendment.

When we take into account the other mandated requirements on employers, the other private sector mandates such as increasing the minimum wage, the resulting higher labor costs will affect an employer's decision about whether and when to hire workers, which worker to hire, how much cash to pay the worker, and how long to keep that worker on the payroll. This rise in mandated labor costs paid by employers is one of the most important forces leading companies to lay off workers or use part-time or temporary workers or

contract labor instead of full-time employees.

As I said, while I support extending the benefits, I believe it is essential that we address the underlying problems of job creation and unemployment. The FUTA tax only makes those problems worse, especially for small businesses. This is why Republicans wanted to offer an amendment that paid for the benefits extension without the FUTA tax on job creation. Why would the majority leader be frightened of this? Why would he not want to even debate this obviously legitimate question? That is one of the reasons action on this bill has been delayed. This bill could have been completed 2 weeks ago.

I have heard some of my colleagues from the other side come down and say: Why are Republicans holding up the extension of unemployment benefits? I voted for cloture to proceed. I voted for cloture to proceed to the substitute. I am not holding up anything. But the majority leader is not holding up his part of the bargain, which is to at least allow some amendments—three or four—that Republicans have offered. We can't even offer this amendment to offer an alternative way to pay for what almost all of us want to do and will end up voting to do.

I find it disappointing that a very good Republican idea, an obviously legitimate debate to have, whether workers themselves should have to pay for the extension of these benefits and whether that puts more people on the unemployment rolls, to have to pay for the extension of benefits as time goes on here—I am very disappointed that not only have we not had the opportunity to offer that amendment but colleagues from the other side have actually come to the floor and complained that Republicans are somehow to blame for the extension of unemployment benefits not being permitted. When Republicans are not allowed to offer these kinds of amendments, then, yes, we will insist upon a debate which points out a better idea for solving a problem that every one of us wants to solve, the fact that we are not even being allowed to offer the amendment in order to have that debate and challenge our colleagues from the other side to see whether they want to continue to support this program with a tax on workers or they would like to find a better way, the way the Republican Party has proposed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VA HOSPITAL IN MARION, IL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I will respond to the Senator from Arizona after I speak to an important issue in my home State.

My first comment relates to an important VA hospital in Marion, IL. In the fall of 2007, there was an alarming number of deaths at the Marion VA hospital, causing a thorough investigation to be initiated in Washington. At the end of the investigation, they found that nine veterans who had gone into this hospital for surgery had died under what were considered extraordinary circumstances. The investigation went deeper. As it went deeper, they found clear evidence of malpractice on the part of doctors at this veterans hospital and mismanagement by those who brought these doctors to the hospital and by those responsible for supervising them in their activities.

As a result of that startling and shameful disclosure in the treatment of the veterans, the surgical unit was basically closed—at least inpatient surgery and many other medical activities were restricted until the investigation was complete, changes were made, and new personnel were brought in so that veterans receive the kind of protection and care they deserve.

That investigation resulted in several doctors being dismissed. After the most cursory examination, we found that doctors had been brought to this hospital—at least a particular doctor who had been the subject of malpractice complaints in another State had not been thoroughly reviewed in terms of his background before he was brought into this veterans hospital, and he, in fact, was performing surgeries at this hospital beyond his competency and beyond his authority. That was a fact.

We started this thorough review with new people at the Marion VA Center.

I might say to the Presiding Officer and those following this debate, southern Illinois is a long way from Chicago. It is 400-plus miles away from Chicago. It is an area I know well. It is where my family roots are. It is an area once represented in Congress by Paul Simon, when he was a Member of the House, and then, of course, he later served in the Senate. Paul Simon used to say southern Illinois is the land of grits and gospel music. There are parts of southern Illinois that are south of Richmond, VA, in terms of latitude, to give an idea. It is the South.

I say that because I want to let people know, in following this particular development, that for many of the people who live in southern Illinois, in small towns in southern Illinois, in northern Kentucky, and in eastern Missouri, the Marion VA Medical Center is critically important. It is a long drive from where they live to St. Louis or to Indianapolis or some other place. They count on the Marion VA hospital. We told these veterans they could count on it, that it would be there to help them when they needed it. So this scandal which came out 2 years ago caught everyone's attention and focused all of us on solving this problem as quickly as possible.

We responded in the Senate. I had a colleague in the Senate then, a fellow Senator by the name of Barack Obama. He and I introduced a bill that went after the systemic weaknesses at the VA medical center structure that allowed these deaths to occur. Our bill imposed an accountable quality management system on VA medical centers, on regional networks that monitor and manage the medical centers, and the VA health care system as a whole. We proposed designating a person at each level who would be directly responsible for quality management and only quality management of health care for veterans. The Veterans' Affairs Committee, under the leadership of Chairman AKAKA of Hawaii and Senator RICHARD BURR, a Republican, approved the legislation last Congress and reported it out of committee and to the full Senate, where it died on the floor.

Yesterday, I was shocked to learn that a new inspector general's investigation of the Marion VA Center in August of this year by a medical doctor and his team found that problems identified 2 years ago have not been addressed at the Marion VA Medical Center. Despite this national scandal and the concern we all had about the treatment of veterans, many of the concerns and many of the issues that led to the deaths of these innocent veterans have still gone unheeded. In 2 years' time, the medical center responsible for treating veterans living in southern Illinois has not been able to meet the required standards in facilities safety, patient safety, peer review treatments, and, yes, limiting surgeries to those surgeons who are only approved and licensed to perform them. These continued failures are shocking and inexcusable.

I and my staff and my colleagues in the House have pressed the VA and the medical center itself repeatedly about bringing this center up to the highest standards. We have visited the facility, convened meetings with employees, administrators, and written letters. We have done all we can think of to make sure our veterans have access to the highest levels of medical care in Marion, IL. We have been told time and time again that Marion's quality of care is being closely monitored and all appropriate steps are being taken to rectify the problem. I don't know what went wrong here, but I know now that these efforts have failed.

The inspector general's report of this August is an indictment of all of the efforts undertaken by the previous administration and this administration to remedy the problem. I am deeply disappointed that yet another report identifies entrenched and serious problems at Marion.

In the report finally released yesterday, the inspector general details appalling failures of quality management and patient safety standards. I have read the report. Some failures they found are the same ones they found 2 years ago: physicians performing procedures without required privileges and authority; review of treatment records

that is not regular or systematic; where there were reviews of treatment records, no one followed up on questionable treatment decisions as they were made; and, in fact, substandard, unacceptable record keeping of the deaths after treatment.

Other failures in patient care the inspector general found: not complying with guidelines for patients with a history of methicillin-resistant staff infection, known as MRSA. It is a deadly infection that can claim lives. They found an example where an individual who had a history of this infection was left in an environment where he was exposed to other innocent patients. Totally unacceptable. Not grounding electrical equipment in bathrooms, raising the danger of patient electrocutions at one of our veterans hospitals. That is what the inspector general found.

After 2 years to focus on bringing the Marion VA Center up to the basic standards we should expect of every VA facility, those in the direct line of command at Marion have violated the public trust and should be relieved of their duties until serious questions about this management have been answered and resolved.

Secretary Shinseki called me on the phone last night, and we had a lengthy conversation about Marion. When I first met the general and told him I would support him because of his service to our country and his obvious leadership skills, I talked about the Marion center. I told him it had to be high on his priority list. He said he would take the initial step of removing the Marion director and naming a replacement with a long and respected record of leadership.

I wish this new director the best and offer all the help I can to provide and assure veterans in southern Illinois they will receive the best possible care. However, since the problems at Marion have not been fixed, more comprehensive and immediate action is required.

Yesterday's inspector general report is only one of several revelations of quality-of-care issues in VA facilities to gain notice this year. In June, the inspector general reported that several VA facilities were not properly cleaning endoscopy equipment, potentially exposing veterans to infection. In July, weak oversight led to errors in cancer treatments at the Philadelphia Veterans Affairs Medical Center, resulting in mistreatment of several veterans. Taken together, the series of problems raise serious questions about how quality of care in the veterans health system is monitored and enforced.

Since that initial, awful discovery of these unnecessary, shameful deaths in Marion, IL, 2 years ago, we have asked a lot of questions about quality of care that have gone unanswered. We have learned some things. We have learned that VA health care quality assurance programs at every level—Federal, regional, and local—could be better. Where good policy is in place, not all health care officials and practitioners are following the guidance fully. The shortage of health care professionals means VA hospitals are not doing all they can to weed out mistake-prone doctors.

I wish to go back to the legislation Senator Obama and I introduced in the last Congress. This bill would create a network of health quality assurance officers. The idea is we need one designated person at each VA facility, in their VISNs and in VA's headquarters, to pay attention, strictly, to quality and patient safety issues.

So the bill establishes quality management officers at the national, VISN, and medical center levels. These officers would be responsible for peer-review mechanisms and for confidential reporting systems, so VA employees can literally blow the whistle when they see things happen that endanger the lives and treatment of our veterans.

The bill also requires potential VA physicians to disclose their employment history—that is not too much to ask—including negative elements in their resume, before they are hired.

It also mandates that directors of the regional Veterans Integrated Service Networks—or VISNs—investigate and personally approve the candidates.

Again, this year, as it did in the previous Congress, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee has reported the bill. They agree with me. They know it is a bipartisan bill, and they support it on a bipartisan basis. This year it is part of the Caregiver and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2009.

Where is this bill? Why wasn't it passed before this inspector general came and found the same problems at Marion VA today that led to the deaths of nine innocent veterans 2 years ago? What happened to the bill after it was reported to the Veterans' Committee?

Well, I can tell you. The bill is sitting on the Senate calendar. It is being held by one Senator who opposes moving to the veterans bills. He says it costs too much money. Well, what is a veteran's life worth? We lost nine 2 years ago. The latest report is that there is another one whose death has not been investigated, which has not had the appropriate level of review we would expect in a veterans facility, and this Senator says it is too much to ask that we would put someone in place at that Marion VA, and every VA facility, who would focus on patient safety.

I want to tell you, that is unacceptable. Putting a hold on a bill that, if it is not passed, could endanger the lives of veterans is absolutely unacceptable. I hope this Senator will have second thoughts now that this inspector general's report is out. We need this quality management network in the veterans health system. If this were in place and working properly, we could catch those who are taking shortcuts and compromising the quality of care our veterans deserve.

But we also have to acknowledge that policies are only as effective as the people who implement them. Good practices depend on the professionals on the ground, so we have to educate and hold professionals accountable, as well as enacting appropriate quality control measures. We have to make veterans hospitals attractive employers so the scarcity of doctors does not create a perverse incentive to overlook potential shortcuts.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, the Veterans' Administration of the United States of America provides veterans with care of the highest quality. VA personnel—and I have met hundreds of them—similar to all health care workers, enter their professions because of a genuine personal desire to heal the sick and mend the wounded, particularly those women and men who have served our country. They do outstanding work for our veterans every single day, and they deserve our gratitude for that effort. We want to help them provide the very best care for veterans everywhere in America.

I wish to thank Chairman AKAKA and Senator BURR for noting that quality management in the VA needs to be restructured to ensure accountability. I agree with them completely. But despite the good work of the VA, and the wonderful people involved in the VA, clearly, at the Marion VA Center our veterans deserve better.

I hope we can pass this bill and put in place the kind of safeguards that are needed so we will never have to face another inspector general's report such as this. You would think after nine veterans have lost their lives, and all the effort that has gone in to understand why—and stop it from occurring—that we would not be facing an inspector general's report that says we are still harboring people who are not of the highest quality, in terms of their talents, and protecting procedures and approaches which jeopardize the lives of many of these veterans.

This bill should be removed from the calendar, brought to the floor, and passed immediately. I hope it will pass in an overwhelming fashion with bipartisan support.

Mr. President, as to the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act, I heard the Senator from Arizona come out and talk about the unwillingness of the Democratic majority to allow the Republicans to offer amendments. He used that as his reason to explain why, for 26 days, the Republicans have held up the extension of unemployment benefits to thousands of people across this country.

During that 26-day period of time the Republicans have stopped us from extending unemployment benefits, 180,000 Americans have seen their unemployment benefits end. We know because many of us have heard from them. They are people who have been out of work for a long time and looking for a job without luck. When the unemployment check ends, they know it because that is the check that puts bread on the table. That is the check that pays

the mortgage and the utility bills. It keeps their family together.

So for almost one calendar month, the Republicans in the Senate have stopped the extension of unemployment benefits. Why? The Senator from Arizona said: Well, because we had some amendments we wanted to offer.

Well, this is a legislative body. It is not unreasonable to offer an amendment. But what he did not say is that some of the amendments had nothing to do with unemployment or the state of the economy. Some people may have heard of this organization ACORN. They have been in a lot of news recently—videotapes of ACORN employees doing bad things. They were fired. Some are being investigated.

We have had about four or five amendments on the floor about ACORN. Are we going to investigate them? I am for that. I put an amendment in to do that. Are we going to cut off all their government contracts? Are we going to limit the work they can do on this agency or that agency? Amendment after amendment after amendment. At a time when we are in the midst of a deep recession, with high unemployment, fighting two wars, debating health care, some Senator thinks this is all about ACORN.

So one of the Senators from Louisiana said: I am going to hold up unemployment benefits for people across America until I can have another chance to have another debate on another ACORN amendment. Well, forgive me, but I think the majority leader was right. That does not relate to unemployment. It does not relate to the state of the economy. It is simply one Senator who is stuck on one theme that has nothing to do with the economy and that Senator was insisting on his amendment or unemployment benefits would not move forward.

So when the Senator from Arizona talks about the decision of the majority not to allow every amendment to be offered and tie up the Senate for days or weeks at a time, it is understandable. I do have to take exception to remarks that were made by my minority whip and friend from Arizona when he said we are not offering amendments to the Republicans on the unemployment compensation benefits bill.

I call his attention to the amendment he voted for yesterday. It was a cloture motion, which means ending debate on a substitute known as the Reid-Baucus substitute. The Reid-Baucus substitute, which is being added to this unemployment benefits bill, includes, within its pages, two Republican amendments, the major Republican amendments that have been offered; one by Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON of Georgia about the home buyers credit. It is in here. A Republican amendment is in here. He and Senator DODD have worked out the details. It is included. The second is an amendment by the Senator from Kentucky, Mr. BUNNING, and it relates to some net operating loss tax treatment, which we think may help some businesses hire people back. Senator BUNNING is a Republican. The amendment was incorporated as a part of it.

So for the Senator from Arizona to argue that we are not allowing any amendments is to ignore the very amendment we voted for yesterday. There are Republican amendments here, and they were worked out, as they should be.

Does that explain why we have waited almost 4 weeks to extend unemployment benefits? The Senator from Arizona takes exception to the idea that we would use the insurance fund that is collected from employers and employees across America for unemployment to extend unemployment benefits. Well, this is an insurance fund we all pay into, in the unlikely event we lose our job, so we can get unemployment insurance.

The Senator from Arizona says we should not do that. It is unfair to collect that tax—or FUTA tax, as they call it—to fund unemployment benefits. I think it is perfectly fair. I have never used it once in my life. I do not mind paying into it. I think it is reasonable. If the day comes when I need it, it is there. So to say we should stop funding this kind of unemployment insurance benefit is, in my mind, to jeopardize a safety net many people count on across America.

I have received calls from people in my State telling their stories. I hope the Senator from Arizona can receive a few of those calls, too, from his State. I am sure there are people who would contact him on this issue.

One lady wrote me and she said:

> I am a 57 year old professional woman [with a masters degree] who was laid off in November 2007, before things got really bad. My unemployment ran out in mid September.

When this debate had not started, but it was beginning here in the Senate. She said:

> I have closed my 401K, my retirement accounts and have spent all my savings to survive thus far—and without having had the help of unemployment benefits, I would have lost everything I have long ago.
>
> And don't get me started on my health insurance issues.
>
> As Congress debates, people lose everything. Good people who worked their whole lives. Please help pass this bill. It will be too late for me, I am totally tapped out next month, but it will save others.

A man writes me:

> I am 60 years old. My wife is 56. We were both laid off. Me first, then her.
>
> We have worked all our lives. Our unemployment benefits have expired.
>
> We were unable to continue paying for Cobra—

Which is a health insurance option for those who are out of work—

> so we lost that. So now we have no health coverage for the first time in our lives and no benefits.
>
> We try to stay optimistic, but the reality is things are tough. We look for work, to no avail. What will happen?
>
> Benefits should be extended indefinitely until the job situation improves to the point where people can get a job. In the meantime we'll take what we can get, and hope something good happens.

This woman, who has never contacted a public official before, writes me and says:

> This is my first time writing to any political figure. I will keep my thoughts and concerns short and sweet.
>
> I am currently unemployed, a mother of 3 and live in a suburb in Illinois. I have been looking for work for over 1 year now to no avail.
>
> It is my hope that you will vote YES in the Senate this week to pass the unemployment extension and hopefully there will be no more delays.
>
> My husband and I have been struggling to make ends meet for months now and with the money I would collect from unemployment, my family would be able to stay afloat [until I can get another job].
>
> My son has some major medical issues at this time and even though we carry insurance, it's just not enough to pay the bills.
>
> I pray the Senate makes a positive and quick decision about extending unemployment benefits.
>
> I appreciate your time.

How do you explain to this woman, and others who wrote to me, what we are doing right now on the floor of the Senate? Are we debating a bill on the floor of the Senate? No. We are burning 30 hours off the clock because the Republicans insist we delay this as long as the Senate rules will allow. They do not want us to extend unemployment benefits 1 minute sooner than they can extend this debate. Under the Senate rules, they have extended it now for 26 days. So another 2, 3 or 4 days are necessary before the Republicans use up all the time they could possibly use.

What happens in the meantime? Well, for the three people who wrote me from Illinois, I am not sure. I do not know how they will get by in the meantime. I hope they will. But for them, it must be hard to understand why they have to be held captive to the procedural rules of the Senate that I think, in this case, are being clearly abused.

We have adopted now Republican amendments that they have asked for. At least we have cleared them to be adopted. The vote last night had only two dissenters. Two Republican Senators dissented. Everyone else voted for it. This is now, apparently, a wildly popular bill but not popular enough for us to vote on it and get it done. No, we are going to have to wait for another day or two or three under the scenario that has been created on the Republican side.

Last week, one of my Republican colleagues was talking on the floor about how we should be in no rush to do anything on unemployment insurance. He said:

> The benefits haven't run out yet. We're going to pass this before the benefits run out. That's not the question.

Well, unfortunately, that is not true. When you hear statements such as that, the Republican delays start to make a little more sense. Americans need help right now, but some Republican Senators do not understand that.

Some Republicans, apparently, do not know that 600,000 Americans have already lost their unemployment insurance benefits—Americans who would be benefited if this bill passed—extending the coverage for an additional 14 weeks across the country and for 20 weeks in areas of higher unemployment.

These 600,000 families have no place to turn. Their benefits are exhausted. The job market is still weak and the Senate talks and talks and talks and, even worse, goes into these quorum calls, where people do not even talk.

We sit in our offices waiting to reach a point where we can take the next vote the Republicans will allow. We finally managed to make a little progress last night to move the bill forward. Now Republicans have said let's wait another 30 hours before we consider what we even passed last night. We have to wait so the Republicans can talk more about whatever it is they think is more important than helping the victims of this recession and dealing with the safety net we desperately need. So America waits and waits some more.

I hope the Senate can finally provide the assistance that hundreds of thousands of Americans are waiting for. There is no excuse for us not to do it right now—today.

MAJOR OPPOSITION TO HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. President, the Senator from Tennessee was here earlier. It appears now that the major Republican opposition to health care reform comes down to something very basic, which I never would have guessed.

It turns out the Republicans object to the length of the bill. It turns out they are offended, and are carrying that offense to an extreme, because they believe the Senate bill for health care reform is over 1,000 pages long. I don't know if the Republicans can help me understand this. Maybe there are a number of pages that they think would be appropriate. I don't know if it is 900 or 500. But, apparently, in their mind there is an appropriate number of pages for a bill. When the bill goes beyond a certain number of pages, whatever it says is unacceptable. That, apparently, is the new approach being taken by the Republicans.

Last week, I asked one of the Republican Senators how many pages the Senate Republican health care reform bill comprised. He didn't answer me, because he knows, and I know, that no such bill exists. There is no Senate Republican health care reform bill. Maybe some day there will be. I hope so.

We have taken two major committees of the Senate and put them to work for weeks to devise health care reform bills. Now we are trying to blend those bills into a final product, which is in the works. Yet they come to the floor and complain it is too long. It turns out that one of the committee bills they are objecting to for being too long contained 150 Republican amendments. Guess what. Those amendments comprised 300 pages.

Am I supposed to be outraged that we would have 300 pages of Republican amendments and say they should not be considered because I have in my mind a number I cannot quite disclose to you as to what a maximum number of pages might be for a bill? In a debate as serious as health care reform, have we reached these depths, where the only complaint we can find from the Republican side is that the bill has too many pages in it? I think that is a sad state of affairs.

People across this country, and family after family, know the cost of health care is out of control for businesses, families, individuals, and governments. We cannot sustain it. Health insurance companies will keep piling on premiums and raising costs beyond the reach of families every single day. We have to do something about it now. If it takes 100 pages, good. If it takes 1,000 pages, that is fine, too. Let's get it done.

I keep waiting for the first Republican Senator to stand up and say we are going to join with Democrats in fighting the abuses of health insurance companies, which deny people coverage because of preexisting conditions, which bail out on those who are insured once they get sick, which won't allow you to take your insurance from one job to another, which say that your son or daughter at age 23 is cut off from the family plan.

When will Republicans join us in pushing for real health insurance reform, which gives peace of mind to families across this country? I don't care if that takes 1,000 pages to do it. Let's do it and get it done.

Finally, let's make sure that we push prevention and wellness, so people will have better health outcomes at lower costs, so that more people can qualify for health insurance, so that fewer people turn up in the emergency room without health insurance, or with poor health insurance, desperate for care.

Again, how many pages are acceptable to the Republican side of the aisle? I am waiting to hear.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I am very pleased to be able to speak this afternoon about the health care bill that we all in this country are concerned is coming through Congress at a very rapid pace.

I heard the distinguished Senator from Illinois saying the Republican complaint is how long the bill is. Well, of course, he acknowledged that there is no bill, that we actually don't have a bill that has been introduced yet in the Senate. So I think what we are talking about is the length of the bills that have been put forward by the two committees and will be put together, and it could be 3,000 pages long, if that is what it takes to cover this issue.

The concern Republicans have is, are we going to have time to read it? Are we going to have time for the public to read it, so that we understand fully, before we start debating, before we start amending, what is in every line of the bill?

The American people expect that we will know what we are voting on when we are talking about taking over one-sixth of our economy in this country. We are talking about the health care industry jobs—doctors, nurses, nurses' aides, hospital personnel, and the doctors' office personnel. We are talking about a lot of the economy of our country. Most importantly, we are talking about the relationship between a patient and a doctor, which is the most personal, most important health care relationship you can possibly have in every family.

I think maybe the distinguished deputy leader on the Democratic side has mistaken the complaints about how big the bill is with how long we have to read the big bill. That is the issue. That is why we want to see the bill in the writing that is going to become law before we are asked to debate it, before we are asked to offer amendments. And we want the public to see it, too.

In fact, there was an amendment offered in the Senate Finance Committee by Senator BUNNING to reassure the American people that there would be 72 hours for this bill to be in the public domain before it would come to the floor. That amendment was defeated.

It is very important to us that we have ample time to determine every part of this bill and how it will affect every American, every American family, and for all of the many people in the health care industry—the doctors, nurses, and all the people who provide health care in our country—to know how it will affect them, too. That is the complaint, for sure.

Today I want to talk about the rising health care costs. We know that today, without any new bill, premiums are going up and Americans are being squeezed. Rising premiums are causing them to be very concerned about how much this health care coverage they have is costing. It is also squeezing small businesses, because their premiums are rising, and it is beginning to be a choice in some American businesses whether they can offer health care coverage anymore.

We do need health care reform because of these rising premiums. You would think that, with the premiums going up and costs going up, and Americans being squeezed in a tough economic time, and employers being squeezed, that the position we would be taking in the Senate regarding health care reform would be to bring down costs. That would be what you would think we would be addressing. You would think we would be talking about offering more affordable coverage to more people.

Texas, unfortunately, has the highest percentage of people today without health insurance coverage in the Nation. So I am very concerned about this issue. Unfortunately, 5.8 million uninsured Texans is the number we have

reached. So this is a huge issue for my State.

Let's look at the health care reform and how it is going to affect the rising premium costs. Inflation causes the premiums to go up every year. So what we should be looking for is a way to cut back on those costs that are hurting people so much.

Here is an example: Individuals and families buying their own insurance could see premiums increase as much as 73 percent under the new Democratic proposals that are being written right now. One study projects premium increases of roughly $1,500 a year for individuals, and $3,300 a year for family coverage, in addition to the natural rise in inflation and premiums that would be ongoing anyway. This was from a study delivered by Oliver Wyman. Think about it. All of the taxes on insurance companies, the taxes on an American individual or a family that decides not to take the coverage would add to the cost as well. Then you have the cuts in Medicare that are proposed and the increase in Medicaid that is proposed, which will cost every State and every taxpayer. So you have all these increases in costs, mandates, and taxes.

More alarming is, if you do have insurance today, you may not even be able to keep what you have. The President said if you like what you have, you can keep it. But under the Democrats' proposal that is going through, all plans include a long list of benefits that are required to be in every plan. Some of these may be benefits your family doesn't need or you would not choose as a priority, but they are there. So that will have a cost impact. Millions of Americans will be forced to buy more expensive plans in order to comply with these new Federal laws that are going to reform health care.

When it comes to a small business, you might think: What is this going to do to a small business? Small businesses are now having a hard time because they don't have the big risk pool. So their costs are higher anyway. A small business with 20 employees is going to have higher premiums anyway, and their margins are generally less because they don't have the advantage of having big risk pools and the things that can bring down costs in a bigger business. Small businesses are going to look at these rising costs and probably say, you know, I now have to decide, do I continue to offer health care coverage to my employees or do I back off? And if I back off, of course, people will have to buy their own insurance or pay a fine if they don't.

That is what is going through Congress right now. The Joint Committee on Taxation stated that ''the imposition of the excise tax on insurers can be expected to lead health insurance providers and consumers to take measures to minimize their burden from the tax. As insurers pass along the cost to the consumer by increasing prices, the cost of employer-provided insurance will increase.''

In the House bill, employers will be penalized if they don't pay for a specific percentage of employee premiums. So even if you are offering health insurance to your employees, you may still be penalized if the House bill prevails, if you don't pay the right percentage of coverage for employees. The Kaiser Family Foundation did a research study and said three out of five businesses in America that offer insurance would still have to pay the 8-percent payroll tax, because their percentages would not meet the Federal standard that would be in the House bill. That is just counterintuitive. It is counterintuitive to say if you are doing the right thing and you are offering health insurance to your employees—you are struggling to do it, but you are doing it—but if it is not the right percentage, if it is not 72.5 percent or 65 percent, then you are not going to qualify anyway, so you are going to have to pay an 8-percent fine of the entire payroll of your company.

This is not the reform we should be going after. What we should be doing is trying to have more affordable health care access for individuals and small businesses. That should be our primary objective.

Here are the principles the Republicans would put forward for health care reform.

Small business pooling: We have offered time and time again on the floor of this Senate the small business health plan that would allow small businesses to pool, to be able to offer their employees a bigger risk pool and, therefore, lower premiums for the employee and the employer. We have offered plans that would allow a State organization or a national organization—the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the NFIB, the American Institute of Architects, whatever association that you might join as a small business person—to offer all of their members insurance plans that would have a big risk pool so that if you work for a small business, a small architecture firm, you would be able to offer this in the same basic amounts that if you worked for a big architecture firm or big corporation. But that would not cost the government anything, and it would not change anyone's coverage if they like what they have. It would offer more affordable access to more people.

If the Republicans had the ability to offer amendments to the health care bill or to offer a substitute, we would reduce frivolous lawsuits. In States where there are limits on noneconomic damages or you have an arbitration requirement before you go to a lawsuit, we have lowered the cost of medical malpractice insurance to the doctors by as much as 25 percent. Doctors have come back to practicing medicine again because these premiums have been lowered just by reducing frivolous lawsuits. This has been done in my State of Texas, California, and other States have followed suit and, no pun intended, have lowered the number of lawsuits. It has lowered the cost of the medical malpractice insurance premiums, and doctors have been able to do their work with their patients with much more freedom, knowing they do not need to order unnecessary tests just to cover themselves in case they get sued.

No. 3, why not offer tax incentives? I am a cosponsor of a bill with Senator JIM DEMINT that would offer tax incentives for individuals. There are small businesses and individuals who have no access to affordable coverage. It is just way too expensive. Why not give every individual who purchases their own insurance the same tax break that a corporation gets for offering health insurance to the employees? It is a nontaxable benefit to the employee. Why shouldn't the individual get that same break? Why don't we have a $5,0000-per-family tax credit if you buy your own health insurance for your family, or $2,000-per-person tax credit so that everyone is on a level playing field? That would be a huge incentive. It is a tax credit, so it would be much less expensive than what we are talking about in this government takeover of health care.

How about creating a transparent, online marketplace for consumers to compare and purchase plans? That is something on which I think we could all agree. I think we could agree that if you had a health exchange where you could go online and companies would offer different kinds of plans, any company that wanted to come in with a credible plan for insurance coverage—again, a bigger risk pool so the company would have to be competitive, and it would have that lower cost—that would be a great boon for consumers and it would not cost the government anything to do that. It would just be a marketplace, a transparent place where people could shop for their plans and get a better deal because there would be more competition.

We should allow the purchase of insurance across State lines. Why don't we allow the insurance companies the ability to pool States and offer individuals better prices for health care coverage? We have options that would be good options for American consumers and would give more access to affordable health care. The more people who have affordable health care, the lower cost to everyone who has health care because when people are covered, they don't go to the emergency room for a fever or a common cold. They go to a doctor's office. They have checkups so they have ongoing care to detect something before its gets so bad that it is more serious, more expensive to treat, and certainly more life-threatening.

Those are the principles the Republicans would put forward. But to have a government takeover that is going to increase costs to everyone who has insurance and cause many people to lose their insurance because the employers back out is not the answer. It is not

the answer. We can do something that would give affordable access to more individuals and their families. That should be the goal of this health care reform. We need health care reform. We do. We don't need a government takeover of our health care system. That is the debate we ought to be having right now.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAUFMAN). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, last week families and businesses across our country finally got some good news. We found out that initial estimates show that our GDP grew at a 3.5-percent rate last quarter and that the Recovery Act created or saved over 1 million jobs across the country, including over 30,000 in my home State of Washington, making us third in the country for job creation.

Those are hopeful signs. But I know many families and many businesses and communities still need help. We have a long way to go before we have fully recovered from the worst economic condition since the Great Depression.

I came out on the floor and spoke twice last week about the urgent need to pass an extension of unemployment insurance that would help over 18,000 people in my home State and millions of Americans across the country. I told the stories about five individuals who had lost their jobs and whose families are now in desperate need of support that the extension would give them to help them stay on their feet—families who right now, as we sit out here and debate this bill, wait for hours and hours for us to get to a final vote, even though we know we have the votes, families who are sitting at the kitchen tables across this country having a very agonizing debate about how to make next month's rent or how to get next week's groceries if their unemployment benefits run out.

Those families do not understand why some of our colleagues are delaying and obstructing our efforts to offer this small measure of financial stability to those families who need it most. These families have been coming to me with their stories, and I am committed to fighting to make sure they have every opportunity to get back on their feet. That is why I am here today to urge my colleagues to support and pass the Worker, Homeownership, and Business Assistance Act of 2009.

I am very proud to be a cosponsor of this bill because it will give our families and businesses in Washington State and across the country the support they need today. This bill will be a lifeline to millions of families, and it will provide tax relief to help our businesses create and save jobs. And it will help extend and expand the homeowners tax credit to continue a badly needed boost to help stabilizing the housing market.

This legislation will help families who need it most by providing every single unemployed worker who has exhausted his or her benefits an additional 14 weeks of support, regardless of what State they live in, and it would extend unemployment to laid-off workers in States that have been hardest hit by the job losses, including Washington State, by 6 weeks.

Last week I told some of the stories that are pouring into my office from unemployed workers. These are workers who are not asking for a handout. They just need a small measure of support as they work to get back on their feet. These stories have continued to come in this week, and I wish to share a couple excerpts from letters people sent me urging me to do everything I can to make sure this bill finally passes.

Bill and Patricia Profitt from Littlerock, WA, e-mailed me saying:

> Please act quickly to pass another extension of unemployment benefits. My wife and I are in danger of losing our house and have run out of unemployment. Please help us.

Donna Dettling from Olympia, WA, said:

> My extended benefits will run out in 7 weeks. I am a single mother with three boys and I have been trying for months to get work but have been unsuccessful. If the Senate does not come to an agreement soon, we may end up homeless. Can you please do what you can to push this forward?

Then there is Barbara Headrick from Monroe, WA. She wrote to me and said:

> Dear Patty, I am desperate for the Senate to pass the emergency unemployment benefits legislation. I cannot find a job, have no income, and am in danger of losing my house as well as my utilities. Please, please, please urge all the Senators to pass this emergency legislation as soon as possible.

Those are just three quick e-mails from thousands of letters I have received from across my home State of Washington. We owe it to these workers, to their families, and to millions more like them to pass this legislation and not continue to delay it so that they can get the support they need.

These men and women who are writing me and stopping me when I am home did not expect to have to ask for help. They had jobs. They felt secure. But now they are spending their days desperately looking for work that is not available. They are worrying about what will happen to them, and they are worrying about their families when their savings are exhausted and their credit cards are maxed out and the bank will not wait any longer for a mortgage payment.

We cannot continue to go hour after hour after hour delaying this when our working families are pushed to the brink by a financial crisis that they did not create but for which they are paying. We need to pass this legislation.

By the way, this bill is going to do a lot more for our families, businesses, and communities. It will expand and extend the successful home buyers tax credit that will allow our families the opportunity to move into homes and make sure that our weakened housing market continues on the road to recovery.

This is a program that has already helped many families purchase their first homes. This bill will extend the $8,000 credit to first-time homebuyers through the end of April 2010 and expand the program providing a $6,500 credit to new purchasers who have lived in their current home for 5 years or more.

These programs will not only help families move into new homes; they will also increase liquidity and provide a shot in the arm to housing markets that still need a lot of support.

I have heard from real estate agents, from homebuilders, from families from every corner of Washington State, and they all tell me they have to have this extension. I received letters from families telling me they want to buy a new home but they cannot close in time to get this credit and they would not be able to afford a new home without it.

Thousands of homebuilders, construction workers, and real estate agents have contacted me telling me how successful this credit has been and how an extension and expansion would create jobs and give the housing market another strong push forward.

This bill will also provide a critical boost to businesses in Washington State by extending their ability to carry back losses they suffered in 2008 or 2009. That is a tax provision that will provide badly needed capital to help our companies avoid layoffs, expand their operations, and create jobs.

We have heard a lot today about this concept of too big to fail. Well, in this time of nationwide economic uncertainty, I believe the millions of families and Main Street businesses that are on the brink are certainly too important to fail, and they deserve every bit of support we can give them to allow them to get back on their feet. So the Worker, Homeownership, and Business Assistance Act of 2009 will help bring these families, businesses, and communities back from the precipice.

I urge our colleagues to support and pass this critical legislation. It is surprising to me that we have to wait hour after hour after hour after hour, when we know the votes are there, simply because somehow delaying this bill is some kind of win for whoever is delaying it. It is not a win for Washington families who have to stay awake one more night worrying about how they are going to buy food or pay their mortgages or keep their families intact.

I urge my colleagues to stop the delaying tactics and allow this bill to come to a vote.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I would echo the words of Senator MURRAY, who has worked perhaps harder than anyone in this institution to extend unemployment benefits.

I don't get it. Sometimes around here politics has a role. Certainly we have

two political parties, and we have a couple of Independents. In both the House of Representatives and in the Senate that happens. But on this one, on extending unemployment benefits, 90 percent of the country agrees on that. It is not a welfare program, it is unemployment insurance. People pay into it. It is to help people who want to work, who have lost their jobs, and would like to get back into the workplace.

We have been trying to get this passed for 3 weeks, and the fact that this has not passed, I guess, indicates there are some Republicans who, frankly, don't much like unemployment insurance. It is a government program, so they do not like it—just as some number of Republicans don't like minimum wage or they don't like workers compensation or Medicare. They don't believe government has a role in some of these things. That is particularly difficult to swallow when it comes to unemployment insurance.

Senator MURRAY mentioned the number of e-mails she has received from people in her State. I get e-mails and letters from Ohioans—from Lima, Xenia, Springfield, Zanesville, Bellaire, and Ravenna—all the time, from people who didn't know they were going to be unemployed. They have worked hard, played by the rules, paid their taxes, kept their houses nice, kept their neighborhoods strong, and they lost their jobs. They are looking and looking and looking and can't find a job.

With an unemployment rate that is more than 10 percent in my State, all we are saying is give them an extension of unemployment so they can keep looking and keep putting food on the table. Unfortunately, some Republicans—not a majority of Republicans but some number of Republicans—think there is no role for government. They don't like Medicare, they don't like minimum wage or workers compensation, and they don't like unemployment compensation. It is a tragedy because, frankly, I don't think they are representing the people in their States very well.

Almost nobody—almost no real people except for a bunch of people who dress like this and hang around this Chamber and down the hall in the House of Representatives—thinks that way. There are not many people who think unemployment shouldn't be extended.

An hour or so ago, Senator HARKIN had a hearing in the HELP Committee about the increasing health costs facing small businesses. We had a panel of five people who spoke, a couple of them small business owners who have been victimized by these huge health care costs.

I want to start with this—the business model of an insurance company and a health insurance company. Not all of our problems with health insurance in this country—but a big part of our problems—are due to the behavior of the insurance industry. Think of it this way. The bottom line for the insurance companies is money. They need to make money. They want to make money. They should make money. But their business model is this: Hire a bunch of bureaucrats to figure out how to refuse to sell insurance to people who have preexisting conditions; and on the other end, hire a bunch of bureaucrats to stop from paying claims for people they are insuring when they get sick. That is how they make their money. They do not insure people with preexisting conditions, and then they sometimes do not pay up on claims when people get sick.

Something like 30 percent of health insurance claims on the first round are denied—30 percent. That is almost one in three. Sometimes people fight with their insurance companies and end up getting their claims paid, but why should they have to do that? They pay for insurance year after year after year, and the insurance company makes money on them year after year after year. Then, after they get sick, sometimes their claims aren't paid. Sometimes when they get really sick, the insurance companies do something called rescission—they cut them out and take their insurance away from them.

So when we start with that business model, it is obvious what happens. The CEO of Aetna made $24 million last year. Insurance company profits over the last 7 years have gone up 400 percent. The salaries of the executives, the CEOs, of the top 10 largest insurance companies in this country average $11 million. So in order to make that kind of profit, in order to make that kind of CEO salary—not to mention the salaries of other vice presidents and top executives—I guess that is the business model they need. They need to deny people with a preexisting condition from even getting insurance; then, on the other end, hire a bunch of bureaucrats to keep people from getting their claims paid for. That is why insurance reform is so very important. That is why this legislation is so very important.

So today, in our committee—the committee on which Senator SANDERS also sits, who joins me now on the Senate floor—we had this hearing on the increasing health care costs facing small businesses because this whole insurance company model of denying coverage because of preexisting conditions and then denying claims when people file them particularly hurts small businesses. When the insurance companies do that, small businesses in particular are victimized by it. Small businesses pay more for their insurance. If they have 10 employees and one gets very sick, the prices for the whole insurance plan for that small business get so out of whack they often have to cancel coverage or they simply can't afford it.

So what is coming out of this health care hearing and what we are doing in our legislation that is so important. We have worked on creating this health insurance exchange which will allow small businesses to pool their risks and leverage better deals from insurers. So instead of a small business of 12 people trying to buy insurance, they get to join a health insurance exchange with millions of customers, millions of individuals, tens of thousands of small businesses. Then, if a few people get sick in one small business, their rates don't spike up; they have a much larger pool to keep prices in check.

Small businesses pay about 18 percent more than large companies per capita for their insurance. They pay higher broker fees, higher administrative costs. They have the high cost of medical underwriting. So the result is an unfair competitive disadvantage for small businesses.

One of the other things we do for small businesses in this legislation is to give tax breaks so a small business can take its 20 employees and they can go into the insurance exchange and, if they choose to, they can go into the public option. The public option is there for several good reasons. The public option is just an option. It doesn't mean they can't go into Cigna, Aetna, Blue Cross, or Wellpoint. They can choose Medical Mutual, a not-for-profit in Ohio, or they can choose the public option. The public option will mean competition for insurance companies in southwest Ohio, where two companies have 85 percent of the insurance in that part of Ohio—the Cincinnati area.

When two companies have 85 percent, you can bet they are getting lower quality and they are paying higher cost. If we put the public option in there to compete with them, it will help to drive down cost, stabilize cost, and it will mean better quality insurance. They don't have to choose the public option, but the fact it exists helps.

The other thing the public option will do is to keep these insurance companies much more honest. We are going to outlaw denying coverage due to preexisting conditions. No more discrimination based on disability, on geography, on gender, or any of that.

The pages sitting in front of us—these young men and young women who aren't paying for their insurance yet—if we don't change anything, when the young women finish school and go out into the insurance market, they will pay higher rates than the young men will. So there are all kinds of discrimination that we are going to outlaw in this bill, but we need the public option to make sure these insurance consumer protection reforms are actually in force.

Let me close. Attending today's committee hearing was a businesswoman from Ohio whom I met. Her name is Liz Coriell. She owns a business in Cleves, OH, outside Cincinnati, in the southwestern part of the State. She owns a medical gas servicing company, but she

can't afford health insurance for her workers. Her sons were going to come and work in the business, as her husband does—her husband is 65 and has Medicare, so not a problem for him. She is not 65. Her sons would like to join the business, but they can't get insurance because she can't afford it for this small business.

Why do we have a health insurance system that says to her sons: You can't come and work in your parents' family business because you can't get insurance, so it is not going to work out? Why do we allow that? Why don't we encourage these families to stick together—you know, family values—to help them go into the family business, if they want to, and not be denied.

I come to the floor of the Senate many times—I will not today because Senator SANDERS is waiting to speak—and I share letters I receive from people in Ohio. This one is from Cleveland. This one is from Mansfield where I grew up. Others are from Springfield, Dayton, and all over.

Two things come through in these letters. One is that people thought they had good insurance until they got sick. Then they found out, well, maybe they lost their insurance because they got really sick or maybe they had a baby born with a preexisting condition, and then their insurance was canceled.

The other thing I find is that it is affecting people like Liz from Cleves, OH, in southwestern Ohio. Liz is several years away from Medicare, but she is thinking about several years from now being eligible for Medicare, when she wouldn't have to worry about this. I get letters from people in their early sixties and late fifties who are just anxious and thinking: I am only 2 or 3 or 6 years away from Medicare, and then I will not have these problems with insurance. Then it will be predictable, and it will be stable.

Why can't we do that for everybody now? So whether they are 26 or 46 or 64—not quite eligible—why can't we take away that anxiety and build peace of mind for people so they don't have to worry about whether they can get insurance or whether they are going to be denied or going to have to fight insurance companies to get doctor bills paid? Let's take that anxiety off the table so Americans can concentrate on their small businesses and raising their kids and fixing up their neighborhoods. Let's let them concentrate on giving something back to this society and not always worrying about their health insurance.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating my friend, Senator BROWN of Ohio, for his leadership in this struggle for fundamental reform of the American health care system. He understands, as I do, that there is something absurd about a situation in which we as a nation end up spending almost twice as much per person on health care as any other nation on Earth; yet we end up with tens of millions of people who are uninsured, people who are underinsured, and we have almost 1 million Americans this year who are facing bankruptcy because of medically related illnesses.

As Senator BROWN just talked about, understanding that small businesses are the economic engine of this country, there is something absurd when we have small businesses desperately trying to provide health insurance for their employees but are finding it harder and harder to do so. So I want to congratulate Senator BROWN for the work he is doing on health care.

As I think every American understands, we are in the midst of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. I find it interesting that there are some people out there, some economists, including the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Mr. Bernanke, who have told us ''the recession is very likely over.'' I suggest to Mr. Bernanke, come to the State of Vermont, go to California, go to Nevada, go to Ohio, go to any State in the country and go out on the street and ask people whether they think this recession is over. They will say it may be over for the large banks that were bailed out by taxpayers but it is not over for working families. In fact, according to the latest Washington Post/ABC News poll, 82 percent of Americans disagree with Mr. Bernanke. The overwhelming majority of the American people do not believe the recession is over. Of course, they are right. The recession may be over for banks that are now starting to be profitable, for Goldman Sachs, which is paying out huge bonuses to its top executives, but trust me, on Main Street, on family farms all over this country, in factories all over this country, this recession most certainly is not over.

Since the beginning of this recession in December of 2007, 7.6 million Americans have lost their jobs. The official unemployment rate has doubled, going from 4.9 percent to 9.8 percent. But what is extremely important to understand when we look at the economy today is that the official unemployment statistics do not reflect the reality of what is going on in our economy. Official statistics do not include people who have given up looking for work. If you are in a community where 15 or 20 percent of the people are unemployed, you have given up looking for work, but you are not part of the official unemployment statistics. What happens if you want to work 40 hours a week but you can only find a job for 20 hours a week or 25 hours a week? You are also not in the statistics.

The reality is, if you add all those factors together, people who are officially unemployed, people who have given up looking for work, people who are working part time when they want to work full time, what you are looking at is 17 percent of working-age Americans today are in that category, which adds up to 27 million Americans—an astronomical number. That is an indication of a real catastrophe in our economy.

Mr. Bernanke, I am sorry to disagree with you, but in my view and in the view of the vast majority of the American people, this recession is not over. In fact, in terms of unemployment numbers, it may, in fact, even be getting worse.

On the issue we are dealing with right now, we have to address long-term unemployment. It is one thing to lose your job and get another job a few weeks later. It is another thing not to be able to find a job month after month, and there are millions of Americans in that category.

Today, 5.4 million Americans have been unemployed for over 6 months—the highest on record. Long-term unemployment is a major crisis in this country. It is one we have to address. It is one we have to deal with in terms of extending unemployment benefits. The average length of unemployment is now 27 weeks. That is over 6 months. That is over half a year. That is the longest since the end of World War II.

There are fewer jobs in America today than there were in the year 2000, even though the workforce has grown by 12 million since then. This is a shrinking workforce. We now have the fewest manufacturing jobs than at any time since April of 1941, 8 months before the start of World War II. The importance of that is that manufacturing was the mechanism by which working families were able to carve out a middle-class existence. They had decent wages, decent benefits. They had a union. They may have had a pension program. But today we have the fewest manufacturing jobs since April of 1941.

Home foreclosures are the highest on record, turning the American dream of home ownership into an American nightmare for millions of people.

There is nothing we should be proud of in saying this: Today, in the industrialized world, the United States has the highest rate of childhood poverty. We have the highest infant mortality rate. We have the highest overall poverty rate. At the same time, we have the largest gap between the wealthy and everybody else. What we have seen for a number of years is a collapse in the middle class. It has certainly gone on a lot longer than since the financial collapse. But we have also seen an increase in wealth amongst the top 1 percent. That gap between the very rich and everybody else is growing wider and wider. From a moral perspective, not to mention an economic perspective, we have to address the reality that the top 1 percent today earns more income than the bottom 50 percent. The top 1 percent owns more wealth than the bottom 90 percent. We are becoming two very different countries: people on top with incredible wealth—CEOs on Wall Street making hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars, billions of dollars in a hedge

fund—yet working people seeing their incomes decline, working longer hours for low wages. Actually, today a two-income family has less disposable income than a one-income family did 30 years ago. That is what is going on in America—poverty increasing, middle-class shrinking, the gap between the very richest and everybody else growing wider.

This is an important point to make. We know what happened on Wall Street a little over a year ago. We know what that collapse has done. We know that the outrageous behavior on Wall Street has precipitated us into this very severe recession. But we should not kid ourselves. If by some miracle tomorrow we manage to go back to where we were before the financial collapse on Wall Street, we would still be in very bad shape. It isn't a question of, weren't things great before the collapse on Wall Street and the development of this major recession—no, things were not great back then.

Let me just mention what happened during the Presidency of George Bush. Let me talk a little bit about what happened during that 8-year period.

When President Bush was in office from the year 2000 to 2008, 8.2 million more Americans slipped out of the middle class and into poverty. That is what happened during that period. I might mention, you may recall—it is really frightening to think about it—how during much of that period the Secretary of Treasury and the President were saying the economy is robust, the gross national product is expanding. But that was the reality for working families—people slipping out of the middle class and into poverty.

During that same period—we are dealing with health care right now. One of the reasons we need a national health care program guaranteeing health care to all people is during that same period, 7.8 million more Americans were uninsured; they lost their health insurance. We are now up to about 46 million people without any health insurance. That number is going up every single day. During the Bush era, close to 8 million Americans lost their health insurance.

During the years 2000 to 2008, 4.5 million manufacturing jobs disappeared. I talked a moment ago about the importance of manufacturing. I know it is not a sexy job, but it was a means by which millions of Americans went to work every day, they produced real products, they had real income. It was a vehicle—manufacturing was and is a vehicle by which working Americans could make it into the middle class.

During the Bush tenure, 3.2 million workers lost their pensions, with the result that about half of American workers in the private sector today have no pension whatsoever. There was a time—I know it is a radical idea to even think about—there was a time when millions of Americans who worked had a defined pension plan, a defined benefit pension plan. They actually knew they were going to have a pension. Boy, what a radical idea. That does not exist anymore.

During the Bush era, median household income declined by over $2,100, from $52,500 to $50,303. According to an article that appeared a couple of months ago in USA TODAY, from 2000 to 2008 middle-class men experienced an 11.2-percent drop in their incomes, a reduction of $7,700 adjusting for inflation. That is unbelievable. During that period, middle-class men saw an 11-percent drop in their income. Middle-class women in this age group saw a 4.8-percent decline in their incomes as well.

The important point to be made here is when you hear economists talking about the economy in abstract ways—we have 3 percent growth in this quarter; isn't that great? Yes, that is an important fact, but it is not the most important fact. The most important fact is what happens to ordinary people. This is what happens to ordinary people. People who were 45 to 54 years of age lost $7,700 in the Bush economy. That is true today, it was true then. Focus on what is happening to ordinary people.

With all of that, with the long-term trends in which the middle class has declined, with the fact that since the greed and illegal behavior of Wall Street has gotten us into the deep recession we are in right now, working families all over this country are desperately in need of help, and they are looking to their Federal Government to provide that help. That is why it is so important that we pass an extension in unemployment benefits. I find it hard to understand, why my Republican colleagues continue to delay this legislation being implemented.

We have to do more than that. We have to extend unemployment—that goes without saying—but we have to do more than that. We have to ask ourselves why our economy is in the shape it is right now. That will precipitate a major debate and major discussion, something we as a nation have to have. We have to ask ourselves not just the causation of the recession we are in right now, the role Wall Street has played, but, long term, why since the early 1970s has the middle class continued to shrink? What are the causes of that? Why do we have the highest rate of poverty of any major nation on Earth? Why is it today that people are losing their homes and their pensions and their life savings and their ability to send their kids to college?

Clearly, short term it is imperative that we investigate thoroughly and that we hold accountable those crooks on Wall Street who have done so much damage to the American people. It is simply not acceptable that they be allowed to continue the behavior that drove this country into the severe recession. We need to understand how it happened, we need to hold accountable those people who caused this crisis, and where there is illegal behavior, those people should learn what the penal system of this country is about.

One of the things that really amazes me is that I have yet to see, nor have the American people yet seen, one of those folks on Wall Street whose greed and recklessness has caused this recession, has caused this intense suffering all over this country—have you seen one of those guys go before television, get on TV and say to the American people: I apologize. I am sorry for our greed. I am sorry for the fact that we cost millions of people their jobs and their health care and their savings and their pensions. We are sorry.

I have not seen that. In fact, what we are seeing is these guys on Wall Street spending millions of dollars every day, every week, every month on lobbying in order to make sure we do not bring about the reforms to prevent them from continuing to do what they did, which caused this recession. These guys live in a world of their own, a world of entitlement. They do not seem to understand their actions have widespread consequences in terms of destroying the economic well-being of millions of people. All they seem to think about is, I only made $100 million last year. I can't get by on that. I need my 18th home or 16th car and 18th country club membership. For them, enough is never enough—more and more greed and more and more selfishness. That is an issue we have to deal with.

It only took a couple of weeks for Congress to give Wall Street the largest bailout in history, some $700 billion. But the truth is, up until this point we have done very little to make sure this financial crisis does not occur again. These guys want to go right back to where they were. They want the freedom to speculate, the freedom to convert their financial institutions into large gambling casinos. The Federal Government has provided $182 billion to AIG, $50 billion to Citigroup, $50 billion to Bank of America, a $25 billion bailout to Wells Fargo, a $25 billion bailout to JPMorgan Chase, and on and on it goes. Yet we have asked them for nothing in return. Here are tens of billions of dollars. What are you going to do? What are you going to do for the American people who have bailed you out?

I know reforming the banking sector is not going to be easy. After all, the banking and insurance lobbyists have spent over $5 billion on campaign contributions and lobbying activity over the past decade in support of deregulation. They were all over this place telling us, telling the Congress: Just trust us. Deregulate us. Let us do what we want to do. We are going to create wealth for all the American people.

There were some of my colleagues who actually believed that. I happened not to be one of them, but some of them did, and we deregulated and we let them do whatever they wanted to do and we are where we are today.

In 2007 alone, if you can believe this—this is what goes on—the financial sector employed nearly 3,000 separate lobbyists to influence Federal policymakers. Got that. There are 100 Members of the Senate, 435 in the House—that equals 535 Members of Congress—and they had nearly 3,000 individual lobbyists to influence Federal policymaking. Over a 10-year period, they spent $5 billion.

And that, my friends, is why the rich get richer and almost everybody else gets poorer. We have to address the issue of Wall Street. Let me make some suggestions as to what we have to do.

We need, in fact, a thorough investigation as to how this happened and we need to hold those people accountable. I hope we can do that. I think the American people are asking questions, and they are right to demand answers. But what we also have to do is to deal with this issue of ''too big to fail.'' What I have said ever since this financial crisis began is: If a financial institution is too big to fail, that financial institution is too big to exist.

We need to do exactly what Teddy Roosevelt did back in the trust-busting days, and we need to start to break up these huge financial institutions. We cannot continue to be held hostage by them such that if they fail, they take down the entire system with them so we have to prop them up and bail them out.

I would mention, interestingly enough, that is exactly what they are doing right now in the United Kingdom. Let me quote from the Washington Post:

> The British government announced Tuesday that it will break up parts of major financial institutions bailed out by taxpayers. The British government, spurred on by European regulators, is set to force the Royal Bank of Scotland, Lloyds Banking Group and Northern Rock to sell off parts of their operations. The Europeans are calling for more and smaller banks to increase competition and eliminate the threat posed by banks so large that they must be rescued by taxpayers no matter how they conducted their business, in order to avoid damaging the global financial system.

And you know what. Our friends in the U.K. are doing exactly the right thing. That is what we should be doing. But that is not just my opinion. A growing number of experts, both on the left and on the right, are coming to the same conclusion.

On October 15, Alan Greenspan, probably the man more than any other individual responsible for the deregulatory efforts which led to this financial crisis, admitted last year that his views on deregulation were wrong. He was quoted in Bloomberg News as saying:

> If they are too big to fail, they are too big. In 1911 we broke up Standard Oil—so what happened? The individual parts became more valuable than the whole. Maybe that's what we need to do.

Alan Greenspan, the man whose deregulatory leadership helped create this disaster, now perhaps understands that that whole philosophy of deregulation, letting big banks do whatever they want, letting them merge with insurance companies, maybe was not quite right.

Former Fed Chairman Paul Volcker, who has advised the Obama administration, supports breaking up big banks so that they no longer pose systemic risks to the entire economy. During a recent article in the New York Times, Volcker says:

> People say I'm old fashioned and banks can no longer be separated from nonbank activity. That argument brought us to where we are today.

Absolutely right. The New York Times said that under Volcker's plan:

> JPMorgan Chase would have to give up the trading operations acquired from Bear Stearns. Bank of America and Merrill Lynch would go back to being separate companies. Goldman Sachs could no longer be a bank holding company.

In my view, that is exactly what needs to happen. What insanity that when individuals lose their health insurance, tough luck; small businesses go bankrupt, tough luck; but if you are a large financial institution and you acted in a legal greedy way, we say: Hey, no problem. Taxpayers of this country are here to bail you out, because if we don't bail you out, you are going to bring down the entire economy. That is absurd. We have got to end that.

Robert Reich, President Clinton's former Labor Secretary, said:

> No important public interest is served by allowing giant banks to grow too big to fail. Wall Street giants should be split up—and soon.

I agree with former Secretary Reich.

Let me touch on a few other issues we have to have the courage to deal with. I get calls all the time. I do a national radio show—get it on the radio show, get it from Vermont. People are saying, We bailed out these large financial institutions and what they then do is say ''thank you'' and they raised my interest rates on my credit card to 25 or 30 percent.

That is outrageous. That is usury. We need to pass national usury laws. The truth is, today one out of four credit card holders in this country is paying interest rates above 20 percent, as high as 41 percent, more than double what they paid in interest in 1990.

What we need to do is pass national usury legislation. I have introduced legislation that would mandate that the maximum interest rates that could be charged would be 15 percent. The reason I came up with that number is that is exactly what credit unions are doing today, 15 percent, except under unusual circumstances.

I am proud that on that bill we have as cosponsors Senators DURBIN, LEAHY, LEVIN, HARKIN, and WHITEHOUSE. That is what we have to do. It is immoral. It is wrong for these large companies to be charging 25 or 30 percent interest rates.

It goes without saying that as we take a look at Wall Street, we have to reregulate those institutions. We have to take a hard look at bringing back Glass-Steagall in one form or another.

Lastly, we also need more transparency at the Federal Reserve. Last year when Secretary Bernanke came before the Budget Committee, I asked him a very simple question. I said: Mr. Chairman, my understanding is that you have lent out over $2 trillion at zero interest to some of the largest financial institutions in America. Can you tell me who got the money? I mean, you are putting taxpayer money at risk. Who received this $2 trillion-plus dollars? And, amazingly enough, what Mr. Bernanke said is: No, I am not going to tell you. It is a big secret. I cannot tell you.

Well, on that day we introduced legislation that would mandate that he tell us, and also we would bring about a GAO audit of the Fed. The Fed, especially since the financial collapse, has assumed an enormous amount of power, and the American people have a right to have more transparency there.

Let me conclude by saying that anybody who thinks this recession is over has obviously not talked to real people. Millions of people are hurting. Millions of people are frightened. They are looking to us for some help in terms of extending unemployment benefits, but they are also looking to us to understand the causation of this problem, and to work on economic ideas which will prevent a continued collapse of the middle class in this country.

We have got a lot of work on our hands, and I look forward to working with you.

I yield the floor.

EMPLOYMENT DISINCENTIVES

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, first, let me take this opportunity to commend the chairman and the other members of the Finance Committee on their collective efforts to extend benefits to those unemployed Americans who still face a tough job market in this difficult recession. Second, I would like to engage my good friend and colleague, the Senator from Montana and the chairman of the Committee on Finance, in a colloquy on a subject of utmost importance to the men and women who are currently unemployed. Specifically, I am concerned that under the current unemployment insurance, UI, extensions there may be disincentives for unemployed Americans to seek reemployment.

Mr. Chairman, I believe we can agree that unemployed adults who want to return to work should be given every incentive to return to work even if they accept part-time jobs or lower wages. This benefits not only those individuals and their families but also strengthens our national economy. However, it has come to my attention that many Americans who knew they were doing the right thing by accepting a job, even at greatly reduced wages from their previous employment, would

have been better off turning down meaningful work.

Mr. BAUCUS. I thank the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. LIEBERMAN, for bringing this matter to my attention. We certainly want to avoid a policy that inadvertently discourages Americans from returning to work.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I became aware earlier this year that some of my constituents in Connecticut are being penalized for working either part time or temporarily after first receiving emergency benefits. Further investigation shows that this problem is becoming more prevalent to varying degrees in many States and possibly all 50 States. Under current EUC extensions, if one receives emergency compensation and a year passes with no recorded work history, those benefits can continue uninterrupted while that person seeks employment. The problem often occurs, however, when a person takes a job, either part-time or short-term work, at much reduced wages compared to their previous employment. Because this lower wage work automatically qualifies them for reduced State benefits, Federal law now requires that they can no longer receive the much needed emergency extended compensation.

In a particular case, one of my constituents, a woman who worked on behalf of Connecticut children for 28 years before losing her job, was receiving the Federal benefits she was entitled to. But when this woman, who is the sole caregiver of her 88-year-old father, took a minimum-wage job 2 days a week, her benefits dropped from $483 per week to $38 per week. She would have been better off financially had she not returned to work and instead stayed home to care for her ailing father.

I am also advised by my State's labor department that many other constituents are becoming aware that taking employment at this time may disadvantage them, and some are therefore less inclined to accept employment. I also am told that more and more States are facing this problem and that the problem will grow as this recession continues. I hope the Finance Committee will look into this issue and consider legislative language which I have suggested to address this problem.

Mr. BAUCUS. Again, I thank my colleague for bringing this matter to my attention. You raise a serious concern, and I can assure you my committee will take a look at the issues you raise.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I was unavoidably detained during rollcall vote No. 332 on the motion to invoke cloture on the Reid/Baucus substitute amendment No. 2712 to the unemployment insurance extension bill H.R. 3548.

Had I been present I would have voted yea for rollcall vote No. 332 and ask that the RECORD reflect that.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, section 306(f) of S. Con. Res. 13, the 2010 budget resolution, permits the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee to adjust the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in the resolution for legislation that reduces the unemployment rate or provides assistance to the unemployed, particularly in the States and localities with the highest rates of unemployment, or improves the implementation of the unemployment compensation program. In addition, section 306(b) permits the chairman to adjust the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels for legislation providing tax relief or refundable tax relief. These adjustments to S. Con. Res. 13 are contingent on the legislation not increasing the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2009 through 2014 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2009 through 2019.

I find that S.A. 2712, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3548, the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2009, fulfills the conditions of the deficit-neutral reserve fund for unemployment mitigation. Therefore, pursuant to sections 306(f) and 306(b), I am adjusting the aggregates in the 2010 budget resolution, as well as the allocation to the Senate Finance Committee.

I ask unanimous consent that the following revisions to S. Con. Res. 13 be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010—S. CON. RES. 13; REVISIONS TO THE CONFERENCE AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 306(f) DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR UNEMPLOYMENT MITIGATION AND SECTION 306(b) DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR TAX RELIEF

[In billions of dollars]

Section 101	
(1)(A) Federal Revenues:	
FY 2009	1,532.579
FY 2010	1,614.788
FY 2011	1,935.431
FY 2012	2,137.235
FY 2013	2,298.817
FY 2014	2,520.688
(1)(B) Change in Federal Revenues:	
FY 2009	0.008
FY 2010	−51.198
FY 2011	−153.200
FY 2012	−223.158
FY 2013	−216.520
FY 2014	−112.970
(2) New Budget Authority:	
FY 2009	3,675.736
FY 2010	2,898.207
FY 2011	2,845.866
FY 2012	2,848.108
FY 2013	3,012.328
FY 2014	3,188.867
(3) Budget Outlays:	
FY 2009	3,358.952
FY 2010	3,010.241
FY 2011	2,971.521
FY 2012	2,883.055
FY 2013	3,019.952
FY 2014	3,175.217

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010—S. CON. RES. 13; REVISIONS TO THE CONFERENCE AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 306(f) DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR UNEMPLOYMENT MITIGATION AND SECTION 306(b) DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR TAX RELIEF

[In millions of dollars]

Current Allocation to Senate Finance Committee:	
FY 2009 Budget Authority	1,178,757
FY 2009 Outlays	1,166,970
FY 2010 Budget Authority	1,231,628
FY 2010 Outlays	1,232,134
FY 2010–2014 Budget Authority	6,851,258
FY 2010–2014 Outlays	6,850,666
Adjustments:	
FY 2009 Budget Authority	0
FY 2009 Outlays	0
FY 2010 Budget Authority	5,708
FY 2010 Outlays	5,708
FY 2010–2014 Budget Authority	6,639
FY 2010–2014 Outlays	6,639
Revised Allocation to Senate Finance Committee:	
FY 2009 Budget Authority	1,178,757
FY 2009 Outlays	1,166,970
FY 2010 Budget Authority	1,237,336
FY 2010 Outlays	1,237,842
FY 2010–2014 Budget Authority	6,857,897
FY 2010–2014 Outlays	6,857,305

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I support the substitute amendment before us.

The national unemployment rate is now 9.8 percent. In Kentucky, the unemployment rate is 10.9 percent. Millions of Americans are searching for work, and too many families are struggling and uncertain about their future. This is unacceptable.

When Congress passed the so-called stimulus bill earlier this year that cost $787 billion, not counting increased interest payments on the national debt, our national unemployment rate was 8.1 percent. Clearly, this costly legislation has failed to stop the bleeding of jobs from the American economy.

The bleak job picture makes it necessary to consider another extension of unemployment benefits. But if you talk to Americans who are searching for work, the best unemployment benefit we could extend to them is a high-quality job.

That is why I believe it is so important to include provisions in this bill that will actually create jobs and reduce unemployment. Over 2 weeks ago, I proposed an amendment that would provide net operating loss relief to businesses so they can hire and retain workers.

I also strongly supported Senator ISAKSON's efforts to extend the home buyer tax credit, which is critical for the millions of jobs that depend on the housing industry.

On October 27, I voted against cloture on the motion to proceed to this bill because there was no guarantee that a vote would be allowed on these two crucial provisions to improve the job situation for Americans.

Today, this substitute amendment includes both of these job-creating provisions.

Regarding net operating losses, businesses are generally allowed to offset their income with losses. Under current law, they can carry these losses back for 2 years and carry them forward for 20 years. In a difficult economy where businesses have experienced devastating losses, they may go out of business before they can recover their own money, or they may hang on and gradually recover their money when they return to profitability.

During tough economic times, Congress has extended the net operating loss carryback from 2 to 5 years so businesses can apply for immediate refunds. The logic behind this is that businesses should have access to their own money when it can do the most good and prevent massive layoffs. In an economic crisis, it makes no sense to delay tax refunds until some uncertain, distant point in the future. Businesses may not survive in the future if they do not have access to their own money today.

This relief is especially important in today's climate, where businesses find it increasingly difficult to get credit from banks.

That is why I am pleased that this substitute amendment responded to my call for substantial net operating loss relief, which will allow businesses to create and keep jobs. It also includes Senator ISAKSON's extension and expansion of the home buyer credit, which will stimulate jobs in the housing industry. The crisis in the housing market was a root cause of our economic crisis and it is essential to extend this temporary tax credit to help stabilize the market.

This amendment is not perfect. It is unfortunate that the unemployment benefit extension is financed by imposing taxes on businesses, and the net operating loss and home buyer provisions are offset by delaying tax relief that would make American businesses more competitive internationally. I had proposed an offset to my net operating loss amendment that would not have raised taxes or delayed tax relief, and my amendment would have provided more relief for job creation. However, legislation is rarely perfect, and on balance this amendment provides substantial tax relief and will spur job creation.

I urge my colleagues to support this substitute amendment, which will both extend unemployment benefits and extend tax relief that will reduce the number of unemployed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 45 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about health reform. This is my first speech from the floor on this subject. I have a lot to say.

By now, we have all heard the stories—at least those of us who have been listening—of those who have fallen through the cracks or, more accurately, the gaping holes. We know why those stories are important. They remind us that there are human beings behind these awful statistics.

Since 2001, 6.6 million Americans have lost their health insurance, and many millions more are underinsured. They have seen their health coverage become more and more expensive and less and less adequate. People suffer because of this. They lose their homes. They go bankrupt. They do not get the health care they need. They get sicker. They experience pain, physical and emotional. And they cannot care for their children. They suffer because of this.

During my campaign for the Senate, I did an event in Fergus Falls, the lovely town in Otter Tail County in west central Minnesota. A woman came up to me. She had a story to tell. She told me her father had gotten diabetes and died pretty quickly. But that was not the worst part of the story. She told me her dad received a lot of supplies from Medicare he had not used. She knew of a woman in town who had diabetes, so she decided to drive these supplies that her dad got for diabetes from Medicare to this woman's house. She did. She asked the woman if she could use any of the test strips and orthopedic shoes and other items. The woman said: Yes, I could use them.

Then this woman, the woman with diabetes, told this other woman that her 24-year-old son had diabetes too. He had had juvenile diabetes as a kid, and now he could not afford insurance because he had a preexisting condition. So this woman from Fergus Falls, this woman with diabetes, shares her insulin with her son, a diabetic mother and a diabetic son sharing insulin because he cannot afford health insurance in our country. Is this the kind of country we want to be? Well, the answer depends on what we do right here right now.

As we talk about reforming our health care system, I wanted to break that phrase ''health care system'' apart for a second, because we are talking about two things. The truth is we have some great health care in this country and a terrible system. We have dedicated, smart doctors and nurses and researchers and health professionals in this country. They do amazing things.

If you are a member of the Saudi royal family, you can get on your private jet and come to my State for the best health care in the world. The Saudi royal family is willing to travel 7,500 miles to Rochester, MN, for great care from the Mayo Clinic. For a woman in Fergus Falls, MN, and her adult son, both with diabetes, the same great care is less than 300 miles away, but it is really a world away. That is because if you are an American, you can get great health care too, but only if you make it through the terrible system, and only if you can afford it.

As I travel around Minnesota, when someone comes up to talk to me, I usually hear about three things. First, they say: Health insurance costs too much. What are we going to do about that? Second, they ask: What am I going to do if I get sick or my kid gets sick or my spouse gets sick? And then: Someone in our family has a preexisting condition. Then I lose my job or I want to change my job or I want to start a small business. How am I going to get health insurance then? And, third, if anything happens to me, something bad, am I going to lose everything? Am I going to go bankrupt?

In my view, the answer to those three questions comes down to two major changes. First, we need to reform our health insurance system so it provides security for every American. Secondly, we need to reform our health care system by putting more focus on prevention and by changing the way health care providers deliver health care so they provide high quality at a lower cost. We can do this. We know we can do this.

Let me take a moment to talk to the skeptics. One of the arguments I often hear from opponents of health care reform is that the majority of Americans are happy with the health care they have, and they are. Because the majority of Americans are healthy right now. The truth is, though, that even those who are happy with their coverage are not going to be happy for so long. Right now the average cost of family health insurance payments, including both the employer's and the family's share, is $13,375. That is double what it was 10 years ago. If we do nothing, those premiums will double again in the next 10 years, which means a family could be paying more than $30,000 per year for health insurance. As premiums rise, businesses are forced to drop employees, drop wages or drop coverage to keep up with cost. So even if you are happy with the coverage you have, it may suddenly be the coverage you no longer have because your employer can no longer provide it.

That is exactly what has happened. As premiums go up, so do the number of uninsured Americans. In my State, 355,000 Minnesotans lost employer-based coverage between 2001 and 2008.

There is another problem with the coverage you have. Often you can only find out what is actually covered when you get sick. You can only find out how hard it is to switch or get new coverage once you have been sick. That is why we need health insurance reform that provides true security. It is at those difficult times, when you are nervous and vulnerable and want to focus on dealing with your health

issues, that you realize how little security you have under this current system.

Let me tell you about Liz MacCaskie, who lives in Minneapolis. Liz lost her job in September. She is 58 years old, my exact age. She has been living with diabetes and was just diagnosed with kidney failure. Liz was denied private coverage because of her preexisting condition. The only insurance she can get now comes with a $5,000 deductible and an $8 to $900 monthly charge to maintain coverage. How does paying close to $20,000 a year for insurance count as insurance? It doesn't. Especially when Liz is trying to live on $1,000 a month while she takes job training courses and does part-time domestic work. As a result, Liz and her husband have been borrowing money from Liz's brother-in-law to make payments on their house. This is unconscionable.

Right now, if you have been sick, insurance companies can refuse to cover you—or charge you exorbitant premiums.

As an older woman told me at the State fair this summer: At my age, everything is preexisting.

Under our health care reform bill, we will stop insurance companies from denying you coverage or charging you more because of a preexisting condition. That is a very important, very good thing. Right now, if you are a woman who has had a C-section or you have been a survivor of domestic violence, health insurance companies can deny you coverage because having had a C-section or being the survivor of domestic violence is considered by some insurance companies to be a preexisting condition. Isn't that amazing? Is this the kind of country we want to be? The answer depends on what we do right here and right now.

Under our health care reform bill, we will end discrimination against survivors of domestic violence and stop insurance companies from charging women more for their health coverage just because they happen to be women, which health insurance companies are allowed to do now. Right now, if you get sick, your insurance benefits can run out when you need them the most.

Recently, I was contacted by a Minnesotan named Kathy. A few years ago, she was laid off and had to buy her own insurance. She was able to keep up with the cost until October of 2005, when she was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma. To pay her medical bills, Kathy exhausted her IRA and then had to file for bankruptcy. Kathy's cancer is under control, but her medical costs are over $10,000 each year. She makes $22,000 working part-time in a small CPA firm.

This isn't just an individual tragedy, it is a national travesty. Fifty percent of personal bankruptcies in this country are the result of a health care crisis, and 80 percent of those health care bankruptcies are people who have health insurance. I know people are sometimes surprised to find out that Europe has been doing this better than we have. I have to ask: Do you know how many personal bankruptcies there have been in Germany and in France and in Switzerland because of health care? The answer is zero. Under our health care reform bill, we will eliminate annual and lifetime caps on benefits. Americans will be able to access affordable health care and avoid going bankrupt when they get very sick. That is important. It is very good.

This bill guarantees secure coverage that will be there for all Americans and stay there when people need it. I know you might be thinking: Gee, covering every American, isn't that going to be expensive? Consider this: We already pay for the health care of Americans who don't have insurance. We just pay for it in the most inefficient way possible. Right now people without insurance go to the emergency room for health care, the most expensive possible way to deliver care. Those of us who do have insurance pay for it because it costs every insured family more than $1,100 a year in additional premiums. This cost shift occurs for two reasons. People are using the emergency room for primary care, meaning they are going whenever they get a cold or an ear infection, which is ridiculously inefficient, or, more likely, they are waiting until they get very sick, in which case it often means their health condition has progressed to a point that is very expensive to treat or maybe ultimately tragic.

According to a Harvard study, nearly 45,000 Americans die because they don't have health insurance. Is this the kind of country we want to be? The answer depends on what we do right here, right now.

The fact is, our irrational health insurance industry not only hurts our families, it also hurts our economy in so many different ways. I recently received a letter from James Solie from Moorhead, MN. He was an Air National Guard member for 32 years. During that time, his daughter was covered under TRICARE, the Department of Defense health care program for members of the uniformed services, their families, and survivors. Now that she is on her own, his daughter gets health care through her employer, one of the big-box stores. Her children were born with cystic fibrosis. Because of their significant health care needs, she can't leave her job.

As James wrote to me:

> My daughter is presently a hostage of her family's health insurance needs. She will keep working at that same store until the law is changed.

This is so common, there is actually a term for it. It is called job lock. If this woman had a brilliant idea for a new business or even just wanted to move to a better job, her need for health coverage would prevent her from doing so. That is not only bad for her, multiply it across millions of people and you see how bad it is for our economy.

We are supposed to be the most entrepreneurial society in the world, but because of our health care system, innovators are prevented from starting their own business. Talented or ambitious workers are prevented from moving on to more satisfying, more challenging, more productive jobs. We put at risk the very entrepreneurial spirit that defines us.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke today for a joint session of Congress. She was born in East Germany. When she was a kid, people would smuggle American books and American films into East Germany. Today she spoke on what inspired her the most about it. She said: the American dream.

We are denying millions of Americans their shot at the American dream because of our irrational health insurance system. This bill guarantees that you and your family always have access to stable, portable health insurance, even if you lose your job or get sick or both. It will end the job lock that handcuffs so many Americans.

Of course, guarantees of coverage and portability are hollow promises if they are not accompanied by something else: affordability. Over the last decade, the average health insurance premium for American families, including both the employer's share and the worker's share, has risen from just under $5,800 to nearly $13,400. That is an increase of $7,600 or 131 percent over the last decade. That is more than three times faster than Americans' average wages rose in that same period. Even if you stay healthy, these trajectories are unsustainable. Even if you have coverage, you could still be just a diagnosis or an accident away from bankruptcy.

This has to change right now. If your work-based health plan is expensive, you have no other option, unless you qualify for Medicaid. Under this bill, you will be able to get subsidized insurance if your coverage through work costs you more than a certain percentage of your income. Right now, if your employer doesn't offer you a health plan or you are unemployed, it is prohibitively expensive to buy it on your own. Under this bill, you will be able to access a range of affordable insurance options through a health insurance exchange. This exchange will be similar to a Travelocity for health insurance. All the plans have to meet basic standards, and you can match them up and compare them side by side so you can pick the one best for you and your family.

This isn't going to only help individual Americans. It will help businesses, small businesses. Right now, if you are a business with, say, 11 employees and one of your employees gets sick or pregnant, your premiums are going to go up dramatically. That is because your risk pool is 11 people. But when you choose a policy from the exchange, your risk pool can be a million or two. That is the point of insurance,

to spread the risk over as many people as possible.

In addition, small businesses will also be eligible to receive tax credits to help them purchase coverage for their workers. In Minnesota alone, over 72,000 businesses would be eligible for this assistance. That is what the subsidies and the exchange are all about: increasing the availability of insurance and making it affordable for families and small businesses.

That is also what so much of the debate surrounding a public insurance option is about. A public option creates more choice for consumers and more competition in the marketplace. People who are happy with their current plans would not need to change them. But millions of people who did not have health care options before would finally have an affordable choice. This is what the overwhelming majority of Americans want. It is the right thing to do. I would say to anyone who is against the public option, do not choose it for yourself, but do not deny other Americans that choice.

I remain steadfast in my support for a public option. But we should also recognize a public option is just one of several ways this bill seeks to control health care costs. All these changes, which will create security and promote affordability, will provide necessary and meaningful reforms to the health insurance system. But we need to remember the goal is not just a better insurance system; it is better, more affordable care. That requires not only changing the way insurers behave, it also involves the way we behave and the way our health care providers behave.

Total spending on health care in the economy has doubled over the past 30 years and now is about 16 percent of our GDP. That is almost double the average for western industrialized nations, which are at 8.9 percent. The CBO estimates that the percentage of our GDP spent on health care will double over the next 25 years to 31 percent of GDP if we do nothing.

Fortunately, we have the opportunity right now to act, and we know how to do it. We need to look no further than Minnesota. If my colleagues will indulge me for a bit of some home State pride, Minnesota has taken a national lead in many areas, including cost containment and community health. Part of it is because 90 percent of Minnesotans are covered by nonprofit health plans. It is also because we have models such as the Mayo Clinic, Allina, and HealthPartners, where physicians are paid to be part of a team, providing integrated care, centered on the patient as a patient, not as a profit center.

Patient-centered care is the key. The point is not just better, more efficient treatment for patients, it is that people do not want to be patients at all. The goal of health care is to prevent illness and then, if people get sick, to actually make people who are sick healthier, and then to keep them healthy.

To those ends, we need to see reform in three areas: incentives for better care, more focus on prevention, and a real commitment to contain costs. Let's start with incentives.

Right now, Minnesota providers are punished—punished—under Medicare for providing high-quality care at a low cost. According to the most recent data, Minnesota receives $6,600 per Medicare beneficiary per year and is second in the country for quality of care.

Texas averages more than $9,300 per beneficiary, with some of the worst health outcomes in the country. So Minnesotans are effectively paying doctors in Texas for excessive treatments and lousy outcomes.

Now, consider an innovative program I have seen in my home State: the Cardiac Care Program at Duluth St. Mary's Hospital. They aggressively manage patients with heart disease by helping people make lifestyle changes and making sure people get the followup attention they need. As a result, they have reduced hospitalizations by 80 percent and saved $1 million in 1 year.

But because the current system does not incentivize value, Duluth St. Mary's received no reward for these cost savings. In fact, a hospital that lets its cardiac care patients go unchecked until they need another procedure gets paid a lot for performing that procedure, even though their patients are less healthy.

Under the current Medicare reimbursement system, the good care gets punished and the less effective, more expensive care gets rewarded. We are not providing health care in this country; we are providing sick care. We need incentives for providers to reduce hospitalizations and commit time and resources to prevention. That starts with Medicare payment reform.

This is not an issue of State versus State. If we can get better outcomes at lower costs, it will be better for the entire country because it is the only way we will finally be getting a handle on the runaway cost of health care.

That is why I am so thrilled this health reform bill includes a provision to fundamentally improve the way we pay doctors. Thanks to the efforts of MARIA CANTWELL and my colleague, AMY KLOBUCHAR, and others, for the first time ever we will include what is called the value index in the Medicare payment structure. Doctors who provide high-quality care at a reasonable cost will no longer be punished. Instead, they will be rewarded for being effective partners in their patients' care.

That brings me to lifestyle and prevention. One of the most disturbing trends, for our health and our health care system, is the massive increase in obesity in this country. We know this increase in obesity will lead to increased heart disease and diabetes and increased health care costs for our country. But that future is not inevitable.

Today, Minnesota spends $1.7 billion per year on hospital costs for heart disease. But the residents of New Ulm, MN, have decided they are not going to contribute to those statistics anymore. New Ulm is a beautiful town in the heart of the Minnesota River Valley, about 90 miles southwest of the Twin Cities. The town is partnering with Allina Hospitals & Clinics and has made a commitment to reduce heart attacks by 25 percent over the next 10 years. To do this, the residents of New Ulm are working to bring down their high blood pressure and cholesterol, manage their diabetes, stop smoking, and start exercising. They have community cooking classes, workplace wellness initiatives, and free health screenings.

I visited New Ulm during the recess to see what these folks are doing and how determined they are to make changes in their lifestyles. This dedication to prevention and wellness will keep individuals in New Ulm living longer and living healthier. It will also save the health care system about $10 million over the next 10 years. When it comes to wellness, self-interest and the national interest are aligned.

This bill we are debating right now guarantees that routine checkups and preventive care, such as colonoscopies and mammograms, are covered by all insurance plans at no cost. We need to invest in those things that sometimes seem peripheral to good health but are essential to it: access to healthy foods and a safe environment for physical and social activity to address the alarming rise of obesity and the epidemics of diabetes and heart disease.

I thank my friend TOM HARKIN for his leadership in making sure the Prevention and Public Health Investment Fund is in the health reform bill. This fund will help Americans make the lifestyle choices that lead to better health. These investments will help Americans stay healthier and save money in the long run.

Another way to improve care and bring down its cost is to make sure a greater percentage of every health care dollar actually goes to health care, not wasteful administrative costs or advertising and profit.

While national health care plans spend less than 87 cents of the health care premium dollar on health care, Minnesota's nonprofit plans lead the Nation in keeping administrative costs low, spending 91 cents—91 cents—of every premium dollar on health care. Four cents may not seem like a lot until you remember that is 4 percent of $775 billion in private health insurance premiums a year.

This percentage—the 91 percent I was talking about—is called the medical loss ratio. It is a measure of how much of each health care dollar actually goes to health care. The medical loss ratio

for insurance plans in Minnesota is 91. Many individual and small health group plans across the country are closer to 60—meaning that 40 cents of every health care dollar goes to administration, advertising, and profits—all things that do not make people healthier.

That is why I have introduced legislation, the Fairness in Health Insurance Act, to mandate that 90 cents of every premium dollar must go to health services, not to unnecessary administrative costs or advertising or bloated executive salaries.

This builds upon the important work of my colleague, JACK REED, who pushed for disclosure of this information in the HELP Committee bill.

My house colleague, KEITH ELLISON, from Minnesota's Fifth District, has introduced similar legislation. The House has made progress on this issue by requiring a medical loss ratio of at least 85 percent for the small and large group insurance markets. And because administrative costs constitute such a high percentage of health costs, I want to go even further. Right now, there are hundreds of different private insurers that have hundreds of different claim forms and codes. Why so many different forms? Because the more complicated it is, the more different each form is, the more likely it will be filled out with an error.

Remember, a form filled out with an error allows the insurer to deny the claim. That is why I have called for every insurer to use a standard form for claims. Minnesota has done this on the State level and is saving money and preventing the headaches that providers have in trying to navigate these hundreds of different forms. Nationally, this is a great way to save a lot of money and a lot of paperwork.

You know who will like this? Doctors. Physicians reported spending the equivalent of 3 work weeks each year dealing with health care plans and having to devote additional resources to hire extra staff, not to provide care for patients but to do extra, endless paperwork.

When time is converted to dollars, the national cost to physician practices of dealing with health plans is between $23 billion and $31 billion each year. If we had a uniform billing and claims system, we could save up to $70 billion per year. Wow.

By moving to electronic medical records, we will reduce the number of duplicated tests. We would make it cheaper and easier for people to stay healthy and out of the emergency room. We would be on a path to lower costs for everyone by making health care patient-centered, not profit-centered.

I am proud of what we are doing in Minnesota—with institutions that are delivering care efficiently and effectively. But I recognize the truth of something one health care economist said to me at a health care roundtable I held in Minneapolis a couple months ago. He said:

Minnesota gets an ''A'' . . . but only because we're grading on a curve.

There is huge room for improvement all across America. That is why this is an incredible moment of opportunity for those of us in this Chamber and for the entire Nation.

As I said when I rose, we have great health care in this country but a lousy system. If we do not fix the system, millions more Americans will lose the care. Yes, this is complex stuff. That is why it is particularly important that nobody here injects into this debate misinformation that engenders fear. There has been too much of that already, and it has not resulted in anybody getting better care or moving us closer to a consensus.

So let's remember that behind the numbers we talk about are real people—real people who urgently need our help. As the saying goes: Statistics are people with the tears wiped off.

This is our chance to confront the biggest single threat to America's future and the greatest unmet moral obligation in our history all rolled up into one. That is what health care is. This is our chance to answer those questions Americans are asking, our chance to make life better for Liz MacCaskie and James Solie's daughter and Kathy and a mother and her son from Fergus Fall, MN. We have a chance to keep costs down for people who have insurance and finally provide coverage for those who don't. This is our moment to meet this great moral and economic challenge. So let's finish our work and overcome whatever legislative challenges remain.

We all want to look back on this day from an America in which everyone has stable, secure, affordable health care and say it wasn't the easiest thing, but it was the right thing, and together we were able to get it done.

There is so much more to say on health disparities, on fraud, abuse in the system, on mental health parity, on chemical dependency treatment, on chronic care, on rural health, on workforce issues such as the need for more primary care physicians, and so many other important topics. This is just a start, and I will certainly be back to say more.

I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARDIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO FEDERAL EMPLOYEE DR. STEPHEN ANDERSEN

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I rise once again to honor the service of one of our country's great Federal employees. Today, during these uncertain times, the American people face many challenges—one of them we share in common with all people throughout the world. What I speak of is the threat posed by climate change.

Just this morning, in a special joint session, we heard German Chancellor Angela Merkel on the importance of working together internationally to address climate change. We have come so far in the past three decades but much more needs to be done. So much depends on our ability to address this problem, including the long-term stability of our economy and our national security.

Since its creation in 1970, the Environmental Protection Agency has been at the forefront of reversing climate change. This week's great Federal employee not only spent over 20 years at the Agency, he is also someone we can thank for his leadership in implementing a landmark agreement that has already helped slow down climate change.

When Dr. Stephen Andersen first came to the EPA in 1986, he already had over a decade of experience in the field of climate and ozone protection. During his first year as part of the EPA's Stratospheric Protection Team, he worked with Soviet scientists to negotiate a joint effort to map the ozone by satellite. This was the first-ever United States-Soviet joint mission in space.

The following year saw the adoption of the Montreal Protocol in 1987. This crucial international agreement led to dramatic reductions in the chemicals that contribute to ozone depletion.

Stephen began serving as cochair of the Montreal Protocol Technology and Economic Assessment Panel in 1988. He worked tirelessly to convince hundreds of military and industrial experts to phase out the use of ozone-depleting chemicals on a voluntary basis. Over the course of 20 years, the Montreal Protocol was so successful that it helped prevent annual emissions of 11 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide. According to a crucial study by a team of environmental scientists Stephen himself led, the Montreal Protocol may have delayed the impact of climate change by 7 to 12 years. That doesn't even count the effects of other reductions made as a result of the treaty's influence.

Stephen led an effort a few years ago to encourage several of the world's highest emitting nations to strengthen the original treaty. His leadership led to nine countries agreeing to speed up the elimination of hydrofluorocarbons.

Today, Stephen continues to work on the science of combating climate change. He has focused much of his energy on helping to create voluntary partnerships between the EPA and the business community in order to promote green practices.

Stephen won a Service to America Medal last year for his long and distinguished career as an outstanding public

servant. I hope my colleagues will join me in honoring Dr. Stephen Andersen's service and that of all the dedicated employees of the Environmental Protection Agency. I know that as we continue making progress on this front, they will play an important role in America's global environmental leadership.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time—and will share it with the Senator from Minnesota, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and the Senator from Delaware, Mr. KAUFMAN—to talk a little bit about health care reform, health insurance reform, and the need for us to act.

Quite frankly, on behalf of middle-income families of America, the very worst option we could do is allow the status quo to continue.

During this time, I am going to be quoting from some letters I received from Maryland families who are hurting today. These are families, some of whom have health insurance but they cannot afford it or they are not certain they are going to have adequate coverage to deal with the needs of their families. They are looking to us to help them deal with the problem of health insurance today.

The first problem, quite frankly, is the fact that it is too expensive. Health insurance in America is too expensive for so many families. As the Senator from Minnesota knows, I use the numbers 6, 12, 23 frequently: $6,000 is what it cost a family in Maryland 10 years ago for a family health insurance policy. Maybe their employer paid part of it. Maybe they paid part of it. Then, it was $6,000 for adequate coverage. Today, that number is $12,000 a family. Many families in Maryland have a hard time affording $12,000 of their compensation going to pay for their health insurance. By 2016, it is going to be $23,000 for a family, if we don't do anything about health insurance reform.

Today, of that money families are spending, $1,100 represents what insured families are paying for people who don't have health insurance. I am frequently asked: What about these 46 million or 47 million Americans who have no health insurance, shouldn't they take care of themselves? I say: Yes, we should have personal responsibility, but today those who have insurance are paying extra costs for those who don't have insurance.

One of the most important points of health insurance reform is to make sure everybody pays their fair load to reduce the cost of those who currently have health insurance.

(Mr. TESTER assumed the chair.)

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CARDIN. Yes.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. That is a very important point about the hidden tax. When I was county attorney in Minnesota, representing one of our biggest hospitals in the State, a lot of people came in who didn't have a doctor. Their doctor was the emergency room. Their doctor still is the emergency room, and it is incredibly expensive. If you could explain that a little more because many people don't understand that when people don't have insurance, we are still paying for them. They call it the hidden tax.

Mr. CARDIN. I thank my colleague for the question. The Senator is right. People who have no health insurance do what they can do. They use the emergency room as their doctor. They use the emergency room when they should not be using it. It is very expensive; it costs a lot of money. By the way, they don't pay their bills. It becomes part of what is known as uncompensated care in our hospitals. What is more serious is, they don't get the preventive health care they need. They get the more intense services than if they had access to our health care system from the beginning. They use the emergency room, as the Senator from Minnesota is referring to, and they don't pay their bills, and that becomes uncompensated care. All of us who pay the hospital bills and pay for our services also pay for what the uninsured are using in the emergency rooms, which adds to the cost of hospital care and adds to the cost of our insurance premiums that we pay for family policies. In Maryland, that amounts to $1,100 a year. That is what you and I are paying for those who don't have health insurance because they are using the health care system and not paying their bills.

Part of health care reform is that everyone should have access to affordable, quality health care and health insurance.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CARDIN. Yes.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Isn't it true that when these people don't get prevention, don't have a doctor, don't get the vaccines and the shots they need and they don't go to the emergency room until they are very sick, what happens is they go to intensive care or something or they have a much more serious illness that can go on for weeks and months under intensive care and the price goes up and up?

Mr. CARDIN. The Senator from Delaware is absolutely right. There have been studies done comparing two individuals with the same health care condition, one with insurance and one without insurance. The person who doesn't have insurance uses more health care services than the one who has health insurance, and it is for the reason the Senator said. The person with health insurance will have a much earlier intervention or gets preventive health care, will take blood pressure medicine or cholesterol medicine or will have tests that discover illness at an early stage or prevents an illness; for example, with colon cancer, a polyp can be discovered before it becomes cancerous. A person without insurance doesn't get those services. They enter the system in a much more costly way, which may lead to hospitalization that wouldn't have been necessary if they entered the system at an earlier stage, but they cannot because they have no health insurance. So the Senator is right.

One of the things we do is try to help the families who have health insurance. We can end insurance company abuses. That is a very important point. The health insurance reform package we are looking at will end health insurance company abuses. All the bills reported out of the committees do that. You cannot be denied coverage due to preexisting conditions. There will be no more annual or lifetime caps on benefits. They cannot charge more or drop your coverage if you get sick. It requires them to fully cover preventive care and checkups.

I have received—and my colleagues have, I am sure—letters from people in my State. I wish to tell you how important these health insurance reforms will be in helping middle-income families. I have one example, and I am sure my colleagues can cite others. Here is a letter I received last month from Kevin, who lives in Kensington, Montgomery County.

Kevin is a healthy, nonsmoking, 54-year-old father who was laid off and has recently started his own company. He has two high school-aged children. He recently completed the Marine Corps marathon and has been an avid runner and swimmer all his life. I daresay most of us could not do that.

After Kevin was laid off, all four family members applied for coverage in the individual market. However, Kevin and his two children were denied access to comprehensive coverage because of preexisting conditions. Listen to this. Kevin was denied coverage because the insurance company said he had a history of upper respiratory symptoms. Actually, he has only had two chest colds in the last 6 years. Five years ago, tests showed a very small amount of scar tissue in his lungs, but doctors have concluded this is not a health issue or risk. Yet he was denied coverage because of a preexisting condition. It is important to get health insurance reform passed because insurance companies will not be able to discriminate based on preexisting conditions—that don't even exist, in Kevin's case.

Kevin's daughter's coverage excludes benefits related to any injury to any part of her back. This is because she once had a minor slipped disc, which has not caused her pain in more than 2½ years. This is a common condition among teenage girls, but the insurance company is refusing to cover back injury. Her doctor has written to the insurance company stating that she ''has no more likelihood of needing medical services than any other patient her age.'' Yet today, Kevin is denied full coverage for his daughter.

It gets even worse. Kevin's son was also refused coverage for his knee because he was diagnosed with growing pains that required no treatment. This means Kevin's son will not be covered for any injury to his knees at any time in the future.

Kevin writes:

> We have a healthy, physically active family. No doubt healthier and in better shape than 98 percent of the families in this country. And we're told that 3 of the 4 of us are too great a risk to be fully covered. . . .
>
> We are victims of a health care system that is horribly broken, and our experience in trying to get health insurance for our family—a family that has no chronic health conditions requiring medical treatment—has turned us into strong supporters of health care reform.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. CARDIN. Yes, I am glad to yield.

Mr. KAUFMAN. This thing with preexisting conditions is incredible. You hear this everywhere you go. In Dover, DE, we have Angela Austin, a recent mother. She works as a bartender. Most of her earnings come from tips. She doesn't get health insurance from her employer.

When Angela became pregnant, she tried to find private health insurance, but she was repeatedly denied coverage because her pregnancy was considered a preexisting condition. She applied for Medicaid—to find prenatal care for her and the baby—but was denied coverage because she earned $200 more than the monthly limit allowed.

She called organizations and clinics and was unable to find a payment plan she could afford. Midway through her pregnancy, Angela decided to cut back her work hours so she could qualify for Medicaid. She worked all 9 months of the pregnancy and delivered the baby on May 27.

The Medicaid coverage she got was especially crucial because she had complications from hyperthyroidism and was able to get the necessary prescriptions to control the condition.

The story gets even worse. Angela was so anxious that everything possible be done to ensure a healthy baby, the system threw up roadblocks.

Pregnancy should not be considered a preexisting condition. What is more, no one should be denied coverage because of a preexisting condition. There are many cases where people are totally healthy, and they have been denied coverage because of preexisting conditions. We are going to pass a bill that eliminates not being acceptable for preexisting conditions.

Mr. CARDIN. I think people in this Nation would be shocked to hear about that situation and for someone who is totally healthy being denied full coverage because the insurance company just wants to deny coverage, just wants to pay less claims in the future, so it finds reasons to restrict coverage, even though that person is as healthy as anybody in the general public but is being denied coverage today.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. CARDIN. Yes.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I also was listening to this and thinking, about a week ago, I was at an event that Mrs. Obama, the First Lady, put on for breast cancer in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. There were three women there who all had breast cancer. They were all survivors, and they had incredibly low rates of possibly getting breast cancer again because of advances in science. I was stunned to hear of their difficulty. Even though their possibilities of getting breast cancer again were so low, it was still considered a preexisting condition for an insurance policy. A recent example, when you think about it hitting middle-class families—and some of the people watching this on C–SPAN may have seen this on television—a little boy named Alex was denied coverage by his family's health plan. Alex's parents have coverage through their employers, similar to so many middle-class Americans. But their 4-month-old son Alex, who weighed 17 pounds—and my daughter was one of those low percentages when she was born. He weighed 17 pounds at 4 months old, so he was denied coverage. The insurance company claims this was a preexisting condition for the otherwise healthy baby because of his weight.

Here is the interesting part—and I know the Presiding Officer from Montana will appreciate this. After his family went on TV with the little boy, then the insurance company changed its mind and, suddenly, decided to cover him. I guess the lesson is that middle-class families have to go on TV to make their case in order to get coverage or when a woman who has been a victim of domestic abuse is denied coverage—which is considered to be a preexisting condition in eight States—maybe if she was willing to talk about her domestic abuse on TV, there would be a change of heart. That is not good enough—coverage by cable TV—for the majority of Americans. They need stability in the system. They need a guarantee that they are going to have coverage. I thank the Senator from Maryland for raising this important issue.

Mr. CARDIN. If I might mention another family in Maryland, a typical family—Marvin and Lillian, who live in Chevy Chase, who are grandparents. I can relate to that, having two wonderful granddaughters. Marvin is a retired Federal Government employee. Both he and his wife Lillian have Medicare. They are in pretty good shape. However, they are worried about their grandchildren.

They have a grandson who is 14 years old. He has Crohn's disease and dwarfism. He currently has coverage through his parents, but his family is petrified that he will be denied coverage when he is no longer able to receive insurance through his parents. Because of his preexisting conditions, it will be extremely hard for him to find individual coverage while job hunting or adequate coverage while at school. Without reform, high health care costs will preclude him from starting his own business or working for a small business owner.

Marvin writes:

> My grandson's future employment prospects will be limited because he will need an employer with a large group plan to ensure good coverage. If he gets sick without coverage, or very limited coverage, it would be a disaster.

It is truly unacceptable that in America today, because of the way our health insurance system operates, that a person's future and what type of job that person can seek is limited because of a preexisting condition. That does not make this Nation as competitive as we need to be. We can certainly do a much better job on that now.

There are two good points here. One is that we eliminate preexisting conditions. That would be taken care of. We also provide coverage through the age of 26 so that you can keep a child on your family plan coverage through the age of 26. I think this is going to be a very popular issue. This is one area that does not cost a lot of money. Children in their early twenties are not at high risk. It is unlikely this will add greatly to the insurance premium cost—in fact, it will not—but it does give greater assurances for those children who are not yet fully in the workplace—so they do not have the opportunity to get an affordable health insurance product—that they can stay on their parents' policy until age 26. That is another way we are going to help families.

Lastly, the other area we want to be sure is done is when people change jobs. We know this is a very mobile workforce; people change jobs much more frequently today than they did 10 years ago. This bill will make sure you always have health insurance, even if you lose or change your job. You are not going to be locked into a company because you don't want to lose your health benefits. I must tell you, I hear that frequently from people in Maryland. I am sure my colleagues hear it in Minnesota and Delaware. People say: I want to change jobs, but I can't because I don't want to lose my health benefits. That should not be a reason someone shouldn't be able to look for other opportunities. When we get health insurance done, people will be able to get insurance regardless of where they work. There will be affordable coverage for all Americans. That will help middle-income families. That is our objective. That is what we are trying to do.

Another area I want to mention briefly is small businesses. We hear frequently that small business owners have a hard time finding affordable insurance. I will give a couple examples of people from Maryland.

Steven from Annapolis is a self-employed small business owner. Steven's health care premiums have increased by unmanageable amounts. Steven is currently paying 55 percent more for

his family health insurance than he was 14 months ago—a 55-percent increase in 14 months. The premiums for Steven and his family, all of whom are healthy, are approaching $10,000 annually. In August, his premiums increased 24 percent, after having increased 25 percent in 2008. He wakes up in cold sweats worried about how he can afford such high costs. Steven sent me his most recent health insurance bill, which showed the 24.1-percent increase.

Steven writes:

> We are worrying about these problems 24 hours a day. That is no exaggeration.
>
> Small business people wake up in a cold sweat, as I have done many times through the course of this difficult recession, wondering how we are going to meet our client deadlines, pay our bills, and be a good father and husband all at the same time.

For small businesses, if you have one bad experience with health care during the year, you can expect a large premium increase the next year. It is one thing about health insurance being expensive as it is, but if you are a business owner, how can you plan your company budget when you don't know what your health premiums are going to be the next year?

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. CARDIN. I will be glad to yield to my friend from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. One of the things I have learned in the past year meeting with small business owners is this huge disparity. Small businesses pay 20 percent more. The ones that are the bedrock of our entrepreneurial system in this country pay 20 percent more than big businesses for health care. Their employees are in a small business, but the ones who need it the most, the ones who probably make less income, pay 20 percent more for health insurance.

I was up in Two Harbors, MN, visiting a little backpack company that has done such a good job. They now make backpacks for our troops because they are lighter weight and better for their backs. This little company started with a few employees; it now has 15, 20 employees.

When the owner of that company started it, he didn't have kids. He now has two kids—four in their family. He is paying $24,000 a year for his health insurance. This is a little tiny backpack company in Two Harbors, MN. When the Senator from Maryland was telling us about people having to adjust, they cannot plan, he told me if he had known when he started that much of his profits were going to go into his health insurance, he would not even have started the company to begin with.

This not only hurts our employees, it actually stops small businesses from starting—the incubator of so many of our great ideas in this country and jobs in this country. This is truly something that needs to be solved because it is hurting jobs in this country, the fact that it is so difficult for small business owners to afford health care.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Will the Senator yield for a minute?

Mr. CARDIN. I yield to the Senator from Delaware.

Mr. KAUFMAN. This is another example. It is not just Delaware, Maryland, Minnesota, California, or New York. On the same subject, Ian Kaufman—no relation—moved to Delaware right out of college in 1990. Unfortunately, like far too many Americans today, he got laid off from his job. To get back on his feet, he wanted to start his own business. In the process, Ian picked up COBRA coverage to ensure his family maintained health care insurance. When he first signed up for COBRA coverage, his monthly premium was $1,800—a lot of money each month. Thanks to the COBRA provisions, however, in the stimulus bill, Ian saw his payments reduced by 66 percent, which made his monthly premiums much more manageable. However, this premium assistance will soon run out, and then he will be back once more to paying $1,800 a month. In anticipation of higher COBRA payments, Ian applied for coverage at BlueCross BlueShield but was turned down. They never gave him a reason. He suspects—what we were talking about earlier—that there was a preexisting condition of one of his daughters.

Ian worries, like so many Americans, that the high cost of providing health care to his family, in addition to the difficulty of finding a willing policy provider, will affect his ability to stick with his startup business—the point my colleagues were making of starting up a business and being worried about health care.

Unfortunately, Ian's health insurance predicament as a self-employed businessman is not uncommon. There are entirely too many sole proprietors and small businesses that cannot afford health policies for themselves, their families, and any employees they might have, thereby killing the innovators of our system, the people who create the jobs, the people who made America great, the small businesspeople. They cannot go into business because they are worried about health care not just for their employees, but they have to worry about health care for themselves and their families. We have to change that if we are going to get innovation back in the country and small businesses up and running.

Mr. CARDIN. Small businesses are clearly the driving force behind job creation in America. The Senator from Delaware is absolutely right. Innovation comes from small business. They are so discriminated against under our current health care system. Middle-income families, in large measure, work for small businesses, and they are absolutely disadvantaged today because of the system.

The status quo is unacceptable. We need to enact insurance reforms under what we have here. Small companies can benefit the same as large companies, with much larger pools, much more affordable plans, more choices.

There are really no options for small businesses today. They do not have a lot of companies willing to write the policies. It is interesting, in my State of Maryland, two insurance companies write 71 percent of the private insurance business. If you are a small business owner, you are either going to be with one of those companies or you are not going to be able to find insurance. They can pretty much dictate.

One more example. Robert, who lives in Baltimore, is a married architect who has health insurance with one of our large insurance companies. His insurance for himself and his wife is $20,000 a year—$20,000 a year. As a small businessperson—listen to this—not only does he have to pay these high premiums, but if he needs to find a gastroenterologist in order to do a test, there are plenty of gastroenterologists in his neighborhood, but the insurance company will not cover a doctor in that area. He has to travel all the way across town. He says he spends more time finding out who will treat him because he doesn't have a choice of plan. He has to be in this plan. So there is a lot of wasted money in the system he has to go through.

By the way, if you are in a small business, running a small business, you have to spend time on your business. If you don't spend time on your business, you are not going to make it. If you have to spend time to figure out what doctor you can see under the small print in your insurance plan, you are not going to succeed as a businessperson.

There are a lot of good reasons why we need health insurance reform in America. There are a lot of good reasons we need to act, a lot of good reasons middle-income families are depending on us to fix this broken system—it is too expensive, not enough choice. The health insurance reforms coming out of our committees all provide much more choice and option and protection to the people in our communities.

Mr. KAUFMAN. One of the great ironies in this whole health care debate, which is full of ironies, is I talk to so many small businesspeople, and they are scared of the public option. They have been scared by the ads and things on television. As you say, for a small businessperson, the public option is going to be their choice to get the health care they need, simple health care that is laid out for them that makes a lot of sense.

One of the big things we have to get through to people is exactly what the story is here and what really will help them get their health insurance so we can have small businesses built up, get more employees, create more jobs, and create the jobs we need for the country.

Mr. CARDIN. The public insurance option is another choice. There is more competition. It brings down costs. That

is why we support a public option. It is a reliable product you know is going to be there.

If you are living in western Maryland—and there are not a lot of insurance companies there—you know there is a public option, that plan will be there for you. You know it is going to be affordable. You know it is not going to leave town, as some of the private insurance companies did that used to insure Medicare. These plans will be there.

It is also going to act as strong competition for the private insurance companies so they know they have to be competitive. Today, again, it is not competitive. There are not enough companies there.

The private insurance option will offer people, such as Robert whom I mentioned, another option, another choice, an affordable plan. That is what he is looking for. He cannot afford $20,000 a year. He is looking for a premium much more affordable than $20,000 a year, and the public insurance option gives him that choice.

One other thing about the public option that needs to be clarified. There are those who say: This is a government takeover. Is Medicare a government takeover? The answer is no. There has not been one Senator come to this floor to say we should repeal Medicare. Medicare has been a very successful program.

By the way, health insurance reform will strengthen Medicare. Why? Because the way to bring down Medicare costs is to bring down health care costs. What we have been doing year after year is picking on Medicare, saying we are going to control health care costs by reducing Medicare. We cannot do it. You have to bring down health care costs to bring down Medicare costs. And what we do is strengthen the Medicare benefits by giving additional benefits, starting to fill that doughnut hole under the prescription drug plan, offering preventive care to our seniors. So we are strengthening the Medicare Program. The doctors and the hospitals are all private, as they would be under a public option. This is a way of providing more competition, quite frankly, keeping the private insurance companies a little bit more competitive and honest as they do their marketing, to make sure we get value for the dollars we are paying for our health insurance premiums.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Again, once more, the irony. Isn't it an incredible irony that people come to the floor and talk about reducing the deficits, reducing the deficits, reducing the deficits, but they don't have health care reform. We know the major cause for the increase in deficits is Medicare and Medicaid, not because they are bad programs but because health care costs explode. There is no way they cannot get greater. That is our biggest challenge in terms of deficit reduction. We have to do something about Medicare and Medicaid costs.

People talk about deficits and then say we don't need health care reform, why don't we slow down, we don't need it now, this is not important. We cannot deal with our deficits if we don't deal with health care costs because without dealing with health care costs, we cannot deal with Medicare and Medicaid. The Senator is absolutely right.

Mr. CARDIN. Health care costs are growing about three times what wages are growing in America today. That means a government that pays for Medicaid and Medicare will continue to pay a larger amount of the budget for health care unless we can get health care costs under control. It also means American families are going to be paying more of their income for health care unless we get health costs under control.

So how do we get health care costs under control? We do it by prevention and we do it by wellness and by streamlining the bureaucratic system, by using health information technology more effectively and by managing diseases. We do it in a way that brings down health care costs and improves access and quality, and that is what we are doing.

The Senator from Delaware is absolutely right. Our goal is quite simple: bring down the escalating cost of health care, provide access to affordable quality health care for every American family, and do it in a fiscally responsible way.

The Senator from Minnesota, Ms. KLOBUCHAR.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Well, I thank Senator CARDIN. As I was listening, I was thinking about how I first got involved in this whole debate. My story is like so many moms and middle-class parents. It involved rules, rules that made no sense when it is your family's health at stake.

When my daughter was born, she was very sick. She couldn't swallow. They thought she had a tumor. She was in intensive care overnight. Back then, the insurance companies had a rule that you could only stay in the hospital 24 hours—new moms and their babies. For some people, when you have been in labor for 24 hours and you think your daughter might die for 24 hours, it doesn't make sense. So 24 hours after giving birth, I was kicked out of the hospital. I was wheeled out of the hospital while my daughter was there in intensive care.

I thought to myself: This is never going to happen to anyone again. I went to the legislature with a number of other moms and got one of the first bills passed in the country guaranteeing new moms and babies a 48-hour hospital stay. I still remember the conference committee where we had a number of lobbyists who couldn't say they were against the bill, but they were trying to delay the implementation. They were trying to make it so that it wouldn't take effect for years and years and years.

I finally decided to bring my pregnant friends to that conference committee so they outnumbered the insurance company lobbyists 2 to 1. When the legislators said: When should this bill take effect, all the pregnant moms raised their hands and said: Now. And that is what was happening.

I can tell Senator CARDIN, this is what the American people are saying. They are saying: Now. They need reform now because of what you have just talked about—the fact that costs have been escalating and escalating, and it is becoming more and more unaffordable for so many middle-class Americans.

In 2008, employer health insurance premiums increased by 5 percent, two times the rate of inflation. Everyone feels it. Everyone knows what I am talking about.

When people throw out all these numbers—and we hear all these numbers from the other side—I believe you only have to know three numbers. Senator CARDIN brought them up before, three simple numbers. They are easy to remember: 6, 12, and 24.

What do the numbers 6, 12, and 24 represent? Well, $6,000 was the cost of insurance for the average American family 10 years ago. They were paying that in their premiums. They are now paying $12,000. Some people are paying a lot more, such as the small business owner I talked about in Two Harbors, MN. But the average is $12,000.

What do the studies show? They show that in 10 years people in Billings, MT, people in Delaware, people in Baltimore, people in the tiniest towns in this country will be paying an average of $24,000 a year. Do you think they are going to be able to afford that, the average middle-class family, $24,000 a year? I think every family can look at their own checkbook and figure out that answer. That is why we need health care reform now.

I think of the people I have heard from in my State, such as Jan in Plymouth who wrote the other day about her 20-year-old daughter Jennifer. Jennifer was diagnosed almost a year ago with Hodgkin's lymphoma. She made it through chemotherapy but is still being monitored. She had to continue going to college to keep her health care coverage. Despite having good health care insurance, Jan and her husband had to use their retirement fund to cover the out-of-pocket expenses of Jennifer's chemotherapy. Jennifer has since taken some time off from school to recover and is going to be transferring to a new school soon. Her parents don't know how they are going to keep her insured.

That is why the point was made about this plan allowing parents to keep their kids on their insurance until they are 26 years old. I can't tell you what good news that is to the parents of America who are struggling and who are thinking: Once my kid goes to college, what is going to happen because they would not have a job? How are they going to get insurance?

Now, until they are 26 years old, they are going to get insurance. That would

help this family in Minnesota tremendously.

The preexisting conditions—I talked about three women with breast cancer who were there with the First Lady—unbelievable stories of people who, through no fault of their own, get a disease, they are not sick anymore but they get thrown off their insurance policies; kids who are a little overweight or a little underweight—the only way they can get rid of this thing off their backs and get health insurance is by going on TV? I think we would have to have permanent TV stations going around the clock to cover all these families who want to get their preexisting conditions off their backs. That is not going to work in this country. The better way is to pass health care reform.

The Senator from Maryland brought up the cost, and I can tell you that for a lot of people in Minnesota, that is the No. 1 issue I hear: How can we afford this? What can we do about it? Well, I can tell the Senator from Delaware—and I see the Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, is here, and he has been working hard on the Medicare fraud issue on the Judiciary Committee, as well as the Senator from Maryland—that 3 to 10 percent of our health care dollars go down the tube to crooks, to con men, and we are not doing anything about this. There is money in the system, and it is just going to the wrong places.

Another way to solve this is with trying to put more quality measures into our system, trying to have high quality care at the lowest cost. People understand if you go to a hotel and you spend more money on a room, you tend to get a better room, a bigger room, with a nicer view. With health care, it is not the case. With health care, some of the highest cost places have the lowest quality care. So one of the things that health reform allows us to do is to put in those high-quality measures.

So we start having incentives. We say to hospitals: If you have less infections in your hospital, which means more people live, you will be treated better in the system. So we will put in incentives so that doctors treat their patients better and, believe it or not, that is the way we are going to save money.

Why is that? So many times the way the system operates, it is about reimbursing for every little test, every little thing you do, instead of looking at the rules or looking at the quality of care that you can get at the end of the road. And that is what we want to do with this legislation. There is a value index in this legislation.

The bill that came out of the Finance Committee, which Senator CANTWELL and I have worked hard on, let's us look at the value to the patient. Let's put patients in the driver's seat so they can get the value, so middle-class families can get the same kind of health care that Members of Congress get, so they can get the kind of value they want out of their health care.

So when we look at how we can pay for this, there are so many ways. We can not only save some money, such as plug that doughnut hole so that seniors can get better deals on their prescription drugs, but we can do it so we can give people higher quality care. We are going to link rewards to outcomes to create the incentives for doctors and hospitals to work together to improve quality and efficiency. That is what we are trying to do.

So I thank Senator CARDIN for bringing up this issue of cost because for so many middle-class families in my State, they understand we want to have not only more affordable care but also high-quality care. They do not like these kinds of mistakes that go on, and there are some things we can do by creating incentives for safer procedures and for better standards for hospitals and for doctors that I think could go a long way toward paying for a lot of what we need to do.

Mr. CARDIN. I thank my colleague from Minnesota. She has been a real fighter for middle-income families and working families in America and in Minnesota and has brought out these issues of how we can improve the standard of living.

I think the point the Senator raises is one that needs to be underscored. Today, working families, middle-income families are seeing an erosion of their income. They are seeing more and more of their compensation going to pay for health benefits. If their employers are paying for it, it means less take-home money for them in their paychecks. If they have to pay the cost, they are seeing more and more of an increase. Again, health care costs are going up three times what wages are going up in America. So middle-income families are falling behind every year, and they are depending on us to speak up for them.

They are also paying a hidden tax—a hidden tax. Middle-income families today are spending $1,100 a year paying for those who don't have health insurance. We talked about that earlier. That is a hidden tax. We have to get rid of that tax.

One of the things we do in our health insurance reform is to get rid of that tax by saying that everyone has to be responsible for their own health care costs. Why should I pay for someone who today could have health insurance but chooses not to have health insurance?

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. If the Senator will yield, I think it is unfair to middle-class families who are trying to save every penny so they can send their kids to college—and those costs are going up—and to put food on the table and fill their car with gas, to have this hidden tax where they are paying for people who aren't getting health insurance or can't afford health insurance. That is why I think one of the most important things for people to understand about this bill is that we are already paying for these people who don't have health insurance. So let's make it more efficient and work for everyone so you can get some benefit out of this yourself.

Mr. CARDIN. It is interesting that one of the ways we can save money from the Medicare system is to get everybody to pay their health care bills. Our seniors are paying higher costs under the Medicare system because people use the system who are not Medicare beneficiaries and don't pay for it. So Medicare, every year, pays a premium to our hospitals called DIS—the disproportionate share—for the uncompensated care in the hospitals. The Medicare system is paying for that. Our seniors could be getting better benefits if everyone paid their own way rather than having our seniors subsidize those who have no health insurance.

So these are ways in which we do help middle-income families in America.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I was just with a group of seniors this past weekend in Richfield, MN, and they are worried because they hear about these numbers—that by 2017, if we don't do something, Medicare will go in the red. Those seniors are living longer and longer lives, which is a great thing. Hopefully, my mom is watching right now; she is 82 years old. But those who are 65 want to have Medicare when they are 95 years old, and those who are 65 want to make sure Medicare is there for them when they are 90 years old. That is why it is so important to look at this reform and make sure this is working for the seniors.

The doughnut hole, I am so tired of worrying about that problem. These seniors have their health care coverage for their drugs, and then it vanishes and goes down the doughnut hole. One of the great things I like about this health care reform is that it will help them pay for the doughnut hole. I think 50 percent of those costs they will not have to worry about anymore.

Mr. CARDIN. Not only will we be able to help them with the doughnut hole on prescription drugs, we will be able to provide them better health care services with lower copayments and deductibility, and we are providing a stronger system.

Look, I think we all have a common interest. If you are a family that currently has health insurance, if you are a small business owner who is covering your employees, if you are covered under the Medicare system today, you all have an interest in making sure we pass the health insurance reform that is being debated now in the Congress.

For those who have insurance, it will make your coverage more affordable in the future. It will eliminate this hidden tax, and it will enact significant health insurance reforms to protect you against the arbitrary practices of private insurance companies.

If you are a small business owner, it will give you more competition, more reliable premiums without being increased radically on a yearly basis. It

will provide competition so that you can get the same benefits a large company can get with larger pools.

If you are in the Medicare system, it takes some of the cost out of Medicare that you are currently subsidizing for people who are uninsured. It firms up our health care system, which is good for Medicare in the future as far as keeping it safe and sound, and it allows us to expand benefits, such as the prescription drug benefit, and get rid of that doughnut hole.

So we are all in this together. But the only option that we cannot afford to have is the status quo. The letters we have read on the Senate floor from people who are literally being forced out of their current coverage, who are being discriminated against by insurance companies because of preexisting conditions that don't even exist, they are depending upon us to act.

I see the assistant majority leader is here, and I mention that because Senator DURBIN has been one of the real leaders in taking on some of the tough interests in our country—taking on the tobacco companies and dealing with tobacco and children, taking on prescription drugs to make sure we have affordable drugs in America. So I thank him for his leadership because I know he has been one of the real leaders on this issue in the Senate.

I know all of us will do everything we can to help middle-income families. We have worked hard to strengthen Medicare over the years, fought the efforts by those who wanted to privatize Medicare, who wanted to weaken Medicare, and we are committed to making sure that these programs are strengthened, are continued, and that is why we are so passionate about the need for us to take up health insurance reform, for us to make sure we protect middle-income families.

Mr. DURBIN. If the Senator will yield for a question?

Mr. CARDIN. I am glad to yield.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Minnesota, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Senator CARDIN from Maryland for their leadership coming to the floor. I have been following the floor all day.

I heard from the other side of the aisle a litany of complaints that they have about health care reform. Leading off in the complaints about health care reform is the number of pages in the bill. The fact is, there is no Senate bill; it is in preparation at this moment. But the Republican side of the aisle, starting with Senator MCCONNELL, the leader, through other Senators, continues to come to the floor and bemoan the fact that this bill may actually reach 2,000 pages in length. I don't know that it will. I don't know that it will not. I don't know that it makes any difference. I don't think people back home really care if this is a short bill or a long bill as long as it is a good bill, as long as it does what needs to be done.

When you get down to the issues we are talking about, we want to make sure the language is precise. If we are going to fight the health insurance companies—and believe me, they are spending a fortune trying to stop us. But if we are going to fight the health insurance companies to make sure people have a fighting chance when they have a health insurance plan not to be canceled when they have a preexisting condition, so they have a health insurance plan that is there when they need it when they get sick, a health insurance plan that has enough money in it to pay for what they need, pay for preventive care, then let's take the time and write the pages that are necessary. Trust me, the attorneys for the insurance companies will be fighting us in court every step of the way as we try to make these changes.

I was listening to the Senator from Maryland and the Senator from Minnesota. I recall a story I learned when I went home about a good friend of mine whose son has been battling cancer for years. He is a bright young man who developed a melanoma and has gone through extensive radiation and chemotherapy and also surgeries. It has been a valiant effort on his part. Two years ago, his oncologist found a drug that made a difference for him. He was cancer free. He was as happy as he has been for a long time because of this drug.

I think you know how this story is going to end. Just 2 months ago, his health insurance company notified him that they would no longer pay for this drug that he needed. His oncologist sent a letter to the insurance company and said: This drug I am using off-label is working for him. It has arrested the spread of his cancer, saved his life, and you need to continue it.

The insurance company said: No, we will no longer pay for this.

The drug costs $13,000 a month. There is no way this young man and his young family can pay for this. Even if his dad, mom, and all the relatives mortgage their homes, they just can't pay for it.

It shows you how average people who pay premiums all their lives are at the mercy of an insurance company executive or, worse, an insurance company clerk who decides to just say no. That happens every single day.

I have been waiting for the first person on the Republican side of the aisle to stand up and say: We may disagree on a lot of things, but we sure do agree we have to do something about health insurance reform. The way they are treating Americans is unacceptable. But we never hear that from that side of the aisle.

I hope at the end of the day we will be able to come together in a bipartisan way. We all want to. But there may come a point where we cannot. If standing up to the health insurance companies can only be done on this side of the aisle, so be it. Let's gather the votes, and let's do it. But at the end of the day for that family and many in Maryland and Minnesota, that is going to be the test of whether health care reform works. Will the costs start coming down? Will you have a fighting chance with the health insurance company when you really need protection? Will it pay for things that mean something to you, such as maintaining a person on diabetes prevention and wellness? Will it start bringing more people into the protection of health insurance so, as Senator CARDIN said, we all are not paying for those who show up as charity cases at the hospital? Those are the bottom-line questions.

I thank the Senator for raising this because I think this goes to the heart of this health care debate.

Mr. CARDIN. A little earlier, I read into the record several letters I received from Marylanders. That was a sampling. I received a lot more. But it just points out—a letter from a Marylander who was denied full coverage, not only for himself but his two children, for preexisting conditions that didn't even exist, frankly—they didn't exist—but the insurance company was in a position where they could write a policy the way they wanted to write it, and this person in Maryland had no choice. There was no other insurance company that person could get. There was no competition there. We need to do something about that. We need to make it clear. I agree with the Senator, if it takes 10 pages or 100 pages or 1,000 pages, we have to make it clear that insurance companies cannot do those types of practices against people in this Nation. They cannot underwrite based upon preexisting conditions.

It seems as though insurance companies want to write insurance policies where no one can make claims. We buy insurance to protect us. Insurance needs to be there. That is one of the reasons we eliminate caps. Insurance should be there to give you the coverage when you need it. If that family needs that medicine to keep that child alive, that is why you have insurance. Insurance should cover that. If it takes 1,000 pages, let's make sure we get it right to protect the people in this Nation.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. If the Senator will yield, I was thinking, as the Senator from Illinois was talking about the number of pages in bills, when we were in the middle of this country's worst economic crisis since the Depression under the Bush administration and people were trying to figure out what to do, if you remember, the administration came forward with a bill that gave nearly $1 trillion out to banks, and it was something like 25 pages long, if I remember. I think the people in this country said: Hey, wait a minute, this is a major issue; 25 pages or 10 pages or 3 pages or 100 pages is not enough.

We are dealing with an incredibly complicated issue—with insurance companies that have been running this show for so long. The fact that we are going to spend some time on this bill, as the Senator from Illinois has pointed out—and the Senate bill is not even

done yet. We are still working on this, we are still bringing through these consumer reforms and that which is going to be good for the people of America.

I really am a little tired of hearing about the number of pages. As I said, I think there are 3 numbers that matter here: 6, 12 and 24. Mr. President, $6,000 is what an average family paid 10 years ago—$6,000. Now an average family pays $12,000. What are you going to pay 10 years from now? What are you going to pay if nothing is done here—just keep going the way we are going, with the cost, the waste in the system, the Medicare fraud, and all these things that should not be going on? Mr. President, $24,000 is what the average family is going to pay. We need to start bringing those costs down, and the only way we take on these companies that have been putting in place these rules that say if a baby is 4 months old and happened to weigh 17 pounds, just a little underweight, you can't get insurance, and his family's insurance company—the only way we are going to help by taking them on, and I don't care how many pages it takes.

Mr. CARDIN. I thank my colleagues, Senator KLOBUCHAR from Minnesota, Senator KAUFMAN from Delaware, and Senator DURBIN from Illinois, for their comments and for their passion on this issue. This is an issue we have to get right for middle-income families in America. They are the ones hurting. They are the ones who cannot afford this current system. They are the ones falling further and further behind every year. These are the ones—subject to the discriminatory practices of private insurance companies—we have a responsibility to protect. These are the ones paying the hidden tax for people who do not have health insurance, many of whom can afford health insurance but choose not to get it. It is our responsibility to act on behalf of middle-income families in America to make sure we have the health care system that is affordable and is available to every person in this country.

What we are doing is to bring down the cost of health care, to make sure we have affordable care for every person, every American, and do it in a fiscally responsible way. I urge my colleagues to make sure we take advantage of this opportunity. Let's make sure we get health care reform done, and done as soon as possible.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about extended unemployment benefits. I just received a call this afternoon from one of my State legislators in Minnesota who represents the Iron Range of Minnesota where my grandpa grew up and worked 1,500 feet underground in the mines in Ely, MN, never graduated from college, and saved money in a coffee can in the basement of his and my grandma's house to send my dad to college, and my dad and brother also worked in the mines.

It is tough times up in Ely, MN. Things go up and down, up and down in the iron ore business. Right now, they are in a downtime. There are some glimmers of hope out there. Some of the mines have started up again, but there is high unemployment up there, high unemployment in the double digits. That is why this is so important, as America has been trying to really pick itself up and get moving again after this economic crisis.

Someone once said that when Wall Street gets a cold, Main Street gets pneumonia. That is what we are still seeing across this country despite the glimmers of hope we see with the GDP, the good numbers there and some of the other good numbers with house sales going up. There are some positives going on in this country, there is no doubt about that. But there are still so many people looking for jobs. I think for every job out there, there are six unemployed people trying to find that job. I have gotten letters from people saying they have applied for hundreds of jobs, sent in their resumes.

That is why it is so important, while Wall Street is starting to do well again, to make sure we are protecting the people in this country who need their unemployment. In the past 125 days alone, over 185,000 Americans lost their unemployment benefits. Each passing day without an extension, more and more Americans are losing the last lifeline they have to keep their heads above water in this difficult economy.

One of the things I really like about the Senate bill—I see the Senator from Illinois is back. I thank him for his leadership, and Senator REID and Senator SHAHEEN and others who have worked on this issue. The Senate bill doesn't say: OK, only certain States are going to be able to get this extension of unemployment benefits. The Senate bill says what the people of my State say: The unemployment rate in Minnesota might be 7.3 percent right now, but in my house it is 100 percent, and I have been trying to find work over and over again.

I don't know what I would have said to the people of my State if I had to come home and say to them: Look, the people of Wisconsin are going to get their unemployment benefits extended, right across the border there, but the people of Minnesota are not.

We were glad to get Brett Favre from Wisconsin. That was a nice pickup. But it doesn't mean they get unemployment benefits and we don't. That is not a fair trade. So we are very glad the Senate bill takes care of States such as Minnesota and so many other States such as Montana and others across this country.

I urge the Senate to pass this as quickly as possible in the name of all the people in my State and others who have been looking for work.

I will end with a letter I got from a woman named Barbara, from Mahtomedi, MN. She wrote:

> My husband has been looking for a job since March and without unemployment to help us out I don't know what will happen. All of us [our kids] have been looking for steady employment for months. We drive old cars, we bought a house within our means that we have been fixing up slowly for ourselves for the past 22 years. We buy everything used or on sale. Please don't let [the people of our State] get left out in the cold [because it is starting to get cold and we need the unemployment until we find a job.]

I thank you for allowing me a few minutes to talk about this important bill pending before the Senate, and I urge the Senate to quickly adopt our unemployment bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Minnesota because the story she tells are stories that are told in every State. How will we ever explain to people who are struggling from day to day to feed their families while they look for a job why it took us 26, 27, 28 days to extend unemployment benefits in the Senate? Because, on the other side of the aisle there was objection because Senators had ideas of amendments they wanted to offer.

Well, there are plenty of bills for ideas. This was a bill that was providing necessities of life for a lot of people even in their own States. I am glad that it appears we are finally going to move to it tomorrow, 4 weeks after we started the extension of unemployment benefits.

I do not understand how you can be for family values and not stand up for these families when they are facing the toughest challenges in life.

I thank the Senator from Minnesota for her comments.

I ask unanimous consent that on Wednesday, November 4, following a period of morning business, the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 3548, and all postcloture time be considered expired, all amendments to the substitute and bill be withdrawn, no further amendments be in order, and the substitute amendment be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that the Senate then have general debate until 12:15 p.m., with the time equally controlled between the leaders or their designees, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on H.R. 3548; and that if cloture is invoked, the postcloture time be considered to have begun running as if cloture had been invoked at 11:45 p.m., Tuesday, November 3.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of Colorado.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING CHARLIE FRIAS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Charlie Frias for his positive work in Nevada. For almost five decades Charlie and his wife Phyllis have worked to make Nevada a better place. Whether through their business endeavors or their philanthropy, the Friases have sought to improve their community and make life a little easier for their fellow Nevadans.

Charlie Frias was born in San Antonio, TX, in 1922. As a young man, he worked with his father and grandmother as a delivery boy in the family business. He graduated from Breckenridge High School and then joined the Navy. After being honorably discharged, he returned to San Antonio, TX, and married his wife Phyllis. In 1958, the couple moved to Las Vegas, NV, with little if any resources.

Upon arriving in Las Vegas, Charlie took a job as a taxicab driver with ABC Union Cab Company. He worked diligently for this company that he would come to own by 1962. Charlie quickly acquired three more cab companies and opened the first taxicab service in Mesquite, NV, the Virgin Valley Cab Company. He later went on to further expand into the limousine business by adding Airline Limousine and Las Vegas Limousine to his holdings. At the time of his passing in 2006, Charlie had enjoyed over 40 years of success in the transportation field as well as other business activities.

Mr. Frias's wife, Phyllis, has not played the role of spectator over the years. A constant partner in her husband's entrepreneurial efforts, Phyllis has recently displayed her own business talents through the completion of A Cowboy's Dream Bed and Breakfast in Alamo, NV. I have no doubt that Phyllis' luxury resort will help stimulate Nevada's economy during our period of recovery.

Over the years Charlie and Phyllis did not consign themselves to a profit-driven life. Rather, they have shown a humanitarian spirit and have displayed this by giving back to the people of Clark County and all Nevada. Mr. and Mrs. Frias have sent school bands to participate in events in Washington, DC, purchased buses for Virgin Valley High School, and provided apparel for local high school athletics. One of Charles and Phyllis Frias' greatest beliefs is for every child to have the opportunity to obtain a quality education. Over the years, the Friases established scholarships and funded other programs for students in the education system, subsequently making it possible for many children to attend college. They established the Phyllis Frias Environmental Studies Scholarship at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. They have not limited their generosity to education, but have also donated to other cultural and community organizations such as the Mesquite Arts Council, Spring Valley Little League, American Lung Association, Las Vegas Rescue Mission, the Clark County Firefighters Christmas Fund, and many others.

The valiant Mother Teresa once said, ''Let us not be satisfied with just giving money. Money is not enough, money can be got, but they need your hearts to love them. So, spread your love everywhere you go.'' It is safe to say that Charlie and Phyllis Frias have displayed this ideal through their actions. They have devoted their time, energy, love and resources to helping Nevada's kids get a quality education and a better life. For me Charlie Frias stands for the independent spirit of Las Vegas and the west. He is in my Hall of Fame.

I know that A Cowboy's Dream Bed and Breakfast will have a future as bright as the neon Vegas Vic cowboy sign. I salute the Friases for their service to the people of our great State and I wish Phyllis the very best now that Charlie is gone.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT DALE R. GRIFFIN

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life of SGT Dale Russel Griffin from Terre Haute, IN. Dale was 29 years old when he lost his life on October 27, from injuries sustained during a roadside bomb attack in Arghandab Valley, Afghanistan. He was a member of the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Lewis WA. Dale was serving as part of operation Enduring Freedom.

Today, I join Dale's family and friends in mourning his death. Dale will forever be remembered as a loving son, and friend to many. Dale is survived by his parents, Dona and Gene, and a host of other friends and relatives.

Prior to entering the service, Dale graduated from Terre Haute South Vigo High School in 1999 where he was an accomplished wrestler gaining All-State recognition. He would later lead the Virginia Military Institute to a fourth place finish in the All-Academy Wrestling Championships in 2000, in which he was named the Tournament's Outstanding Wrestler.

While we struggle to express our sorrow over this loss, we can take pride in the example Dale set as both a soldier and son. Today and always, he will be remembered by family, friends and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we cherish the legacy of his service and his life.

As I search for words to do justice to this valiant fallen soldier, I recall President Abraham Lincoln's words as he addressed the families of soldiers who died at Gettysburg: ''We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.'' This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as we can take some measure of solace in knowing that Dale's heroism and memory will outlive the record of the words here spoken.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Dale R. Griffin in the official record of the U.S. Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy and peace. I pray that Dale's family can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, ''He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.''

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Dale.

TRIBUTE TO JAY FETCHER

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to recognize a true champion of land protection who also happens to be a member of my staff, Mr. Jay Fetcher.

Jay, who owns a ranch near Steamboat Spring, CO, and who is my northwestern Colorado field director, has been selected by a land preservation group called Colorado Open Lands as the recipient of their 2009 George E. Cramner Award. Every year since 1992, Colorado Open Lands has bestowed this award on someone who has distinguished themselves in open space preservation. According to Colorado Open Lands, recipients of this award are individuals who have gone above and beyond what others have done to preserve and protect open spaces and often achieve these goals through determination and passion for the land. They leave behind a legacy that will be valued and enjoyed for generations. Jay is just such a person, and he is indeed deserving of this prestigious award.

As highlighted in the Colorado Open Lands newsletter announcing this award, Jay's ties to Colorado agriculture and conservation run deep. He grew up on the family ranch, and after receiving a degree in Animal Science from the University of Wyoming, he returned to his family's ranch to take over the operation. In 1980, he received a master's degree in genetics from Colorado State University.

In 1994, the Fetchers decided that they wanted their land near Steamboat Springs to be a ranch forever and to be able to pass it on to their children. After creating their ranch's conservation easement, Jay went to the board of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association and suggested it start a land trust.

The Cattlemen's Association voted to become the first mainstream agricultural organization in the Nation to form a land trust, which was officially incorporated in 1995 as the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust.

Jay worked diligently for land preservation as a founding member and past president of the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust. Jay's community service record is also impressive, and includes serving on the boards of the Colorado Water Trust, the Colorado Environmental Coalition, the Steamboat Springs School District and Education Fund, the North Routt Fire Protection District, the Yampa Valley Medical Center, and as a founding member of the Community Agriculture Alliance.

He served on the Governor's Agriculture Land Conversion task force in 1995 and is a member of the Routt County Cattlemen and the Colorado Cattlemen's Association. He also served as a regional representative in northwest Colorado for Senator Ken Salazar.

In 1997, Jay received the American Land Conservation Award, which recognizes outstanding volunteer leadership in land and water conservation. In April 2009, he received the William Funk Award for the Nonprofit Association of Colorado, which honors acknowledged leaders who can unify people and organizations around a common cause.

Over the years, Jay's insight and hard work for the land trust movement and conservation have proven invaluable. Jay has become a trusted resource for those considering conservation easements.

That experience—and his deep roots in the community and his dedication to service—lead Jay to twice run for a seat in the Colorado State Legislature. Jay applied the same work ethic—and integrity—to these races as he does to his land preservation work. These were very close races, and his loss has been our gain.

In March of this year, I asked Jay to join my office as field director for the issues and concerns of northwestern Colorado. I had no hesitation offering him the position, as he is a well-known and well-respected community member of this region of Colorado. He had performed similar great service to a former Senator from Colorado—and now Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar. He has been doing an exemplary job working with the communities and citizens in this area on issues regarding water, land, agriculture, outdoor recreation, rural health care and services, and federal public land management. Jay is an expert in all of these areas and has already proven himself as a valued member of my team.

Jay's dedication to the land and the need to keep it productive and preserved was recently highlighted in a book from Colorado's preeminent landscape photographer, John Fielder. The book, called Ranches of Colorado, features glorious photographs of many Colorado ranches, including the Fetcher ranch. In the text of the section describing the Fetcher Ranch, former Denver Post reporter and author James Meadow had this to say about Jay when describing the Fetcher ranch family history:

> [Jay] fell in love with the land and the cattle and stayed to learn their ways; remaining on the ranch year after year, until the years became decades, and the decades tumbled past a half-century, and there is still no end in sight to [Jay's] love of the land. You can see that love in his eyes [and] you can hear it in his voice. It is a soft voice, a voice that cites Mother Teresa and the intricacies of cattle genetics with the same kind of curiously easygoing gravitas.

This is a short but apt description of Jay—his story and passion for the land he has worked and loved.

I appreciate that Colorado Open Lands has also recognized Jay's great work and am pleased that they are honoring him with this prestigious award. My staff and I want to express our congratulations to Jay for all his great work. We will continue to expect many more great accomplishments from him in the years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE CANNELOS

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the leadership George Cannelos demonstrated during his 4 years of public service as Federal Cochair of the Denali Commission. From 2005 to 2009, George effectively used his extensive experience in rural Alaska to improve the delivery of affordable, reliable, and sustainable infrastructure to scores of Alaska communities.

With his guidance, the partnership between the Denali Commission and the State of Alaska grew in significant ways and has become the cornerstone of the Commission's success and progress. His advancement of collaborative efforts helped find innovative solutions with a promptness for carrying out the Denali Commission's mission.

In his first year as Cochair, a transportation advisory committee was created, composed of rural Alaska leaders with broad experience. Its successful implementation made it a useful model for committees to come. In 2007, the Commission opened its first rural office, taking a new approach with a remote site workforce.

George has led the Commission with passion and dedication to using innovative strategies in rural Alaska. For 2 years in a row, the Denali Commission was recognized by the National Association of Development Organization for innovative program work.

His contributions have moved the Commission forward, leaving a positive outlook for upcoming years. His efforts will continue to do good work and play a critical role in the quality of life and economic development of Alaska's most remote communities.

Mr. President and colleagues, please join me in recognition of his outstanding accomplishments and important work in improving the quality of life, infrastructure, housing, access to health care, and economic opportunity in rural Alaska. We thank him for his service and wish him luck as he begins the next chapter of his life.•

RECOGNIZING GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY

• Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, 40 years ago, just a few miles south of Chicago, a brand new public university first opened its doors to an incoming class of students. The school was designed to reflect the core values of higher education, but in an innovative, nontraditional way. To bring exceptional undergraduate and graduate-level academics to a diverse student body, and to extend the benefits of a quality education beyond the walls of the college classroom.

This week, as Governors State University observes its 40th anniversary, I am pleased to join the students, alumni, administration, and faculty in celebrating the continued success of their fine public institution.

Since its inception, the Governors State community has grown and developed into an educational and cultural center of Illinois. And even as the university looks back with pride on the last 40 years, they recognize that the best way to celebrate their past is by looking to the future.

I would like to commend Governors State University for its indelible contributions to the quality of higher education in Illinois, and its continuing leadership in this field. Their evolving vision continues to inspire thousands to enroll every year. Their commitment to excellence has touched the lives of generations of students.

And with the recent creation of a doctoral program in physical therapy, Governors State continues to expand its reach and broaden its horizons.

I am proud to join Governors State University in celebrating its first 40 years as a bastion of the Illinois educational community. And I have no doubt that as we look ahead to the next 40 years, this fine institution will continue to lead the way.•

REMEMBERING SILVIANO ROMERO

• Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, it is with great sorrow that today I pay tribute to one of the finest men Northern New Mexico has ever known, Silviano Romero, or ''Silver,'' as he was known to all who knew and loved him.

On Sunday, October 25, 2009, Silver passed away, 1 month shy of his 90th birthday, in the small Northern New Mexico town of Embudo where he was born on November 27, 1919. But for his service to our Nation in the Pacific

Theater and Phillipines during World War II, Embudo is where Silver lived his entire life with his extraordinary and beautiful wife and best friend of 67 years, Mary B. Romero, of Dixon. Together, after Silver returned from military service, they built the house in Embudo on County Road 0062 where their three sons, Alfonso, David, and Richard, grew up and where Silver lived and worked until his passing last week.

Silver was a pillar of his community. He was a man dedicated to others—to his family, his community, his country, and his God. Like so many others of his noble generation, he served his country in the military and continued to serve his community upon his return home. Not only did Silver work for Los Alamos County, the Española School District, and as the Rio Arriba County clerk, but he was also actively involved as a county school board member, a Jemez co-op board member, a member of the East Rio Arriba Soil and Water Conservation District, and a lifelong active member of the Rio Arriba Democratic Party.

Yes, Silver was a pillar of the extended Embudo community, and he was something of an institution in Rio Arriba County. But it was on County Road 0062, at La Junta, and the confluence of the Rio Embudo and Rio Grande, that one could see and feel Silver's love for the people and world around him. The cats, dogs, and horses who came under Silver's care knew full well the enormity of Silver's heart. And one need look no further than see the joy on Silver's face as he drove his four-wheeler down the road to inspect what may or may not be a rattlesnake, wind whipping through his appropriately silver-colored hair, to understand his appreciation and love for life.

That Silver lived at the confluence of the little-known Rio Embudo and the Rio Grande, one of the largest rivers in the United States, is appropriate. The Rio Grande stretches almost 2,000 miles, providing water and sustenance to parts of this country where no one has heard of the little Rio Embudo. Yet without it, and other tributaries along the way, the Rio Grande would likely not be the force it is.

So, too, does a life like Silver's contribute to the world around him. Those of us who knew him and knew of his commitment to his community understand the contributions he made and the ways in which it improved the lives of many beyond Embudo, Rio Arriba County, and even New Mexico. But a life lived as Silver lived his touches even those who never had the honor and pleasure of knowing him. Quite simply, the world was a much better, kinder place with Silver in it.

While we are profoundly saddened by the passing of this humble yet extraordinary man, we can take great solace in the fact that he is survived by many deeply touched by him: his wife Mary; his brothers, Tom and Uvaldo Romero; his sister, Julia Montoya; his sons, Alfonso, David, and Richard; his grandchildren, Ann Williams, Amy Shelly, Dee Romero, David Romero, Jason Romero, Ryan Romero, Richard Romero, Jr., and Marquita Romero; his great-grandchildren, Taylor, Tyrell, Ashton, Saren, Katherine, Emma, Isla, Noah Silviano, Juan Diego, and Mark.

The spirit of Silviano ''Silver'' Romero lives on in all of them and will forever live in the Dixon and Embudo Valley, Rio Arriba County, and in all of the great State of New Mexico.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:36 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 174. An act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery for veterans in the southern Colorado region.

H.R. 1168. An act to amend chapter 42 of title 38, United States Code, to provide certain veterans with employment training assistance.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 509. An act to authorize a major medical facility project at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Walla Walla, Washington, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 6:05 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 475. An act to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to guarantee the equity of spouses of military personnel with regard to matters of residency, and for other purposes.

S. 509. An act to authorize a major medical facility project at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Walla Walla, Washington, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 174. An act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery for veterans in the southern Colorado region; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 1168. An act to amend chapter 42 of title 38, United States Code, to provide certain veterans with employment training assistance; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–3533. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Importation of Tomatoes From Souss–Massa–Draa, Morocco'' (Docket No. APHIS–2008–0017) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2009; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3534. A communication from the Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendments to Mushroom Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Order'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–08–0047; FV–08–702–FR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2009; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3535. A communication from the Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Onions Grown in South Texas; Change in Regulatory Period'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–9–0012; FV09–959–1 FIR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2009; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3536. A communication from the Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Oranges, Grapefruit, Tangerines and Tangelos Grown in Florida and Imported Grapefruit; Relaxation of Size Requirements for Grapefruit'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–09–0002; FV09–905–1 FIR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2009; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3537. A communication from the Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Almonds Grown in California; Revision of Outgoing Quality Control Requirements'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–08–0045; FV08–981–2 FIR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2009; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3538. A communication from the Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Cotton Research and Promotion Program: Referendum Procedures'' (Docket No. AMS–CN–09–0027; CN–08–003) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2009; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3539. A communication from the Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pears Grown in Oregon and Washington; Increased Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–

FV–09–0037; FV09–927–1 FR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2009; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3540. A communication from the Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fresh Prunes Grown in Designated Counties in Washington and in Umatilla County, OR; Increased Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–09–0040; FV09–924–1 FR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2009; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3541. A communication from the Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Nectarines and Peaches Grown in California: Decreased Assessment Rates'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–09–0013; FV09–916/917–2 IFR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2009; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3542. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the House Armed Services Committee Report 111–166, accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (HR 2647); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3543. A communication from the Chairman and President of the Export-Import Bank, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to transactions involving U.S. exports to Spain; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3544. A communication from the Chairman and President of the Export-Import Bank, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to transactions involving U.S. exports to Papua New Guinea; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3545. A communication from the Chairman and President of the Export-Import Bank, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to transactions involving U.S. exports to the United Arab Emirates; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3546. A communication from the Chairman and President of the Export-Import Bank, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to transactions involving U.S. exports to Chile; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3547. A communication from the Secretary of the Commission, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fair Credit Reporting Affiliate Marketing Regulations; Identity Theft Red Flags and Address Discrepancies Under the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003'' (RIN3084–AA94) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 29, 2009; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3548. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Foreign Repairs to American Vessels'' (RIN1505–AB71) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 19, 2009; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3549. A communication from the Office Manager, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medicare Program: Changes to the Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System and Calendar Year 2010 Payment Rates; Changes to the Ambulatory Surgical Center Payment System and Calendar Year 2010 Payment Rates'' (RIN0938–AP41) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2009; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3550. A communication from the Office Manager, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medicare Program: Payment Policies Under the Physician Fee Schedule and Other Revisions to Part B for Calendar Year 2010'' (RIN0938–AP40) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2009; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3551. A communication from the Office Manager, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medicare Program: Home Health Prospective Payment System Rate Update for Calendar Year 2010'' (RIN0938–AP55) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2009; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3552. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2009-0126–2009-0161 and 2009-0179–2009-0197); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3553. A communication from the Office Manager, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medical Examination of Aliens—Removal of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection from Definition of Communicable Disease of Public Health Significance'' (RIN0920–AA26) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–3554. A communication from the Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Inspector General's Semiannual Report for the six-month period ending September 30, 2009; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3555. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, ''Report to Congress on the Social and Economic Conditions of Native Americans: Fiscal Years 2003 and 2004''; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC–3556. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator of Diversion Control, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Schedules of Controlled Substances: Placement of Fospropofol into Schedule IV'' (Docket Number DEA–327F) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2009; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. ENZI):

S. 2722. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of adding the Heart Mountain Relocation Center, in the State of Wyoming, as a unit of the National Park System; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BROWNBACK (for himself and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 2723. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a special depreciation allowance and recovery period for noncommercial aircraft property; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. REID (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. ENSIGN, and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 2724. A bill to provide for environmental restoration activities and forest management activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. 2725. A bill to provide for fairness for the Federal judiciary; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 146

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 146, a bill to amend the Federal antitrust laws to provide expanded coverage and to eliminate exemptions from such laws that are contrary to the public interest with respect to railroads.

S. 535

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 535, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 796

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 796, a bill to modify the requirements applicable to locatable minerals on public domain land, and for other purposes.

S. 797

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 797, a bill to amend the Indian Law Enforcement Reform Act, the Indian Tribal Justice Act, the Indian Tribal Justice Technical and Legal Assistance Act of 2000, and the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to improve the prosecution of, and response to, crimes in Indian country, and for other purposes.

S. 1129

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1129, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants to local educational agencies to improve college enrollment.

S. 1158

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from New Jersey

(Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1158, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct activities to rapidly advance treatments for spinal muscular atrophy, neuromuscular disease, and other pediatric diseases, and for other purposes.

S. 1183

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1183, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to provide assistance to the Government of Haiti to end within 5 years the deforestation in Haiti and restore within 30 years the extent of tropical forest cover in existence in Haiti in 1990, and for other purposes.

S. 1222

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1222, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and expand the benefits for businesses operating in empowerment zones, enterprise communities, or renewal communities, and for other purposes.

S. 1723

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1723, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to delegate management authority over troubled assets purchased under the Troubled Asset Relief Program, to require the establishment of a trust to manage assets of certain designated TARP recipients, and for other purposes.

S. 1760

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1760, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with regard to research on asthma, and for other purposes.

S. 1771

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1771, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a program of grants to newly accredited allopathic medical schools for the purpose of increasing the supply of physicians.

S. 1783

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1783, a bill to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to provide for country of origin labeling for dairy products.

S. 1789

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. BURRIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1789, a bill to restore fairness to Federal cocaine sentencing.

S. 1790

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1790, a bill to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to revise and extend that Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1803

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1803, a bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to authorize reviews by the Comptroller General of the United States of emergency credit facilities established by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System or any Federal Reserve bank, and for other purposes.

S. 1822

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1822, a bill to amend the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, with respect to considerations of the Secretary of the Treasury in providing assistance under that Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1833

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1833, a bill to amend the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009 to establish an earlier effective date for various consumer protections, and for other purposes.

S. 1857

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1857, a bill to establish national centers of excellence for the treatment of depressive and bipolar disorders.

S. 1867

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1867, a bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on phenyl isocyanate.

S. 1868

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1868, a bill to renew the temporary suspension of duty on hydroxylamine.

S. 1869

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1869, a bill to extend temporarily the suspension of duty on mixed xylidines.

S. 1870

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1870, a bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on trichlorobenzene.

S. 1871

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1871, a bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on methanol, sodium salt.

S. 1872

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1872, a bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 2-Phenylphenol.

S. 1873

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1873, a bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 2, 3-Dichloronitrobenzene.

S. 1875

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1875, a bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Orgasol.

S. 1876

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1876, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on 11-Aminoundecanoic acid.

S. 1877

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1877, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on dry adhesive copolyamide pellets.

S. 1878

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1878, a bill to extend and amend the temporary duty suspension on certain thin fiberglass sheets.

S. 1879

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1879, a bill to clarify the tariff classification of certain fiberboard core and laminate boards and panels, and for other purposes.

S. 1880

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1880, a bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Chlorotoluene.

S. 1881

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1881, a bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on bayderm bottom DLV–N.

S. 1882

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1882, a bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on certain ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymers.

S. 1883

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1883, a bill to extend and modify the temporary suspension of duty on iminodisuccinate.

S. 1884

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1884, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on MDA50.

S. 1885

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1885, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain air pressure distillation columns.

S. 1886

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1886, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Epilink 701.

S. 1887

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1887, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Nourybond 276 Modifier.

S. 1888

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1888, a bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 2-ethylhexyl 4-methoxycinamate.

S. 1889

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1889, a bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on glass bulbs, designed for sprinkler systems and other release devices.

S. 1890

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1890, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on manganese flake containing at least 99.5 percent by weight of manganese.

S. 1891

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1891, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on standard grade ferroniobium.

S. 1892

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1892, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on methyl sulfonic acid.

S. 1894

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1894, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on N-Benzyl-N-ethylaniline.

S. 1895

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1895, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on p-Dodecyl aniline.

S. 1896

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1896, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on stainless steel single-piece exhaust gas manifolds.

S. 1953

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1953, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on p-toluidine.

S. 1954

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1954, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on p-nitrotoluene.

S. 1955

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1955, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on acrylic resin solution.

S. 1956

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1956, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Benzenamine, 4 Dodecyl.

S. 1958

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1958, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on medium molecular weight solid epoxy resin.

S. 1979

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1979, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain fiberglass sheets used to make ceiling tiles.

S. 1980

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1980, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain fiberglass sheets used to make flooring substrate.

S. 2052

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2052, a bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to require the Secretary of Energy to carry out a research and development and demonstration program to reduce manufacturing and construction costs relating to nuclear reactors, and for other purposes.

S. 2076

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2076, a bill to suspend temporarily the duty on titanium dioxide.

S. RES. 210

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 210, a resolution designating the week beginning on November 9, 2009, as National School Psychology Week.

AMENDMENT NO. 2712

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2712 proposed to H.R. 3548, a bill to amend the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 to provide for the temporary availability of certain additional emergency unemployment compensation, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2712 proposed to H.R. 3548, supra.

AMENDMENT NO. 2723

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2723 intended to be proposed to H.R. 3548, a bill to amend the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 to provide for the temporary availability of certain additional emergency unemployment compensation, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. ENZI):

S. 2722. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of adding the Heart Mountain Relocation Center, in the State of Wyoming, as a unit of the National Park System; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I join Senator ENZI today to introduce the Heart Mountain Relocation Center Study Act. This legislation will authorize the National Park Service to conduct a special resource study of the site of Heart Mountain Relocation Center near Powell, Wyoming. The site is an important part of our national history and of the history of our communities in western Wyoming.

This legislation is truly a credit to the individuals, local communities and grassroots organizations supporting recognition of the Heart Mountain site. Many of these individuals readily share their experience of the years between 1942 and 1945, when Japanese American families from the West Coast were forcibly moved to Park County, Wyoming and interned at the site near Heart Mountain. During those years, the Heart Mountain site was the third-

largest community in Wyoming, housing nearly 11,000 Japanese Americans. The experience during those years shaped internees and local residents alike. It represents an important chapter in American history.

The legislation introduced today will authorize study of the Heart Mountain site and its significance to the mission of the National Park Service. The study will involve participation by the public and evaluate options for future management of the Heart Mountain site.

I want to thank the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, along with other supporting organizations, for championing this cause. It is because of their efforts that this important historical site has been preserved and presented to the public.

The internment of Japanese Americans during World War II is a part of America's history. The special resource study of Heart Mountain Relocation Center will lay groundwork for protecting this history for future generations. I urge Senators to support the Heart Mountain Relocation Center Study Act.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the importance of preserving the Heart Mountain World War II Internment Camp in Powell, Wyoming. My good friend and colleague Senator JOHN BARRASSO and I are introducing a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of adding the Heart Mountain Relocation Center as a unit of the National Park System.

Heart Mountain, WY, was 1 of 10 relocation centers created during World War II to house Japanese and Japanese-Americans who were forcibly relocated inland from the west coast. The current site contains the most existing structures of any site in the country. To memorialize this history, the Heart Mountain, Wyoming Foundation is working to develop a Learning Center on the site of the Internment Camp. The Foundation is a well-established and creditable organization serving 2,800 on its mailing list, with notable Board and Advisory Board members including former Senator Alan Simpson and former U.S. Department of Commerce and U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta. Senator Simpson and Secretary Mineta first met as Boy Scouts when Senator Simpson's Cody, WY, Scout Troop visited Secretary Mineta's troop while he was interned as a young man in the Heart Mountain camp. They developed a bond that would last for decades and eventually served in Congress together.

Private and public entities alike strongly believe that Heart Mountain, WY, should be preserved for future generations. I, too, believe preservation of one of our country's landmarks from World War II should be saved so our children and grandchildren have another tool to learn about our country's history.

In 2000, I secured Federal funding from the Economic Development Initiative Grant Program, EDI, under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Heart Mountain, Wyoming Foundation. The foundation used this funding to acquire land and conduct environmental assessment of the land in order to build an interactive learning facility at Heart Mountain's World War II Internment Camp in Powell, WY. The facility educates tourists and Wyomingites about the camp's history and effects on the Japanese American population. In the past 9 years, private individuals, non-profit organizations, and the Federal Government have issued additional dollars to the Heart Mountain, Wyoming Foundation in order to achieve its goal of preserving the land, remaining structures, and building the Learning Center.

The next step in this journey is the bill Senator BARRASSO and I are introducing today. The bill would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of adding the Heart Mountain Relocation Center as a unit of the National Park System. When conducting the study, the Secretary of the Interior will be looking at various factors including, but not limited to, evaluating the national significance of Heart Mountain, WY; identifying the cost estimates for any Federal acquisition, development, operation and maintenance of the area; and identifying any potential impacts of designation of site as a unit of the National Park System on private landowners. Once funds are made available for the study, the Secretary of the Interior has 3 years to study the issue and issue a report about next steps to the appropriate House and Senate committees of jurisdiction.

Simply because we are introducing this legislation does not guarantee that Heart Mountain will become a part of the National Park System. The bill we are introducing will allow the Secretary to study that question and to make a recommendation based on the merits of Heart Mountain and how it would fit within the entire National Park System.

Heart Mountain Camp internees want to leave a legacy of learning through this Center to future generations such that abridgements of freedoms and lack of ethnic understanding not occur again in this great country. Preserving the land and structures and building the Learning Center will do just that. This bill is the next step forward in making their dream a reality.

By Mr. BROWNBACK (for himself and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 2723. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a special depreciation allowance and recovery period for noncommercial aircraft property; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, Today I introduce an important piece of legislation that would provide a real boost to our economy at little, if any, expense to taxpayers. The bill I introduce would offer bonus depreciation on the purchase of noncommercial general aviation aircraft in 2010 or 2011.

America is the world leader in general aviation manufacturing, a sector in which we truly have no peer. General aviation is an essential and critical part of our Nation's transportation infrastructure for many individuals and businesses, for whom time is of the absolute essence. Further, general aviation is a vital component of our economy, supporting over 1.2 million jobs and providing $150 billion in economic activity. It is one of the few remaining American manufacturing industries that still provide a significant trade surplus for the U.S., generating over $5.9 billion in exports of domestically manufactured planes in 2008 alone.

However, this sector is particularly susceptible to economic downturns. Many individuals and companies will delay or even cancel the purchase of an aircraft in a bad economy even though they may have a present need for a new aircraft.

We see this reflected in our general aviation sector where during the first half of 2009, we witnessed declines of 58 percent in piston engine aircraft sales; 37 percent in jet engine aircraft sales; and 13 percent in turboprop aircraft sales. At the same time, use of business jets has declined 12 percent over the past year, and the number of used aircraft on the global market stands at a historic high.

Cumulatively, general aviation companies have had to lay off 19,000 American workers, and this includes 11,500 alone in Wichita, KS. Over the past year, total employment of general aviation companies has declined by almost 14 percent. This is even more alarming when you consider that the U.S. Department of Labor aerospace workforce multiplier is three. For every general aviation worker on an aircraft, there are three jobs outside the immediate company that are created, whether manufacturing, engineering, supply or support. So, for this many general aviation workers to have been laid-off has much further reaching consequences in terms of the number of people and families that are adversely impacted.

The legislation that I propose today is a proven approach to spur general aviation aircraft orders with minimal affect on the Federal budget. My approach to this issue is an approach that has resulted in real jobs. During the 2003–2004 economic downturn, I worked to have general aviation bonus depreciation included in legislation that emerged from the Senate Finance Committee. That provision is credited with spurring over $2 billion in new general aviation aircraft sales, and it is credited with saving or sustaining thousands of jobs. Also, another consideration that makes this approach a real

no-brainer is that, in the past, the Joint Tax Committee reported the provision to have a negligible impact on Federal tax revenues over the 10–year budget window. This is because, while tax revenue is reduced in the near-term, revenues rebound to higher levels in the second half of the 10–year window as no deprecation is being taken in the later years of the period.

Acting on this proposal now is important. The Blue Chip Economic Indicators consensus forecast expect unemployment to rise above 10 percent and to remain above the 3rd quarter 2009 level of 9.6 percent at least though the end of 2010, so we are looking at uncertain economic growth and high unemployment for several more quarters. A proposal like the one that I am putting forward is likely to encourage individuals and businesses to go ahead and act now on placing orders rather than waiting. For the Congress to act on this bonus depreciation legislation now would have a positive effect on getting our economic engines moving again and can play a part in helping facilitate a broader economic recovery, as it would hopefully again help to save and sustain jobs as well as returning jobs to those who have lost them as a result of the recession.

By Mr. REID (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. ENSIGN, and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 2724. A bill to provide for environmental restoration activities and forest management activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today with my good friends, Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator ENSIGN, and Senator BOXER to introduce the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2009.

Representatives HELLER, TITUS, BERKLEY and others will be introducing an identical version of this legislation in the House of Representatives today, and I urge both bodies to act swiftly on this important legislation.

Lake Tahoe is a place of incredible beauty. The clear blue waters of the lake, surrounded by forested slopes and snow-capped peaks is a sight that can stir the soul. When Mark Twain first saw Lake Tahoe in 1861, he described it as ''a noble sheet of blue water lifted six thousand three hundred feet above the level of the sea, and walled in by a rim of snow-clad mountain peaks that towered aloft full three thousand feet higher still!'' He went on to proclaim the view in front of him as surely ''the fairest picture the whole earth affords.'' I could not agree more.

But the Lake Tahoe Basin faces some great challenges. The famed clarity of the lake declined by over a third during the last 50 years; it is estimated that 25 percent of the trees in the basin are dead or dying; the Lahontan cutthroat trout that once grew to 40 pounds or more in Lake Tahoe are no longer present; and many of the basin's natural marshes and wetlands have been altered or drained.

It became clear to me in the 1990s that a major commitment was needed to turn things around for the health and future of Lake Tahoe and the Lake Tahoe Basin. In 1996, I called then-President Clinton and Vice President Gore and asked if they would come to Lake Tahoe with me so that they could see both the incredible beauty of the place and many threats facing this rare jewel. When we convened in July 1997, the President and Vice President brought four cabinet secretaries with them and we had a serious multi-day session On the future of Lake Tahoe. President Clinton promised to make Lake Tahoe a priority—for the people of Nevada, for the people of California and for the whole country. An executive order and the subsequent Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2000 underscored that commitment.

It would have been difficult to imagine at that first summit how much progress we would be able to make in 12 years. The clarity of the lake now appears to have stabilized, thousands of acres of forest lands have been restored, roads and highways across the basin have been improved to limit runoff, and the natural function of many miles of stream zones and riparian areas has been restored. But there is a great deal yet to be done. We offer this legislation as the next step.

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2009 focuses Federal attention on the areas where we can be most effective and it builds on the lessons we have learned since 1997. The basic summary of the bill is that it authorizes $415 million over 8 years to improve water clarity, reduce the threat of fire, and restore the environment. But I would like to take a few minutes to explain some of the components in greater depth.

It would be impossible to make real progress in the Lake Tahoe Basin without working hand-in-hand with the Forest Service, which manages 75 percent of the land in the area. With that in mind, we call on the Forest Service to support the thresholds put forth by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, we provide encouragement and funding to work on the restoration of stream environment zones, and we withdraw all Forest Service in the Basin lands from mineral entry in order to minimize soil disturbance. The Forest Service is also granted increased flexibility to exchange land with the states of Nevada and California which will allow for more cost-efficient management of the over 8,000 publicly owned urban parcels spread throughout the Basin. Currently, the Forest Service owns over 3,280 of these urban parcels and there are questions about whether it is in the public interest for the Forest Service to manage these urban lands or whether it would be better to pass them to other responsible entities that could provide more efficient management. We have asked the Forest Service to report to Congress on their plans for improving this part of their program, including any suggestions for how Congress might be able to help. Along with these new authorities and direction for forest management, the bill authorizes $136 million to reduce the threat of wildfire. This includes work on Forest Service lands as well as work done by local fire agencies. Local communities and fire districts that receive grants from this generous program will provide a 25 percent cash match.

The Environmental Improvement Plan, EIP, another key part of restoration efforts in the basin. The EIP is a list, prepared by Lake Tahoe stakeholders, of projects that are designed to improve water quality, forest health, air quality and fish and wildlife habitat around Lake Tahoe. As part of this bill we authorize $136 million for Federal funding to support EIP projects. We also call on stakeholders in the basin to carefully rank the projects in the EIP, using the best available science, in order to give everyone involved an understanding of the long-term priorities and goals of the program. Through this ranking, when state, local, or private funds become available, the stakeholders and government agencies can move immediately to fund and implement the projects that are most vital and in keeping with the long-range vision for environmental restoration in the basin.

Another important authorization in the bill is $72 million for stormwater management and watershed restoration projects which have been determined to be among the most effective ways to improve water clarity. These are projects designed to reduce the inflow of very fine sediment into the lake through improvement of urban stormwater systems or the restoration of natural watershed functions in the basin's streams and marsh areas.

The legislation also takes great strides in protecting Lake Tahoe from dangerous invasive species like quagga and zebra mussels. The damage that would be inflicted at Lake Tahoe by a quagga or zebra mussel infestation has been estimated to be in the tens of millions of dollars annually. These organisms destroy native ecosystems. Their rampant reproduction upsets food chains and drives other species out of existence. Dense accumulation of shells damages infrastructure, clogs water pipes and fouls boats and motors. As has been experienced in other parts of our country, these invasive species can leave boulders and beaches covered in an unsightly, foul-smelling, crust of sharp fingernail-sized shells. In order to protect Lake Tahoe from this horrible fate, our bill would provide $20 million for watercraft inspections and removal of existing invasive species from Lake Tahoe. Further, we prohibit watercraft that have had contact with quagga or zebra mussel-infested waters from entering waterbodies in the Lake Tahoe Basin. All other watercraft must submit to inspection and decontamination prior to launch in order to prevent

the introduction of these harmful species. Watercraft can be exempted from decontamination if they have not launched elsewhere since last being in Lake Tahoe.

Of special importance to me, this legislation authorizes $20 million to help implement the full-scale recovery of the Lahontan cutthroat trout. This iconic fish was highly sought by anglers for generations, and was the top predator in the lake's ecosystem. Populations started to decline when widespread logging and pulp operations came to the Tahoe Basin, damaging crucial spawning areas. This, combined with serious overfishing, led to a sharp decline in population levels. To make matters worse, a number of non-native fish were introduced into Lake Tahoe and began to prey upon the remaining juvenile cutthroats.

We have since made great progress in cleaning up the Basin's streams and restoring lost habitat, but we will need to take additional steps to bring this great fish back to Lake Tahoe. The funding authorized by this legislation will make these steps possible. I would also like to note, that the Fish and Wildlife Service has made great progress in bringing Lahontan cutthroat trout back to Fallen Leaf Lake, in the Tahoe Basin. I have faith that they can work similar wonders in Lake Tahoe.

Another piece of this bill that we have put a lot of time and thought into is the science program. A solid understanding of how our restoration efforts are working, and how natural physical and biological processes affect the lake is critical to ensuring continued progress in restoring the health of the basin. The legislation authorizes $30 million for scientific programs and research that will produce information on long-term trends in the basin and provide the basis for selection of the most effective projects. To help coordinate efforts, all projects funded by this legislation will have monitoring and assessment built into their project design so that we can better understand their contributions to restoration in the basin.

A great deal of work has gone into this bill, and I am grateful for the help and assistance that my colleagues and their staffs have provided. Senator FEINSTEIN and her staff deserve special praise for their diligent efforts. I also sincerely appreciate the time and attention of the many people in Nevada and California who have provided crucial input along the way.

Anyone who has been to Lake Tahoe knows that is it not just uniquely beautiful but that it is also worth fighting to protect. It is my sincere hope that my grandchildren will see the day when the Lake's clarity is restored to 100 feet or more, when Tahoe's giant native trout are once again plentiful, and when nearby forests are diverse and healthy. Mark Twain saw something amazing when he crested into the Lake Tahoe Basin. We owe it to ourselves and to subsequent generations to restore as much of that splendor as we can. This bill is the next step in that journey.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2724

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2009''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106–506; 114 Stat. 2351) is amended by striking section 2 and inserting the following:

''SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

''(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

''(1) Lake Tahoe—

''(A) is 1 of the largest, deepest, and clearest lakes in the world;

''(B) has a cobalt blue color, a biologically diverse alpine setting, and remarkable water clarity; and

''(C) is recognized nationally and worldwide as a natural resource of special significance;

''(2) in addition to being a scenic and ecological treasure, the Lake Tahoe Basin is 1 of the outstanding recreational resources of the United States, which—

''(A) offers skiing, water sports, biking, camping, and hiking to millions of visitors each year; and

''(B) contributes significantly to the economies of California, Nevada, and the United States;

''(3) the economy in the Lake Tahoe Basin is dependent on the protection and restoration of the natural beauty and recreation opportunities in the area;

''(4) the Lake Tahoe Basin continues to be threatened by the impacts of land use and transportation patterns developed in the last century that damage the fragile watershed of the Basin;

''(5) the water clarity of Lake Tahoe declined from a visibility level of 105 feet in 1967 to only 70 feet in 2008;

''(6) the rate of decline in water clarity of Lake Tahoe has decreased in recent years;

''(7) a stable water clarity level for Lake Tahoe could be achieved through feasible control measures for very fine sediment particles and nutrients;

''(8) fine sediments that cloud Lake Tahoe, and key nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen that support the growth of algae and invasive plants, continue to flow into the Lake from stormwater runoff from developed areas, roads, turf, other disturbed land, and streams;

''(9) the destruction and alteration of wetland, wet meadows, and stream zone habitat have compromised the natural capacity of the watershed to filter sediment, nutrients, and pollutants before reaching Lake Tahoe;

''(10) approximately 25 percent of the trees in the Lake Tahoe Basin are either dead or dying;

''(11) forests in the Tahoe Basin suffer from over a century of fire suppression and periodic drought, which have resulted in—

''(A) high tree density and mortality;

''(B) the loss of biological diversity; and

''(C) a large quantity of combustible forest fuels, which significantly increases the threat of catastrophic fire and insect infestation;

''(12) the establishment of several aquatic and terrestrial invasive species (including bass, milfoil, and Asian clam) threatens the ecosystem of the Lake Tahoe Basin;

''(13) there is an ongoing threat to the Lake Tahoe Basin of the introduction and establishment of other invasive species (such as the zebra mussel, New Zealand mud snail, and quagga mussel);

''(14) the report prepared by the University of California, Davis, entitled the 'State of the Lake Report', found that conditions in the Lake Tahoe Basin had changed, including—

''(A) the average surface water temperature of Lake Tahoe has risen by more than 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit in the past 37 years; and

''(B) since 1910, the percent of precipitation that has fallen as snow in the Lake Tahoe Basin decreased from 52 percent to 34 percent;

''(15) 75 percent of the land in the Lake Tahoe Basin is owned by the Federal Government, which makes it a Federal responsibility to restore environmental health to the Basin;

''(16) the Federal Government has a long history of environmental preservation at Lake Tahoe, including—

''(A) congressional consent to the establishment of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency with—

''(i) the enactment in 1969 of Public Law 91–148 (83 Stat. 360); and

''(ii) the enactment in 1980 of Public Law 96–551 (94 Stat. 3233);

''(B) the establishment of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit in 1973;

''(C) the enactment of Public Law 96–586 (94 Stat. 3381) in 1980 to provide for the acquisition of environmentally sensitive land and erosion control grants in the Lake Tahoe Basin;

''(D) the enactment of sections 341 and 342 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2004 (Public Law 108–108; 117 Stat. 1317), which amended the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–263; 112 Stat. 2346) to provide payments for the environmental restoration projects under this Act; and

''(E) the enactment of section 382 of the Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–432; 120 Stat. 3045), which amended the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–263; 112 Stat. 2346) to authorize development and implementation of a comprehensive 10-year hazardous fuels and fire prevention plan for the Lake Tahoe Basin;

''(17) the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works was an original signatory in 1997 to the Agreement of Federal Departments on Protection of the Environment and Economic Health of the Lake Tahoe Basin;

''(18) the Chief of Engineers, under direction from the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, has continued to be a significant contributor to Lake Tahoe Basin restoration, including—

''(A) stream and wetland restoration;

''(B) urban stormwater conveyance and treatment; and

''(C) programmatic technical assistance;

''(19) at the Lake Tahoe Presidential Forum in 1997, the President renewed the commitment of the Federal Government to Lake Tahoe by—

''(A) committing to increased Federal resources for environmental restoration at Lake Tahoe; and

''(B) establishing the Federal Interagency Partnership and Federal Advisory Committee to consult on natural resources issues concerning the Lake Tahoe Basin;

''(20) at the 2008 and 2009 Lake Tahoe Forums, Senator Reid, Senator Feinstein, Senator Ensign, and Governor Gibbons—

''(A) renewed their commitment to Lake Tahoe; and

''(B) expressed their desire to fund the Federal share of the Environmental Improvement Program through 2018;

''(21) since 1997, the Federal Government, the States of California and Nevada, units of local government, and the private sector have contributed more than $1,430,000,000 to the Lake Tahoe Basin, including—

''(A) $424,000,000 from the Federal Government;

''(B) $612,000,000 from the State of California;

''(C) $87,000,000 from the State of Nevada;

''(D) $59,000,000 from units of local government; and

''(E) $249,000,000 from private interests;

''(22) significant additional investment from Federal, State, local, and private sources is necessary—

''(A) to restore and sustain the environmental health of the Lake Tahoe Basin;

''(B) to adapt to the impacts of changing climatic conditions; and

''(C) to protect the Lake Tahoe Basin from the introduction and establishment of invasive species; and

''(23) the Secretary has indicated that the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit has the capacity for at least $10,000,000 and up to $20,000,000 annually for the Fire Risk Reduction and Forest Management Program.

''(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

''(1) to enable the Chief of the Forest Service, the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, in cooperation with the Planning Agency and the States of California and Nevada, to fund, plan, and implement significant new environmental restoration activities and forest management activities to address in the Lake Tahoe Basin the issues described in paragraphs (4) through (14) of subsection (a);

''(2) to ensure that Federal, State, local, regional, tribal, and private entities continue to work together to manage land in the Lake Tahoe Basin and to coordinate on other activities in a manner that supports achievement and maintenance of—

''(A) the environmental threshold carrying capacities for the region; and

''(B) other applicable environmental standards and objectives;

''(3) to support local governments in efforts related to environmental restoration, stormwater pollution control, fire risk reduction, and forest management activities; and

''(4) to ensure that agency and science community representatives in the Lake Tahoe Basin work together—

''(A) to develop and implement a plan for integrated monitoring, assessment, and applied research to evaluate the effectiveness of the Environmental Improvement Program; and

''(B) to provide objective information as a basis for ongoing decisionmaking, with an emphasis on decisionmaking relating to public and private land use and resource management in the Basin.''.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106–506; 114 Stat. 2351) is amended by striking section 3 and inserting the following:

''SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

''In this Act:

''(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term 'Administrator' means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

''(2) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term 'Assistant Secretary' means the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

''(3) CHAIR.—The term 'Chair' means the Chair of the Federal Partnership.

''(4) COMPACT.—The term 'Compact' means the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact included in the first section of Public Law 96–551 (94 Stat. 3233).

''(5) DIRECTOR.—The term 'Director' means the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

''(6) ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.—The term 'Environmental Improvement Program' means—

''(A) the Environmental Improvement Program adopted by the Planning Agency; and

''(B) any amendments to the Program.

''(7) ENVIRONMENTAL THRESHOLD CARRYING CAPACITY.—The term 'environmental threshold carrying capacity' has the meaning given the term in article II of the compact.

''(8) FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP.—The term 'Federal Partnership' means the Lake Tahoe Federal Interagency Partnership established by Executive Order 13957 (62 Fed. Reg. 41249) (or a successor Executive Order).

''(9) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY.—The term 'forest management activity' includes—

''(A) prescribed burning for ecosystem health and hazardous fuels reduction;

''(B) mechanical and minimum tool treatment;

''(C) road decommissioning or reconstruction;

''(D) stream environment zone restoration and other watershed and wildlife habitat enhancements;

''(E) nonnative invasive species management; and

''(F) other activities consistent with Forest Service practices, as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

''(10) NATIONAL WILDLAND FIRE CODE.—The term 'national wildland fire code' means—

''(A) the most recent publication of the National Fire Protection Association code numbered 1141, 1142, or 1144;

''(B) the most recent publication of the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code of the International Code Council; or

''(C) any other code that the Secretary determines provides the same, or better, standards for protection against wildland fire as a code described in subparagraph (A) or (B).

''(11) PLANNING AGENCY.—The term 'Planning Agency' means the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency established under Public Law 91–148 (83 Stat. 360) and Public Law 96–551 (94 Stat. 3233).

''(12) PRIORITY LIST.—The term 'Priority List' means the environmental restoration priority list developed under section 8.

''(13) SECRETARY.—The term 'Secretary' means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

''(14) TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD.—The term 'total maximum daily load' means the total maximum daily load allocations adopted under section 303(d) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1313(d)).

''(15) STREAM ENVIRONMENT ZONE.—The term 'Stream Environment Zone' means an area that generally owes the biological and physical characteristics of the area to the presence of surface water or groundwater.

''(16) WATERCRAFT.—The term 'watercraft' means all motorized and non-motorized watercraft, including boats, personal watercraft, kayaks, and canoes.''.

SEC. 4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAKE TAHOE BASIN MANAGEMENT UNIT.

Section 4 of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106–506; 114 Stat. 2353) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(3), by striking ''basin'' and inserting ''Basin''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(c) TRANSIT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit shall, consistent with the regional transportation plan adopted by the Planning Agency, manage vehicular parking and traffic in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, with priority given—

''(A) to improving public access to the Lake Tahoe Basin, including the prioritization of alternatives to the private automobile, consistent with the requirements of the Compact;

''(B) to coordinating with the Nevada Department of Transportation, Caltrans, State parks, and other entities along Nevada Highway 28 and California Highway 89; and

''(C) to providing support and assistance to local public transit systems in the management and operations of activities under this subsection.

''(2) NATIONAL FOREST TRANSIT PROGRAM.—Consistent with the support and assistance provided under paragraph (1)(C), the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation, may enter into a contract, cooperative agreement, interagency agreement, or other agreement with the Department of Transportation to secure operating and capital funds from the National Forest Transit Program.

''(d) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.—

''(1) COORDINATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In conducting forest management activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, the Secretary shall, as appropriate, coordinate with the Administrator and State and local agencies and organizations, including local fire departments and volunteer groups.

''(B) GOALS.—The coordination of activities under subparagraph (A) should aim to increase efficiencies and maximize the compatibility of management practices across public property boundaries.

''(2) MULTIPLE BENEFITS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In conducting forest management activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, the Secretary shall conduct the activities in a manner that—

''(i) except as provided in subparagraph (B), attains multiple ecosystem benefits, including—

''(I) reducing forest fuels;

''(II) maintaining or restoring biological diversity;

''(III) improving wetland and water quality, including in Stream Environment Zones; and

''(IV) increasing resilience to changing climatic conditions; and

''(ii) helps achieve and maintain the environmental threshold carrying capacities established by the Planning Agency.

''(B) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding clause (A)(i), the attainment of multiple ecosystem benefits shall not be required if the Secretary determines that management for multiple ecosystem benefits would excessively increase the cost of a project in relation to the additional ecosystem benefits gained from the management activity.

''(3) GROUND DISTURBANCE.—Consistent with applicable Federal law and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit land and resource management plan direction, the Secretary shall—

''(A) establish post-project ground condition criteria for ground disturbance caused by forest management activities; and

''(B) provide for monitoring to ascertain the attainment of the post-project conditions.

''(e) WITHDRAWAL OF FEDERAL LAND.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to valid existing rights and paragraph (2), the Federal land located in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is withdrawn from—

''(A) all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws;

''(B) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and

''(C) disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing.

''(2) DETERMINATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The withdrawal under paragraph (1) shall be in effect until the date on which the Secretary, after conducting a review of all Federal land in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and receiving public input, has made a determination on which parcels of Federal land should remain withdrawn.

''(B) REQUIREMENTS.—The determination of the Secretary under subparagraph (A)—

''(i) shall be effective beginning on the date on which the determination is issued;

''(ii) may be altered by the Secretary as the Secretary determines to be necessary; and

''(iii) shall not be subject to administrative renewal.

''(f) ENVIRONMENTAL THRESHOLD CARRYING CAPACITY.—The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit shall support the attainment of the environmental threshold carrying capacities.

''(g) COOPERATIVE AUTHORITIES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—During the 4 fiscal years following the date of enactment of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2009, the Secretary, in conjunction with land adjustment projects or programs, may enter into contracts and cooperative agreements with States, units of local government, and other public and private entities to provide for fuel reduction, erosion control, reforestation, Stream Environment Zone restoration, and similar management activities on Federal land and non-Federal land within the projects or programs.

''(2) REPORT ON LAND STATUS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2009, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report regarding the management of land in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Urban Lots Program, including—

''(i) a description of future plans and recent actions for land consolidation and adjustment; and

''(ii) the identification of any obstacles to desired conveyances or interchanges.

''(B) INCLUSIONS.—The report submitted under subparagraph (A) may contain recommendations for additional legislative authority.

''(C) EFFECT.—Nothing in this paragraph delays the conveyance of parcels under—

''(i) the authority of this Act; or

''(ii) any other authority available to the Secretary.

''(3) SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITY.—The authority of this subsection is supplemental to all other cooperative authorities of the Secretary.''.

SEC. 5. CONSULTATION.

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106–506; 114 Stat. 2351) is amended by striking section 5 and inserting the following:

''SEC. 5. CONSULTATION.

''In carrying out this Act, the Secretary, the Administrator, and the Director shall, as appropriate and in a timely manner, consult with the heads of the Washoe Tribe, applicable Federal, State, regional, and local governmental agencies, and the Lake Tahoe Federal Advisory Committee.''.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZED PROJECTS.

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106–506; 114 Stat. 2351) is amended by striking section 6 and inserting the following:

''SEC. 6. AUTHORIZED PROJECTS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, the Director, and the Administrator, in coordination with the Planning Agency and the States of California and Nevada, may carry out any project described in subsection (c) or included in the Priority List under section 8 to further the purposes of the Environmental Improvement Program if the project has been subject to environmental review and approval, respectively, as required under Federal law, article 7 of the Compact, and State law, as applicable.

''(b) MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT.—All projects authorized under subsection (c) and section 8 shall—

''(1) include funds for monitoring and assessment of the results and effectiveness at the project and program level consistent with the program developed under section 11; and

''(2) use the integrated multiagency performance measures established in the science program developed under that section.

''(c) DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES.—

''(1) STORMWATER MANAGEMENT, EROSION CONTROL, AND TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD IMPLEMENTATION.—Of the amounts made available under section 18(a), $40,000,000 shall be used for the Federal share of the following projects:

''(A) Bijou Stormwater Improvement Project in the City of South Lake Tahoe, California.

''(B) Christmas Valley Stormwater Improvement Project in El Dorado County, California.

''(C) Kings Beach Watershed Improvement Project in Placer County, California.

''(D) Lake Forest Stormwater and Watershed Improvement Project in Placer County, California.

''(E) Crystal Bay Stormwater Improvement Project in Washoe County, Nevada.

''(F) Washoe County Stormwater Improvement Projects 4, 5, and 6 in Washoe County, Nevada.

''(G) Upper and Lower Kingsbury Project in Douglas County, Nevada.

''(H) Lake Village Drive-Phase II Stormwater Improvement in Douglas County, Nevada.

''(I) State Route 28 Spooner to Sand Harbor Stormwater Improvement, Washoe County, Nevada.

''(J) State Route 431 Stormwater Improvement, Washoe County, Nevada.

''(2) STREAM ENVIRONMENT ZONE AND WATERSHED RESTORATION.—Of the amounts made available under section 18(a), $32,000,000 shall be available for the Federal share of the following projects:

''(A) Upper Truckee River and Marsh Restoration Project.

''(B) Upper Truckee River Mosher, Reaches 1 & 2.

''(C) Upper Truckee River Sunset Stables.

''(D) Lower Blackwood Creek Restoration Project.

''(E) Ward Creek.

''(F) Third Creek/Incline Creek Watershed Restoration.

''(G) Rosewood Creek Restoration Project.

''(3) FIRE RISK REDUCTION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Of the amounts made available under section 18(a), $136,000,000 shall be made available for the following projects:

''(i) Projects identified as part of the Lake Tahoe Basin Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy 10-Year Plan.

''(ii) Competitive grants for fuels work to be awarded by the Secretary to communities that have adopted national wildland fire codes to implement the applicable portion of the 10-year plan described in clause (i).

''(iii) Biomass projects, including feasibility assessments and transportation of materials.

''(iv) Angora Fire Restoration projects under the jurisdiction of the Secretary.

''(B) MULTIPLE BENEFIT FUELS PROJECTS.—Consistent with the requirements of section 4(d)(2), not more than $10,000,000 of the amounts made available to carry out subparagraph (A) shall be available to the Secretary for the planning and implementation of multiple benefit fuels projects with an emphasis on restoration projects in Stream Environment Zones.

''(C) MINIMUM ALLOCATION.—Of the amounts made available to carry out subparagraph (A), at least $80,000,000 shall be made available to the Secretary for projects under subparagraph (A)(i).

''(D) PRIORITY.—Units of local government that have dedicated funding for inspections and enforcement of defensible space regulations shall be given priority for amounts provided under this paragraph.

''(E) COST-SHARING REQUIREMENTS.—As a condition on the receipt of funds, communities or local fire districts that receive funds under this paragraph shall provide a 25 percent match.

''(4) INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT.—Of the amounts to be made available under section 18(a), $20,500,000 shall be made available for the Aquatic Invasive Species Program and the watercraft inspections described in section 9.

''(5) SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES MANAGEMENT.—Of the amounts to be made available under section 18(a), $20,000,000 shall be made available for the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Recovery Program.

''(6) SCIENCE.—Of the amounts to be made available under section 18(a), $30,000,000 shall be used to develop and implement the science program developed under section 11.

''(d) USE OF REMAINING FUNDS.—Any amounts made available under section 18(a) that remain available after projects described in subsection (c) have been funded shall be made available for projects included in the Priority List under section 8.''.

SEC. 7. ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PRIORITY LIST.

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106–506; 114 Stat. 2351) is amended—

(1) by striking sections 8 and 9;

(2) by redesignating sections 10, 11, and 12 as sections 16, 17, and 18, respectively; and

(3) by inserting after section 7 the following:

''SEC. 8. ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PRIORITY LIST.

''(a) FUNDING.—Subject to section 6(d), of the amounts to be made available under section 18(a), at least $136,000,000 shall be made available for projects identified on the Priority List.

''(b) DEADLINE.—Not later than February 15 of the year after the date of enactment of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2009, the Chair, in consultation with the Secretary, the Administrator, the Director, the Planning Agency, the States of California and Nevada, the Federal Partnership, the Washoe Tribe, the Lake Tahoe Federal Advisory Committee, and the Tahoe Science Consortium shall submit to Congress a prioritized list of all Environmental Improvement Program projects for the Lake Tahoe Basin, regardless of program category.

''(c) CRITERIA.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The priority of projects included in the Priority List shall be based on the best available science and the following criteria:

''(A) The 5-year threshold carrying capacity evaluation.

''(B) The ability to measure progress or success of the project.

''(C) The potential to significantly contribute to the achievement and maintenance of the environmental threshold carrying capacities identified in the Compact for—

''(i) air quality;

''(ii) fisheries;

''(iii) noise;

''(iv) recreation;

''(v) scenic resources;

''(vi) soil conservation;

''(vii) forest health;

''(viii) water quality; and

''(ix) wildlife.

''(D) The ability of a project to provide multiple benefits.

''(E) The ability of a project to leverage non-Federal contributions.

''(F) Stakeholder support for the project.

''(G) The justification of Federal interest.

''(H) Agency priority.

''(I) Agency capacity.

''(J) Cost-effectiveness.

''(K) Federal funding history.

''(2) SECONDARY FACTORS.—In addition to the criteria under paragraph (1), the Chair shall, as the Chair determines to be appropriate, give preference to projects in the Priority List that benefit existing neighborhoods in the Basin that are at or below regional median income levels, based on the most recent census data available.

''(3) EROSION CONTROL PROJECTS.—For purposes of the priority list, erosion control projects shall be considered part of the stormwater management and total maximum daily load program of the Environmental Improvement Program.

''(d) REVISIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Priority List submitted under subsection (b) shall be revised—

''(A) every 4 years; or

''(B) on a finding of compelling need under paragraph (2).

''(2) FINDING OF COMPELLING NEED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary, the Administrator, or the Director makes a finding of compelling need justifying a priority shift and the finding is approved by the Secretary, the Executive Director of the Planning Agency, the California Resources Secretary, and the Director of the Nevada Department of Conservation, the Priority List shall be revised in accordance with this subsection.

''(B) INCLUSIONS.—A finding of compelling need includes—

''(i) major scientific findings;

''(ii) results from the threshold evaluation of the Planning Agency;

''(iii) emerging environmental threats; and

''(iv) rare opportunities for land acquisition.

''SEC. 9. AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2009, the Director, in coordination with the Planning Agency, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the Nevada Department of Wildlife, shall deploy strategies that meet or exceed the criteria described in subsection (b) for preventing the introduction of aquatic invasive species into the Lake Tahoe Basin.

''(b) CRITERIA.—The strategies referred to in subsection (a) shall provide that—

''(1) combined inspection and decontamination stations be established and operated at not less than 2 locations in the Lake Tahoe Basin;

''(2) watercraft not be allowed to launch in waters of the Lake Tahoe Basin if the watercraft—

''(A) has been in waters infested by quagga or zebra mussels;

''(B) shows evidence of invasive species that the Director has determined would be detrimental to the Lake Tahoe ecosystem; or

''(C) cannot be reliably decontaminated in accordance with paragraph (3);

''(3) subject to paragraph (4), all watercraft surfaces and appurtenance (such as anchors and fenders) that contact with water shall be reliably decontaminated, based on standards developed by the Director using the best available science;

''(4) watercraft bearing positive verification of having last launched within the Lake Tahoe Basin may be exempted from decontamination under paragraph (3); and

''(5) while in the Lake Tahoe Basin, all watercraft maintain documentation of compliance with the strategies deployed under this section.

''(c) CERTIFICATION.—The Director may certify State agencies to perform the decontamination activities described in subsection (b)(3) at locations outside the Lake Tahoe Basin if standards at the sites meet or exceed standards for similar sites in the Lake Tahoe Basin established under this section.

''(d) APPLICABILITY.—The strategies and criteria developed under this section shall apply to all watercraft to be launched on water within the Lake Tahoe Basin.

''(e) FEES.—The Director may collect and spend fees for decontamination only at a level sufficient to cover the costs of operation of inspection and decontamination stations under this section.

''(f) CIVIL PENALTIES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Any person that launches, attempts to launch, or facilitates launching of watercraft not in compliance with strategies deployed under this section shall be liable for a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed $1,000 per violation.

''(2) OTHER AUTHORITIES.—Any penalties assessed under this subsection shall be separate from penalties assessed under any other authority.

''(g) LIMITATION.—The strategies and criteria under subsections (a) and (b), respectively, may be modified if the Secretary of the Interior, in a nondelegable capacity and in consultation with the Planning Agency and State governments, issues a determination that alternative measures will be no less effective at preventing introduction of aquatic invasive species into Lake Tahoe than the strategies and criteria.

''(h) FUNDING.—Of the amounts made available under section 6(c)(4), not more than $500,000 shall be made available to the Director, in coordination with the Planning Agency and State governments—

''(1) to evaluate the feasibility, cost, and potential effectiveness of further efforts that could be undertaken by the Federal Government, State and local governments, or private entities to guard against introduction of aquatic invasive species into Lake Tahoe, including the potential establishment of inspection and decontamination stations on major transitways entering the Lake Tahoe Basin; and

''(2) to evaluate and identify options for ensuring that all waters connected to Lake Tahoe are protected from quagga and zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species.

''(i) SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITY.—The authority under this section is supplemental to all actions taken by non-Federal regulatory authorities.

''SEC. 10. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS; INTERAGENCY AGREEMENTS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Assistant Secretary may enter into interagency agreements with non-Federal interests in the Lake Tahoe Basin to use Lake Tahoe Partnership-Miscellaneous General Investigations funds to provide programmatic technical assistance for the Environmental Improvement Program.

''(b) LOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Before providing technical assistance under this section, the Assistant Secretary shall enter into a local cooperation agreement with a non-Federal interest to provide for the technical assistance.

''(2) COMPONENTS.—The agreement entered into under paragraph (1) shall—

''(A) describe the nature of the technical assistance,

''(B) describe any legal and institutional structures necessary to ensure the effective long-term viability of the end products by the non-Federal interest; and

''(C) include cost-sharing provisions in accordance with paragraph (3).

''(3) FEDERAL SHARE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Federal share of project costs under each local cooperation agreement under this subsection shall be 65 percent.

''(B) FORM.—The Federal share may be in the form of reimbursements of project costs.

''(C) CREDIT.—The non-Federal interest may receive credit toward the non-Federal share for the reasonable costs of related technical activities completed by the non-Federal interest before entering into a local cooperation agreement with the Assistant Secretary under this subsection.

''SEC. 11. SCIENCE PROGRAM.

''The Administrator, in cooperation with the Secretary, the Planning Agency, the States of California and Nevada, and the Tahoe Science Consortium, shall develop and implement a Lake Tahoe Science Program that—

''(1) develops and regularly updates an integrated multiagency programmatic assessment and monitoring plan—

''(A) to evaluate the effectiveness of the Environmental Improvement Program;

''(B) to evaluate the status and trends of indicators related to environmental threshold carrying capacities; and

''(C) to assess the impacts and risks of changing climatic conditions and invasive species;

''(2) develops a comprehensive set of performance measures for Environmental Improvement Program assessment;

''(3) coordinates the development of the annual report described in section 13;

''(4) produces and synthesizes scientific information necessary for—

''(A) the identification and refinement of environmental indicators for the Lake Tahoe Basin; and

''(B) the evaluation of standards and benchmarks;

''(5) conducts applied research, programmatic technical assessments, scientific data management, analysis, and reporting related to key management questions;

''(6) develops new tools and information to support objective assessments of land use and resource conditions;

''(7) provides scientific and technical support to the Federal Government and State and local governments in—

''(A) reducing stormwater runoff, air deposition, and other pollutants that contribute to the loss of lake clarity; and

''(B) the development and implementation of an integrated stormwater monitoring and assessment program;

''(8) establishes and maintains independent peer review processes—

''(A) to evaluate the Environmental Improvement Program; and

''(B) to assess the technical adequacy and scientific consistency of central environmental documents, such as the 5-year threshold review; and

''(9) provides scientific and technical support for the development of appropriate management strategies to accommodate changing climatic conditions in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

''SEC. 12. PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, Administrator, and Director will coordinate with the Planning Agency to conduct public education and outreach programs, including encouraging—

''(1) owners of land and residences in the Lake Tahoe Basin—

''(A) to implement defensible space; and

''(B) to conduct best management practices for water quality; and

''(2) owners of land and residences in the Lake Tahoe Basin and visitors to the Lake Tahoe Basin, to help prevent the introduction and proliferation of invasive species as part of the private share investment in the Environmental Improvement Program.

''(b) REQUIRED COORDINATION.—Public outreach and education programs for aquatic invasive species under this section shall—

''(1) be coordinated with Lake Tahoe Basin tourism and business organizations; and

''(2) include provisions for the programs to extend outside of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

''SEC. 13. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

''Not later than February 15 of each year, the Chair, in cooperation with the Secretary, the Director, the Administrator, the Planning Agency, and the States of California and Nevada, shall submit to Congress a report that describes—

''(1) the status of all Federal, State, local, and private projects authorized under this Act, including to the maximum extent practicable, for projects that will receive Federal funds under this Act during the current or subsequent fiscal year—

''(A) the project scope;

''(B) the budget for the project; and

''(C) the justification for the project, consistent with the criteria established in section 8(c)(1);

''(2) Federal, State, local, and private expenditures in the preceding fiscal year to implement the Environmental Improvement Program and projects otherwise authorized under this Act;

''(3) accomplishments in the preceding fiscal year in implementing this Act in accordance with the performance measures and other monitoring and assessment activities; and

''(4) public education and outreach efforts undertaken to implement programs and projects authorized under this Act.

''SEC. 14. ANNUAL BUDGET PLAN.

''As part of the annual budget of the President, the President shall submit information regarding each Federal agency involved in the Environmental Improvement Program (including the Forest Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service), including—

''(1) an interagency crosscut budget that displays the proposed budget for use by each Federal agency in carrying out restoration activities relating to the Environmental Improvement Program for the following fiscal year;

''(2) a detailed accounting of all amounts received and obligated by Federal agencies to achieve the goals of the Environmental Improvement Program during the preceding fiscal year; and

''(3) a description of the Federal role in the Environmental Improvement Program, including the specific role of each agency involved in the restoration of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

''SEC. 15. GRANT FOR WATERSHED STRATEGY.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Of the amounts to be made available under section 18(a), the Administrator shall use not more than $500,000 to provide a grant, on a competitive basis, to States, federally recognized Indian tribes, interstate agencies, other public or nonprofit agencies and institutions, or institutions of higher education to develop a Lake Tahoe Basin watershed strategy in coordination with the Planning Agency, the States of California and Nevada, and the Secretary.

''(b) COMMENT.—In developing the watershed strategy under subsection (a), the grant recipients shall provide an opportunity for public review and comment.

''(c) COMPONENTS.—The watershed strategy developed under subsection (a) shall include—

''(1) a classification system, inventory, and assessment of stream environment zones;

''(2) comprehensive watershed characterization and restoration priorities consistent with—

''(A) the Lake Tahoe total maximum daily load; and

''(B) the environmental threshold carrying capacities of Lake Tahoe;

''(3) a monitoring and assessment program consistent with section 11; and

''(4) an adaptive management system—

''(A) to measure and evaluate progress; and

''(B) to adjust the program.

''(d) DEADLINE.—The watershed strategy developed under subsection (a) shall be completed by the date that is 2 years after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this section.''.

SEC. 8. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS.

Section 17 of The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106–506; 114 Stat. 2358) (as redesignated by section 7(2)) is amended by inserting '', Director, or Administrator'' after ''Secretary''.

SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106–506; 114 Stat. 2351) is amended by striking section 18 (as redesignated by section 7(2)) and inserting the following:

''SEC. 18. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act $415,000,000 for a period of 8 fiscal years beginning the first fiscal year after the date of enactment of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2009.

''(b) EFFECT ON OTHER FUNDS.—Amounts authorized under this section and any amendments made by this Act—

''(1) shall be in addition to any other amounts made available to the Secretary, Administrator, or Director for expenditure in the Lake Tahoe Basin; and

''(2) shall not reduce allocations for other Regions of the Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, or United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

''(c) COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT.—Except as provided in subsection (d) and section 6(c)(3)(E), the States of California and Nevada shall pay 50 percent of the aggregate costs of restoration activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin funded under section 6 or 8.

''(d) RELOCATION COSTS.—Notwithstanding subsection (c), the Secretary shall provide to local utility districts ⅔ the costs of relocating facilities in connection with—

''(1) environmental restoration projects under sections 6 and 8; and

''(2) erosion control projects under section 2 of Public Law 96–586 (94 Stat. 3381).

''(e) SIGNAGE.—To the maximum extent practicable, a project provided assistance under this Act shall include appropriate signage at the project site that—

''(1) provides information to the public on—

''(A) the amount of Federal funds being provided to the project; and

''(B) this Act; and

''(2) displays the visual identity mark of the Environmental Improvement Program.''.

SEC. 10. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) ADMINISTRATION OF ACQUIRED LAND.—Section 3(b) of Public Law 96–586 (94 Stat. 3384) is amended—

(1) by striking ''(b) Lands'' and inserting the following:

''(b) ADMINISTRATION OF ACQUIRED LAND.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Land''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) INTERCHANGE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the Secretary of Agriculture (acting through the Chief of the Forest Service) (referred to in this paragraph as the 'Secretary') may interchange (as defined in the first section of Public Law 97–465 (16 U.S.C. 521c)) any land or interest in land within the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit described in subparagraph (B) with appropriate units of State government.

''(B) ELIGIBLE LAND.—The land or interest in land referred to in subparagraph (A) is land or an interest in land that the Secretary determines is not subject to efficient administration by the Secretary because of the location or size of the land.

''(C) REQUIREMENTS.—In any interchange under this paragraph, the Secretary shall—

''(i) insert in the applicable deed such terms, covenants, conditions, and reservations as the Secretary determines to be necessary to ensure—

''(I) protection of the public interest, including protection of the scenic, wildlife, and recreational values of the National Forest System; and

''(II) the provision for appropriate access to, and use of, land within the National Forest System;

''(ii) receive land within the Lake Tahoe Basin of approximately equal value (as defined in accordance with section 6(2) of Public Law 97–465 (96 Stat. 2535)); and

''(iii) for the purposes of any environmental assessment—

''(I) assume the maintenance of the environmental status quo; and

''(II) not be required to individually assess each parcel that is managed under the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Urban Lots Program.

''(D) USE OF LAND ACQUIRED BY UNITS OF STATE GOVERNMENT.—Any unit of State government that receives National Forest System land through an exchange or transfer under this paragraph shall not convey the land to any person or entity other than the Federal Government or a State government.''.

(b) INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT FUNDING.—Section 108(g) of title I of division C of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005 (Public Law 108–447; 118 Stat. 2942) is amended by striking ''$25,000,000'' and inserting ''$75,000,000''.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, Lake Tahoe is a national treasure. Her alpine beauty has drawn and inspired people for centuries: artists and poets, John Muir and Mark Twain, and countless millions the world over.

But the ''Jewel of the Sierra'' is in big trouble. If we don't act now, we could lose Lake Tahoe—lose it with stunning speed—to several devastating threats.

Invasive species, such as the quagga mussel, could decimate the lake, much as it has Lake Mead. Just one quagga mussel attached to a boat could lay 1 million eggs. An infestation would devastate the lake. It would ruin its biology, foul its beaches, deliver a body

blow to the regional economy. It would turn this ''noble sheet of clear water,'' as Twain put it, into just another dull, gray, polluted body of water. We must get a stranglehold on invasive species before they get a stranglehold on the lake.

Catastrophic wildfires could spiral out of control and consume the basin. The Angora Fire of 2007 destroyed 242 homes and scorched 3,100 acres. It was just a wakeup call. Today, 25 percent of the basin's forests are marred by dead, downed or dying trees. These fuels—combined with hot, tinder-dry conditions—threaten explosive wildfires that could incinerate the basin. We must make their removal a top priority.

Pollution and sedimentation threaten Lake Tahoe's fabled water clarity. In 1968, the first year UC Davis scientists made measurements using a device called a Secchi disk, clarity was measured at an average depth of 102.4 feet. Clarity declined over the next three decades, hitting a low of 64 feet in 1997. We have seen improvements in this decade. This year scientists recorded average clarity at 69.6 feet—roughly within the range of the past 8 years. Scientists say the rate of decline in Lake Tahoe's clarity has slowed. I believe we can build on this. But the gains could easily be reversed if we are not diligent.

Climate change is real and adding to all these problems. It leaves the basin hot and tinder-dry, and vulnerable to wildfires. The lake's surface water temperature has risen 1.5 degrees in 38 years. That means the cyclical deep-water mixing of the lake's waters will occur less frequently, and this could significantly disrupt Lake Tahoe's ecosystem.

We must face facts—we could lose Lake Tahoe.

So it is with a real sense of urgency that today I join with Majority Leader REID as he introduces sweeping legislation to attack these threats. The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2009 is also cosponsored by Senators ENSIGN and BOXER. Representative DEAN HELLER of Nevada is introducing a companion in the House of Representatives.

This legislation would authorize $415 million over 8 years to mount a robust attack against these threats.

Against invasive species.

Against catastrophic wildfires.

Against the sedimentation and pollution that could forever ruin Lake Tahoe's crystal waters.

With this legislation we can rise to the challenges presented by all these threats, and build upon the gains set in motion by the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2000.

Bottom line—this bill will help ensure the protection and preservation of Lake Tahoe, now and for future generations.

Now, to see where we are headed, it's important to review where we have been. So I would like to touch on the work that's been done so far at Lake Tahoe, work that sets the foundation for the effort that lies ahead.

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2000 set in motion a partnership between the Federal Government, the States of California and Nevada, local governments and organizations, and the private sector.

All were brought together with a common purpose—to save Lake Tahoe.

I am proud to have been an original sponsor, along with Senators REID and BOXER, and then-Senator Dick Bryan.

This legislation set in motion investments that have enabled us to get a foothold. These investments included $424 million by the Federal Government, $612 million by the State of California, $87 million by the State of Nevada, $59 million by local governments and $249 million by the private sector.

It financed more than 300 projects under the Environmental Improvement Program, a combined Federal, State, local, and private-sector partnership to restore Lake Tahoe. One hundred eighty three more projects are in progress.

We have seen improvements across the board:

Water Clarity: Stormwater, erosion-control, and road improvement projects enabled us to begin to tackle the problem of sedimentation and pollution, which enters the lake and degrades its fragile water clarity. This includes improvements to 429 miles of roadways and restoring 739 acres of wetlands. As I noted a moment ago, we have seen gains in water clarity in this decade, and this year's average clarity was 69.6 feet. Scientists report that the rate of decline has slowed. But these gains could easily be reversed if we don't continue and broaden our efforts to keep sediments out of the lake.

Catastrophic Wildfires: One-fourth of the forests of the Tahoe Basin are comprised of dead, downed, and dying trees. Combined with hot, tinder-dry conditions, they can feed massive wildfires that could destroy the basin. Removal of these hazardous fuels has been a priority. The Fire Safe Councils and the local Fire Departments have done good work. They deserve our continued support, and with this legislation, they will get it. As with efforts on water clarity, efforts to clear the forests of hazardous fuels, and to institute sensible fire-safe practices must be continued. So far, hazardous fuels reduction treatment has occurred on 33,549 acres, including 12,256 acres treated since 2006. In the next 8 years, we plan on treating 68,000 additional acres.

Stream Restoration and Wildlife Habitat Improvement: So far more than 13,927 acres of wildlife habitat have been improved and 800 acres of Stream Environment Zones restored. This includes restoration of the Upper Truckee Watershed to reduce the flow of sedimentation into the lake, and reintroduction of the Tahoe Yellow Cress, a plant that grows no place else on Earth.

Much work has been done. Much work lies ahead. It must be done, because the old threats are still there. And new ones—such as the quagga mussel—have arisen.

The bill introduced today by Senator REID is essential to continuing the good work done to date, and to meeting the threats facing the lake today.

It would authorize $415 million over 8 years to improve water clarity, reduce risk of catastrophic wildfire, and restore the environment. Specifically, it would do the following:

The bill provides $248 million over 8 years for the highest priority restoration projects, according to scientific data. The legislation authorizes at least $72 million for stormwater management and watershed restoration projects scientifically determined to be the most effective ways to improve water clarity. This bill also requires prioritized ranking of environmental restoration projects and authorizes $136 million for state and local agencies to implement these projects. Now—and this is an important point—this legislation would direct investments to where it is needed most. For example, today we know the major sources of stormwater runoff that send sedimentation into the lake, degrading water clarity. So the monies would go to specific projects addressing California State roads, source of 23 percent of urban particle loads; the city of Lake Tahoe, CA, 22 percent; Washoe County, Nevada, 17 percent; and so forth. In this bill, these stormwater projects are targeted to the areas of greatest concern. Priority projects will improve water quality, forest health, air quality and fish and wildlife habitat around Lake Tahoe. In addition, projects that benefit low-income neighborhoods are encouraged.

The bill authorizes $136 million over 8 years to reduce the threat of wildfire in Lake Tahoe. This would finance hazardous fuels reduction projects, at $17 million per year, including grants to local fire agencies. It provides the Forest Service up to $10 million for fuels projects that have multiple environmental benefits, with an emphasis in restoring Stream Environment Zones. This is critical because, again, these streams feed into the lake, and form a critical link in the ecosystem. We need to pay attention to these stream zones if we hope to restore water clarity. The bill also creates incentives for local communities to have dedicated funding for defensible space inspections and enforcement.

This bill protects Lake Tahoe from the threat of quagga mussels and other invasive aquatic species. Quagga mussels pose a very serious threat to Lake Tahoe, a threat made more intractable because these mussels have been shown to survive in cold waters. And this summer UC scientists reported that they found up to 3,000 Asian clams per square meter at spots between Zephyr Point and Elk Point in Lake Tahoe. The spreading Asian clam population could put sharp shells and rotting algae on the lake's beaches and help spread other invasive species such as quagga mussels.

The bill would authorize $20 million for watercraft inspections and removal of existing invasive species. It would also prohibit watercraft that have had contact with quagga or zebra mussel-infested waters from entering waters in the Tahoe Basin. As I noted earlier, one quagga or zebra mussel can lay 1 million eggs in a year. This means that a single boat carrying quagga could devastate the lake's biology, local infrastructure, and the local economy. The damage that could be inflicted at Lake Tahoe by a quagga infestation has been estimated in the tens of millions of dollars annually.

The threat to Lake Tahoe cannot be overstated. There were no quagga mussels in Lake Mead 3 years ago. Today there are more than 3 trillion. The infestation is probably irreversible. Quagga mussels attach themselves to underwater structures and clog water intake pipes, canals, aqueducts and dams. They degrade water quality and can alter the taste and smell of drinking water. They can devastate aquatic ecosystems by consuming large amounts of microscopic plants, leaving little or nothing for native fish and other aquatic species. They are a very real threat.

But the fix need not be drastic. Only about 1.5 percent of boats that have been inspected in Lake Tahoe would be prohibited from entering the lake, according to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. The bill would also require that all watercraft be inspected and decontaminated to prevent the introduction of invasive aquatic species. Watercraft last launched in Lake Tahoe would be exempted. The Secretary of the Interior can modify these regulations if scientific information leads to new technologies or techniques that would be no less effective than current measures. And there's good news. There's promising news on this front. This week, scientists reported that under proper conditions, plastic ''bottom barriers'' laid on top of clam beds can kill all Asian clams living there within 28 days. We can fight off these invaders. But it will require drive and imagination—and the help authorized within this bill.

The bill supports reintroduction of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. The legislation authorizes $20 million over 8 years for the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Recovery Plan. The Lahontan Cutthroat Trout is an iconic species that has an important historic legacy in Lake Tahoe. When John C. Fremont first explored the Truckee River in January of 1844, he called it the Salmon Trout River because he found the Pyramid Lake Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. The trout relied on the Truckee River and its tributaries for their spawning runs in spring, traveling up the entire river's length as far as Lake Tahoe and Donner Lake, where they used the cool, pristine waters and clean gravel beds to lay their eggs. But dams, pollution and overfishing caused the demise of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. Lake Tahoe is one of the historic 11 lakes where Lahontan Cutthroat Trout flourished in the past, and it's a critical part of the strategy to recover the species.

The bill funds scientific research. The legislation authorizes $30 million over 8 years for scientific programs and research which will produce information on long-term trends in the basin and inform the most cost-effective projects.

The bill prohibits mining operations in the Tahoe Basin. The legislation would prevent the start of any mining operations in the basin, ensuring that the fragile watershed, and Lake Tahoe's water clarity, are not threatened by pollution from mining operations.

The bill increases accountability and oversight. Every project funded by this legislation will have monitoring and assessment to determine the most cost-effective projects and best management practices for future projects. The legislation also requires the Chair of the Federal Partnership to work with the Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Fish and Wildlife Service and regional and state agencies, to prepare an annual report to Congress detailing the status of all projects undertaken, including project scope, budget and justification and overall expenditures and accomplishments. This will ensure that Congress can have oversight on the progress of environmental restoration in Lake Tahoe.

The bill provides for public outreach and education. The Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency will implement new public outreach and education programs including encouraging basin residents and visitors to implement defensible space, conducting best management practices for water quality and preventing the introduction and proliferation of invasive species. In addition, the legislation requires signage on federally financed projects to improve public awareness of restoration efforts.

The bill allows for increased efficiency in the management of public land. Under this legislation, the Forest Service would have increased flexibility to exchange land with State agencies which will allow for more cost-efficient management of public land. There is currently a checkerboard pattern of ownership in some areas of the basin. Under this new authority, the Forest Service could exchange land with the California Tahoe Conservancy of approximately equal value without going through a lengthy process to assess the land. For example, if there are several plots of Forest Service land that surround or are adjacent to Tahoe Conservancy land, the Tahoe Conservancy could transfer that land to the Forest Service so that it can be managed more efficiently.

Finally, it is important to note that this bill would increase accountability and oversight. All projects funded by this legislation would be monitored and assessed to ensure cost-effectiveness. The bill would also require annual reports to Congress detailing the status of all projects—including expenditures and accomplishments. Scientific data will be used to inform every aspect of this legislation. It will help us refine and adjust our restoration programs and ensure that we fund only the highest priority projects.

Let there be no doubt: Lake Tahoe is in grave danger. Grave danger from catastrophic wildfires. Grave danger from invasive species. Grave danger from sedimentation and pollution that threaten to dull her crystal waters.

Mark Twain called Lake Tahoe ''the fairest picture the whole world affords.'' Mr. President, we must not be the generation that lets this picture fall into ruin. We must rise to the challenge, and do all we can to preserve the ''Jewel of the Sierra.'' This legislation will do exactly that.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise to talk about a bill that has been introduced today by myself, along with Senators REID, FEINSTEIN, and BOXER, that will be the next chapter in our continuing support of one of the most pristine and magnificent areas in the United States.

Since it was formed 2 million years ago, the breathtaking beauty of Lake Tahoe has awed all who have visited its crystal-clear waters and inspiring views. Mark Twain once said about the landmark, ''I thought it must surely be the fairest picture the whole world affords.'' From the Washoe tribe that originally inhabited its shores to John C. Fremont who first saw Lake Tahoe 165 years ago, this alpine lake is a part of our history and a part of our future.

Next year, the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, originally enacted in 2000, will expire. Over the course of a decade, $300,000,000 was invested in environmental projects for water clarity, erosion control, and fire suppression. I am proud to have led the effort to amend the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act in 2003 in order to guarantee funding for the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act from land auctions across southern Nevada. Great work has gone into protecting this national legacy, but we are not done.

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2009 is our continued commitment to protecting this Nevada treasure for future generations. This effort, a collaboration among Senators FEINSTEIN, REID, BOXER, and me, authorizes $415 million for 8 years and provides for fuels reduction, Environmental Improvement Program projects, storm water management, and watershed restoration. It devotes significant funding—for the first time ever—to prevent the introduction of quagga and zebra mussels into the lake, one of the greatest threats facing Tahoe today. There is also funding for Lahontan Cutthroat Trout recovery and public outreach and education.

Unfortunately, there are many threats facing Lake Tahoe. This legislation addresses each of those threats in a manner that is fiscally responsible with the most effective and efficient use of Federal funds. Hazardous fuels reduction is one of the most important investments we can make. If you have ever been to Lake Tahoe, you know that one catastrophic fire could wipe out the entire basin. Just 2 years ago, we watched in horror as the Angora fire spread and consumed land, trees, homes, and businesses. It spewed sediment and ash into the lake and turned our worst fears into reality. That is why we must be aggressive with our fuels reduction efforts. This bill also provides grants to Fire Protection Districts in the Lake Tahoe Basin to work in partnership with homeowners on defensible space.

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act is not just a Federal effort. Nevada, California, and private entities are also partners in the Environmental Improvement Program. In Nevada, where the legislature recently committed 100 million to the Environmental Improvement Program, Lake Tahoe is beloved and treasured. I had the privilege of spending several years of my childhood at the lake. My wife Darlene and I have made it a point to instill the same love for Lake Tahoe in our children. We spend our family's summer vacations there—biking, boating, waterskiing, and rock climbing. To this day, my favorite spot is the Tahoe Rim Trail looking down on Sandy Harbor, where you can see deep into the lake. You can see huge boulders. The clarity is so amazing, it is literally one of the most spectacular views in all the world. There really is no place in the world like Lake Tahoe.

Let us make sure this inheritance is cared for and passed on to future generations.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. 2725. A bill to provide for fairness for the Federal judiciary; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Federal Judicial Fairness Act of 2009.

I want to thank my cosponsors—Senator HATCH, Senator LEAHY, and Senator GRAHAM—for working with me on this important legislation.

The salaries of our Federal judges are eroding in their real buying power over time. This bill would solve that problem.

Over the past 30 years, pay for Federal judges has declined dramatically. Since 1969, the inflation-adjusted salaries of Federal judges have dropped by 24 percent, even as other Federal workers have received an average salary increase of 18 percent.

The way the pay system works now, Federal judges are at a stark disadvantage each year for receiving a cost-of-living adjustment to keep their salaries in pace with inflation. While most Federal civilian employees receive an automatic cost-of-living adjustment, Federal judges do not. Instead, they currently receive an adjustment only if Congress passes a special law and also provides an adjustment for itself.

Judicial salaries should not be ensnared in Congressional-pay politics. Judges should simply be on the same system that other Federal employees are.

That is what this bill would do.

It would repeal ''Section 140,'' which currently requires Congress to pass a special law each year in order for judges to receive a cost-of-living adjustment; and it would provide judges with an automatic, annual cost-of-living adjustment under the same General Schedule used for other Federal civilian employees.

In other words, the bill would simply put Federal judges on an even playing field.

Why is this important?

The drop in real pay for Federal judges has created what Chief Justice John Roberts has called ''a Constitutional crisis.'' More and more judges are being forced to leave the bench for financial reasons during what should be the peak years of their judicial careers.

Recently, the Federal court for the Central District of California lost a U.S. District Judge, Stephen Larson, after only 4 years of service. Larson had been a public servant for over a decade and said that because of his large family, he was finally faced with an impossible choice: He could either continue serving the public as a judge, or he could retire from the bench in order to be able to afford a college education for his children.

Judge Larson's story is not an anomaly. The Federal bench has lost 103 judges since 1990, 80 percent of whom ended up taking other, usually higher-paying, positions in the private sector.

The problem is especially acute in high-cost states like California. In California, State court judges have higher salaries than Federal Article III judges.

The rate at which our Federal courts are losing judges has increased by 24 percent since the 1990s, even as caseloads have gone up and the replacement process has slowed down.

Departures like Judge Larson's are only half the problem. As former Federal judge and former Representative Abner Mikva has pointed out, a primary effect of the erosion of judicial salaries is to discourage our Nation's most talented lawyers from joining the bench in the first place.

In 1969, the salary of a Federal district court judge was about 20 percent higher than the salary of a top law school dean and about 30 percent higher than that of a senior law professor at a top law school. Today, judges make only two-thirds the salary of similarly credentialed law professors, and half the pay of deans.

In many cases, judges make less than first-year associates fresh out of law school.

The bill that I am introducing today does not say that Federal judges should make as much as law firm partners or law school deans. It simply says that Federal judges should not be at a disadvantage vis-à-vis other Federal employees in getting a cost-of-living adjustment each year. It simply ensures that the salary Congress intended judges to receive will keep pace with inflation.

Congress has already delayed action on this issue for too long. Our Nation now risks losing both our most experienced judges and the next generation of talented jurists.

As early as 2003, the nonpartisan National Commission on the Public Service, also known as the Volcker Commission, concluded that ''the lag in judicial salaries has gone on too long, and the potential for the diminished quality in American jurisprudence is now too large.''

I believe that the legislation that I am introducing today with Senators HATCH, LEAHY, and GRAHAM is a straightforward solution. It is not a raise. It is simply an assurance that judges will not have to jump through special hoops or rely on the politics of Congressional pay in order to get the cost-of-living adjustment received by other Federal employees.

I do not believe that judges should expect to make the kind of salaries available to partners at private law firms. The rewards of public service are of a different kind. But we must ensure that judicial service remains a viable option for the most talented members of the bar.

Basic fairness requires that judges' salaries not diminish over time. It is time to provide these critical public servants with a fair pay system that will guarantee the future health of the judiciary.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2725

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Federal Judicial Fairness Act of 2009''.

SEC. 2. JUDICIAL COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES.

(a) REPEAL OF STATUTORY REQUIREMENT RELATING TO JUDICIAL SALARIES.—Section 140 of the resolution entitled ''A Joint Resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 1982, and for other purposes.'', approved December 15, 1981 (Public Law 97–92; 95 Stat. 1200; 28 U.S.C. 461 note), is repealed.

(b) AUTOMATIC SALARY ADJUSTMENTS.—Section 461(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(a) Effective at the beginning of the first applicable pay period commencing on or

after the first day of the month in which an adjustment takes effect under sections 5303 and 5304 of title 5 in the rates of pay under the General Schedule, each salary rate which is subject to adjustment under this section shall be adjusted by an amount, rounded to the nearest multiple of $100 (or, if midway between multiples of $100, to the next higher multiple of $100) equal to the percentage of such salary rate which corresponds to the overall average percentage of the adjustment in the rates of pay under the General Schedule.''.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on November 3, 2009, at 9 a.m. in Room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Increasing Health Costs Facing Small Businesses'' on Tuesday, November 3, 2009. The hearing will commence at 2:30 p.m. in room 106 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on November 3, 2009, at 2:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an intern from my office, Matthew Spencer, be granted floor privileges.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY AND NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 291, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 291) expressing support for the goals of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month by promoting national awareness of adoption and the children awaiting families, celebrating children and families involved in adoption, and encouraging Americans to secure safety, permanency, and well-being for all children.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 291) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 291

Whereas there are approximately 510,000 children in the foster care system in the United States, approximately 129,000 of whom are waiting for families to adopt them;

Whereas 61 percent of the children in foster care are age 10 or younger;

Whereas the average length of time a child spends in foster care is over 3 years;

Whereas, for many foster children, the wait for a loving family in which they are nurtured, comforted, and protected seems endless;

Whereas the number of youth who ''age out'' of foster care by reaching adulthood without being placed in a permanent home has continued to increase since 1998, and more than 26,000 foster youth age out every year;

Whereas every day loving and nurturing families are strengthened and expanded when committed and dedicated individuals make an important difference in the life of a child through adoption;

Whereas a 2007 survey conducted by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption demonstrated that though ''Americans overwhelmingly support the concept of adoption, and in particular foster care adoption . . . foster care adoptions have not increased significantly over the past five years'';

Whereas, while 4 in 10 Americans have considered adoption, a majority of Americans have misperceptions about the process of adopting children from foster care and the children who are eligible for adoption;

Whereas 71 percent of those who have considered adoption consider adopting children from foster care above other forms of adoption;

Whereas 45 percent of Americans believe that children enter the foster care system because of juvenile delinquency, when in reality the vast majority of children who have entered the foster care system were victims of neglect, abandonment, or abuse;

Whereas 46 percent of Americans believe that foster care adoption is expensive, when in reality there is no substantial cost for adopting from foster care and financial support is available to adoptive parents after the adoption is finalized;

Whereas both National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month occur in November;

Whereas National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to find permanent, loving families for children in the foster care system;

Whereas, since the first National Adoption Day in 2000, more than 25,000 children have joined forever families during National Adoption Day;

Whereas, in 2008, adoptions were finalized for over 4,500 children through more than 325 National Adoption Day events in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam; and

Whereas the President traditionally issues an annual proclamation to declare November as National Adoption Month, and National Adoption Day is on November 21, 2009: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month;

(2) recognizes that every child should have a permanent and loving family; and

(3) encourages the citizens of the United States to consider adoption during the month of November and all throughout the year.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2009

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, November 4; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate proceed to a period of morning business for 2 hours with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half; and that following morning business the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 3548, the Worker, Homeownership, and Business Assistance Act of 2009, as provided for under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. DURBIN. Under the previous order, following the adoption of the substitute amendment tomorrow morning, the Senate will proceed to a cloture vote on H.R. 3548, as amended. This vote will be the first vote of the day and will begin at 12:15 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:02 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, November 4, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

VICTORIA A. LIPNIC, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING JULY 1, 2010, VICE NAOMI CHURCHILL EARP.

VICTORIA A. LIPNIC, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 1, 2015. (REAPPOINTMENT)

ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

PAUL R. VERKUIL, OF FLORIDA, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES FOR THE TERM OF FIVE YEARS, VICE THOMASINA V. ROGERS, TERM EXPIRED.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SMALL BUSINESS FINANCING AND INVESTMENT ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration of the bill (H.R. 3854) to amend the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to improve programs providing access to capital under such Acts, and for other purposes:

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3854 "The Small Business Financing and Investment Act" which will help support our small businesses and hasten our economic recovery. As we all know, small businesses are the backbone of our economy. More than half of all Americans work at or own a small business. Small businesses have been responsible for most of the new jobs created in this country. Anyone who talks about getting our economy on track and does not talk about what we need to do for small business is missing a huge piece of the puzzle.

I firmly support H.R. 3854 because, among other things, it channels investment capital into small business start-ups through public private partnerships, makes microloans more affordable for budding entrepreneurs, and reduces fees for lending programs to help more small businesses afford to raise the capital they need to succeed. Equally important, the legislation will provide much needed assistance to entrepreneurs and communities that need it most by expanding equity investment to low income communities and helping rural and veteran-owned businesses obtain loans.

Mr. Chair, H.R. 3854 all told the bill is expected to support about $44 billion in small business lending annually, which will help to create or save approximately 1.5 million jobs each year. For our economy to recover and continue to grow, it needs to create jobs for persons seeking work. This legislation will create jobs and thus is worthy of our support. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 3854.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, on November 2, 2009, I was unavoidably unable to cast my votes for rollcall 832, rollcall 833 and rollcall 834. My flight to Washington was delayed due to mechanical difficulties. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I was unable to cast votes on the following legislative measures on November 2, 2009. If I were present for rollcall votes, I would have voted "yea" on each of the following:

Roll 832, November 2, 2009: On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended: H.R. 1168, Veterans Retraining Act of 2009.

Roll 833, November 2, 2009: On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree: H. Res. 291, Recognizing the crucial role of assistance dogs in helping wounded veterans live more independent lives, expressing gratitude to The Tower of Hope, and supporting the goals and ideals of creating a Tower of Hope Day.

Roll 834, November 2, 2009: On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass: S. 509, To authorize a major medical facility project at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Walla Walla, Washington, and for other purposes.

HONORING THE WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM FOR ACHIEVING ACCREDITATION BY THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

HON. BILL CASSIDY

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of the West Baton Rouge Museum, located in the City of Port Allen in Louisiana's Sixth Congressional District. It gives me great pleasure to announce that as of August 7th, 2009, the museum has achieved national accreditation by the American Association of Museums, becoming only the 11th museum in Louisiana and the 777th out of the more than 17,000 museums throughout the nation to achieve this distinguished accreditation.

The West Baton Rouge Museum has successfully demonstrated that it meets the high standards established by the accreditation program and the museum field. It has done this through its completion of a rigorous process of self-study and reviews by a visiting committee of its peers and the Accreditation Commission. The accreditation process certifies a museum's commitment to excellence and professional standards of operation.

The West Baton Rouge Museum is a regional history museum that was established in 1968. Through the hard work and persistent efforts of its curators, benefactors, and other supporters, it has grown to include a four-acre campus that offers six historic buildings and an 11,000-square-foot main museum building. It has become a staple of the local community and an invaluable resource to showcase the culture, art, and history of the region. With this accreditation, I can only hope that the Museum's next forty years will be even more successful than it's first.

TRIBUTE TO SARAH ROSE FRANA

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Sarah Rose Frana from Ridgeway, Iowa for her commitment and enthusiasm as a foreign language student at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

Sarah has been selected for a United States Department of State Critical Language Scholarship to study the Arabic language in Amman, Jordan. This Department of State program is an important component of the federal government's coordinated effort to expand the number of Americans learning foreign languages.

I consider it a great honor to represent Sarah Rose Frana in the United States Congress, and I know that my colleagues join me in congratulating her on earning this special scholarship. I wish Sarah great success in the program, her travel and in her future endeavors.

HONORING NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE SENATE

SPEECH OF

HON. PAUL W. HODES

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 2, 2009

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the legislation I introduced, House Resolution 159. My resolution honors the New Hampshire State Senate for becoming the first statewide legislative body with a majority of women in the United States. New Hampshire has a proud tradition of being a first-in-the-nation State, and with this historic achievement, the Granite State continues to lead the way in providing equal opportunity for everyone. I am proud to represent the great State of New Hampshire, which today shines as an example for the entire country.

I want to recognize all 13 women who are currently serving in the New Hampshire State Senate. They are the Honorable Sharon Carson, Jacalyn Cilley, Martha Fuller Clark, Betsi DeVries, Peggy Gilmour, Margaret Hassan, Molly Kelly, Sylvia Larsen, Bette Lasky, Amanda Merrill, Deborah Reynolds, Sheila Roberge, and Kathleen Sgambati. These leaders comprise the majority female body of the New Hampshire State Senate and were elected to office on November 4, 2008, and sworn in on December 3, 2008.

I would also like to recognize the following women, who played critical roles in the history of New Hampshire government:

Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN was the first woman in the State of New Hampshire to be elected Governor in 1997. She is currently serving as the first female senator from the State of New Hampshire.

The first woman to serve as a member of the New Hampshire State Senate was E. Maude Ferguson, who served from 1931 to 1933.

Vesta Roy served as the first female State Senate President, and in 1983 she became the first female Governor of the State of New Hampshire.

In 1994, the Honorable Sylvia Larsen was elected to the New Hampshire State Senate and has served 7 consecutive terms thus far. She is currently serving in her second term as President of the New Hampshire Senate.

In 1996, the Honorable Terie Norelli was elected to the New Hampshire House of Representatives and has served 6 consecutive terms thus far, and in 2008 was re-elected to serve as Speaker of the New Hampshire House of Representatives for a 2nd consecutive term.

Thank you for bringing this important resolution on the New Hampshire State Senate's historic achievement of being the first statewide legislative body with a majority of women in the United States to the floor of the House of Representatives for consideration. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY, MRS. HELEN GARGASH

HON. MICHAEL A. ARCURI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mrs. Helen Gargash, a resident of my district in Upstate New York, who today celebrates her 100th birthday.

Mrs. Gargash was born on November 3, 1909 as the eldest of four children and spent her childhood on a farm outside Amsterdam, New York. After leaving home to attend school, Mrs. Gargash worked at A.D. Julliard in New York Mills, New York and met her husband, Mr. John Gargash, to whom she was married for over 50 years. Together they have three children, eight grandchildren and several great grandchildren.

Over the years, Mrs. Gargash was employed at the former Griffiss Air Force Base and Mele Manufacturing, from which she eventually retired. As a member of various seniors' groups, Mrs. Gargash served often during her retirement as a volunteer at the Utica State Hospital. She was a communicant of St. Joseph-St. Patrick Church for many years until moving to Country Club Courts in New York Mills, New York. There she has enjoyed almost daily visits to the New Hartford Nutrition Center and continues to cook some of her favorite dishes, among them Spanish rice, chicken soup and mushroom stew.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Mrs. Gargash on this joyous occasion. I ask that my colleagues join me in wishing her many more years of health and happiness.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, on roll-call Nos. 832, 833, 834 I missed the votes due to other official business in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

HONORING PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

SPEECH OF

HON. TODD RUSSELL PLATTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 2, 2009

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 736, which honors the anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address as "Dedication Day" on November 19, 2009. I am proud to have introduced this resolution as we celebrate the bicentennial of President Lincoln's birthday in 2009 and remember the words of this most remarkable speech.

Arriving by train to Gettysburg on the evening of November 18, 1863, few knew the impact Lincoln's words would have on the future of our Nation and its citizens. The Address' message was one of paying tribute to those who lost their lives while at the same time affirming a belief that democracy may prevail despite the immeasurable losses suffered by both the North and South.

Lincoln's speech was just over two minutes in length, but its meaning has long endured. Nearly 63 years ago, Congress passed a joint resolution designating November 19, 1946, the anniversary of the Gettysburg Address, as Dedication Day and declaring the Gettysburg Address to be "the outstanding classic of the ages." The resolution suggested that the Gettysburg Address "be read on that day in public assemblages throughout the United States and its possessions, on our ships at sea, and wherever the American flag flies." Additionally, lines from the Gettysburg Address can be found in Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, and its entirety is marked a short distance from where we stand today, on the south wall of the Lincoln Memorial.

During this bicentennial year of Lincoln's birth, the National Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and the Pennsylvania Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, which have both endorsed this resolution, are holding numerous events celebrating the life and legacy of our sixteenth President. On November 19, 2009 the Pennsylvania Abraham Lincoln Commission is hosting "Dedication Day," with events occurring at the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the site of President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. As we celebrate Lincoln's bicentennial, I urge my fellow Members of Congress and constituents to take time to read the words of this remarkable speech:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that 'all men are created equal.' Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who died here, that the nation might live. This we may, in all propriety do. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow, this ground—The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; while it can never forget what they did here.

It is rather for us, the living, we here be dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that, from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here, gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people by the people for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Two centuries after his birth, the message of the Gettysburg Address is as significant as ever. As such, please join me in paying tribute to one of our Nation's most important speeches and support House Resolution 736.

TRIBUTE TO KATHRYN WOLT

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Kathryn Wolt from Ames, Iowa for her commitment and enthusiasm as a foreign language student at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.

Kathryn has been selected for a United States Department of State Critical Language Scholarship to study the Russian language in Astrakhan, Russia. This Department of State program is an important component of the federal government's coordinated effort to expand the number of Americans learning foreign languages.

I consider it a great honor to represent Kathryn Wolt in the United States Congress, and I know that my colleagues join me in congratulating her on earning this special scholarship. I wish Kathryn great success in the program, her travel and in her future endeavors.

ASIAN AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND MR. GARY MITCHELL

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with sincere admiration that I recognize the Asian American Medical Association, which will be hosting its 33rd Annual Gala on Saturday, November 7, 2009, at the Avalon Manor in Merrillville, Indiana. Each year, the Asian American Medical Association pays tribute to prominent, outstanding citizens and organizations for their contributions to the community. In recognition of their efforts, these honorees are awarded the prestigious Crystal Globe Award each year at this annual banquet.

The Asian American Medical Association has always been a great asset to Northwest Indiana. Its members have selflessly dedicated themselves to providing quality medical service to the residents of Indiana's First Congressional District, and they have always demonstrated exemplary service through their many cultural, scholastic, and charitable endeavors.

At this year's charity ball, the Asian American Medical Association will present the Crystal Globe Award to one of Northwest Indiana's finest citizens, Mr. Gary Mitchell, President and CEO of Opportunity Enterprises, Inc., a non-profit organization that serves to create opportunities for individuals with unique challenges and abilities. From the beginning, social work was not only a career choice for Gary but a way of life. Focused on his calling, Gary graduated from Ball State University with a bachelor's degree in social work and went on to receive his master's degree in social work from Indiana University. After college, Gary held many positions in the social service field, and he also has years of experience in business and industry.

In 1986, Gary joined the team at Opportunity Enterprises as the Chief Executive Officer. Opportunity Enterprises has enjoyed unprecedented success under Gary's leadership. The company has continued to grow and expand. In 1986, the organization served 263 individuals with disabilities on a daily basis. Since then, Opportunity Enterprises has shown immense growth and now serves over 1,000 individuals. Gary has made it his goal to provide day services, residential programs, and vocational opportunities for individuals of all ages, whether they have physical, emotional, or developmental disabilities. For the past 15 years, Opportunity Enterprises has received the three-year accreditation for the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), a not-for-profit organization that establishes standards of quality for service to people with disabilities. In addition, for his efforts on behalf of his community, Gary has received numerous honors, including the President's Award in 1992 and the Sagamore of the Wabash in 1993 from then-Governor of Indiana, EVAN BAYH. For his selfless and passionate support for helping individuals to reestablish their roles in community life, Gary is to be commended and admired. He is truly an inspiration.

Gary's dedication to the people he serves is matched only by his devotion to his family. Gary has been married to his wife, Paula, for 42 years. They have three children and seven grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in commending the Asian American Medical Association, as well as this year's Crystal Globe Award recipient, Mr. Gary Mitchell, for their outstanding contributions to their communities and beyond. Their unwavering commitment to improving the quality of life for the people of Northwest Indiana and throughout the United States is truly inspirational. For these reasons, the Asian American Medical Association, its members, and Mr. Mitchell are to be recognized, and I am proud to serve as their representative in Washington, D.C.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DISTRICT ATTORNEY ESTABLISHMENT ACT OF 2009

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today I introduce the District of Columbia District Attorney Establishment Act of 2009, continuing a series of bills that I will introduce this session to ensure a continuation of the process of the transition to full democracy and self-government for the residents of the District of Columbia. This bill is the seventh in our "Free and Equal D.C." series of bills to eliminate anti-Home Rule legislation and to remedy obsolete or inappropriate congressional laws to the local affairs of the District of Columbia or denials of federal benefits or recognition routinely granted to other jurisdictions.

This bill would establish an Office of District Attorney for the District of Columbia, to be headed by a district attorney elected by D.C. residents. This bill would effectuate the November 2002 referendum in which D.C. voters overwhelmingly (82 percent) approved a locally elected District Attorney.

This important legislation is designed to put the District of Columbia on par with every other local jurisdiction in the country by allowing D.C. residents to elect an independent district attorney to prosecute local criminal and civil matters now handled by the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, a federal official. Under this bill, the new, locally elected district attorney would become the city's chief legal officer. The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia would remain and, like other U.S. Attorneys' offices in the U.S., would handle only the federal matters under its jurisdiction. As presently constituted, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District is the largest in the country only because it serves mainly as the local city prosecutor. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia needs to be freed up to handle national security and other vital federal cases, particularly in the post-9/11 nation's capital.

There is no law enforcement issue of greater importance to our residents, or on which we have less say, than the prosecution of local crimes here. A U.S. Attorney has no business in the local criminal affairs of a local jurisdiction. This bill simply would make the District's prosecutor accountable to the people by electing him or her, as elsewhere in the nation.

In addition to issues of democracy and self-government, such as congressional voting rights and legislative and budget autonomy, that District residents are entitled to as American citizens, residents are determined to achieve each and every other element of home rule. Amending the District's Home Rule Act to create a local district attorney position would be an important development toward our goal of achieving true self-government. I urge my colleagues to support this important measure.

CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS ATTORNEYS TESTIFY BEFORE THE TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues to the following testimonies of two Chinese human rights attorneys who submitted testimony for a hearing last week of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission.

[Written Testimony submitted to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission on the rule of law in China, Oct. 29, 2009]

ON THE RELIGIOUS CASE IN SHANXI AND THE STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN CHINA

(By Mr. Dai Jinbo)

I. THE STATUS OF CHINA'S RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN RECENT YEARS

Since the release of the Regulations on Religious Affairs (hereafter abbreviated as Regulations) by China's State Council in 2004, house churches and other unregistered religious organizations have all been regarded as illegal by the ruling administration. House churches that do not want to join TSPM (Three-Self Patriotic Movement) churches, due to disagreement concerning their beliefs, have become targeted because they refuse to acquire administrative approval by registering their house church as a religious organization. The Regulations have become the basis for government departments to carry out selective law enforcement on unregistered religious organizations including house churches. This is also a result of China's institutionalization of religious issues.

Therefore, with the official implementation of the Regulations in 2005, house churches in various places have all faced or have experienced being banned, fined and /or requested to suspend their religious activities by the government. This can cause such administrative sanctions against them on the grounds that they are not registered. In terms of banning, there are various kinds of different rulings authorizing the ban. These rulings include administrative penalties meted out by the religion management departments to ban illegal religious organizations, ban illegal venues for religious activities and ban illegal Bible training workshops. The religious affairs departments also manage civil affairs departments and use their capacity as a governing entity for social organizations and religious organizations to ban and crack down on house churches on grounds that they are illegal social organizations. An example is the persecution experienced by the Autumn Rain Church in Chengdu in June 2009. Even public security agencies would also interfere in the internal affairs of religious organizations and prevent them from making progress towards autonomy. Further evidence of this type of religious persecution is the case in Baixiang, Wenzhou, in March 2009.

While the Chinese government was attempting to control and crack down on unregistered religious organizations, including house churches, these unregistered religious organizations did not succumb. Instead, they took the path of defending their rights in accordance with Chinese law. By defending their rights, they have exposed the Chinese government's violation of the rule of law and the principle of human rights. While cracking down on unregistered religious organizations on grounds that they are not registered, it is a violation of the international

convention and the relevant provisions concerning religious freedom in China's constitution. This has also made more religious organizations reach a consensus, that is, whether being registered or unregistered is not a criterion for defining a religious organization as legal or illegal. If they are no legally registered, this should not deprive the citizens of their right to religious freedom.

An excessive number of cases involving violations of citizens' religious freedom would negatively affect China's international image. Controlling unregistered religious organizations by banning them could not achieve the desired effect. Some local governments have changed their strategies of cracking down on the unregistered religious organizations and turned religious issues into non-religious issues, thus, trying to control unregistered religious organizations by means of limiting their access to venues. This is mainly reflected in two approaches. One approach is targeted at urban religious organizations that primarily rent their venues. The government departments often secretly force the landlords to cancel the lease or not to renew their lease so that the religious organizations will not have stable venues for religious activities. The second approach is to forcefully demolish unregistered facilities for religious activities on grounds that they were illegally built. The religious case in Xiaoshan in 2006 was evidence, as was the case in 2009 where the Land and Resources Bureau in Jinghai County, Tianjin, ordered the party concerned to demolish their newly-built church facilities. They also fined the church in excess of 10,000 Yuan on grounds that they had violated the law of land management. Therefore, the unregistered religious organizations in China cannot obtain legal church assets. This has caused a breakdown in achieving religious freedom in China.

The recent case in Linfen, Shanxi, will produce a profound impact on China's religious freedom. This is also an issue of church assets. Since according to the current Law of Land Management and the relevant provisions in the Urban Planning Law, a construction project not only requires a certificate of land use but also requires a planning permit for the construction project. However, the government departments would absolutely not want to process these procedures for houses that may be used for gatherings of house churches. Churches are often unable to obtain approval when they are trying to resolve the problem of meeting venues by building new houses, this includes some TSPM churches. Some registered legitimate historical facilities, used for religious activities also found it very hard to obtain approval for construction of new churches. If houses are built without approval, they would be considered ''illegal constructions'' and would face the risk of being demolished at any time.

At dawn, on September 13, 2009, more than three hundred police officers, without producing any legal paperwork, stormed into ''Gospel Shoes Factory,'' a gathering venue for house churches in Fushan County, Linfen, Shanxi. The government broke into the gathering place of the church members and used military weapons, wood sticks, bricks, iron hooks and other sharp instruments beat the people, while smashing and looting the property. They severely beat more than one hundred Christians who were caught entirely off guard. Many lost consciousness and many more collapsed in pools of their own blood. At the same time, bulldozers and other heavy machinery were dispatched to destroy and demolish many buildings. All this had occurred because the government departments deemed their meeting venue as ''illegal buildings'' for the sake of cracking down and oppressing house churches.

The local government has tried to negotiate with local church leaders since this religious incident. The negotiations between the government departments and the church failed. On September 23, Yang Rongli of Linfen Church and six other church members decided to report the situation to the provincial government. On their way to the province capital they were stopped by the local government. A large number of PAP officers were stationed at the Cathedral in Linfen city, blocking the entrance to the church and confiscated important items in the church. They also prohibited believers from going to meet there. Many church members, including the pastor of the Linfen Church, Huang Xiaoguang, were detained illegally, put under house arrest, or closely monitored. It seemed that the local government wanted to completely destroy the house churches in Linfen. At present, the situation is still developing yet the media has not reported any incidences on this case.

According to Mr. Fan Yafeng, who is rather familiar with the situation, states that house churches in Linfen, Shanxi, are one of China's ten major house church systems in China. If house churches in Linfen were destroyed by the government through the use of illegal force, this would be the ultimate invasion in the Chinese government's crackdown on house churches and persecution of citizens. According to Professor Li Fan's research at the World and China Institute, a non-governmental think tank, house churches in China make up at least half of China's NGO resources. If such respectful and honorable house churches are destroyed, this will be a major regression of China's religious freedom and a serious violation of citizens' religious freedom. This would cause a massive blow to China's non-governmental forces of freedom and would seriously hinder China from making any progression toward religious freedom and the rule of law.

II. SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS TO THE U.S. CONGRESS

1. We request that the U.S. Congress review and forward the religious case in Linfen and relevant information concerning the status of religious freedom in China to President Obama. It is our desire to increase attention to the religious case in Linfen. Furthermore, it is our desire for President Obama to convey this religious persecution to the Chinese government during his visit to China.

2. We request the U.S. Congress to immediately ask the spokesperson of the U.S. State Department to hold a press conference focusing on the religious persecution case in Linfen.

3. We request the U.S. Congress pass a resolution to adopt strong measures in response to the Chinese government's infringement of human rights and religious freedom.

4. We request the U.S. Congress encourage and support the U.S. Embassy in China to periodically meet and communicate with the groups of Chinese human rights lawyers and advocates. We also request that the U.S. Embassy will make U.S. entry visas more accessible for these people who are fighting for China's democracy, freedom, and rule of law.

5. We request that the U.S. Congress send a letter to the Chinese government expressing concern for Pastor Wang Xiaoguang of Linfen Church in Shanxi who is currently being detained, as well as church leaders, such as Yang Rongli, Yang Hongzhen, Li Shuangping, Yang Chaizhen, Yang Xuan, Cui Jiaxing, Gao Fuqin, and Zhang Huamei.

[Written Testimony submitted to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission on the rule of law in China, Oct. 29, 2009]

THE CHALLENGES RIGHTS DEFENSE ATTORNEYS IN CHINA FACE AND ITS FUTURE PROSPECT

(By Mr. Li Fangping)

We are now living in the China set against such a dramatic background of the times: First, the economic system is fast evolving while its political system has seen little changes over the years. Second, its legal system is increasingly improving, but the public power is often not restrained by the law. Third, the citizens' awareness of their rights is increasing and the more the awareness to defend one's rights, the more prominent the abuse and the shirking of responsibilities by the public power becomes.

With the advent of the Internet in China, the first widespread and passionate participation by the citizens in political matters occurred in 2003 during the ''Sun Zhigang Incident,'' which successfully made the State Council announce the annulment of the system of ''internment and deportation.'' In the next year, ''The State respects and safeguards human rights'' was solemnly written into the Constitution. In the next five years, right defense attorneys have, as a professional social group committed to promoting rule of law and safeguarding human rights, presented themselves before the world.

Certainly, in a country where rule of law is still far from realized and where there is full of terrible things against ordinary citizens, the work and life of right defense attorneys must be full of obstacles and frustrations. Just because we engage in work involving human rights, government departments not only do not understand the significance of our existence, they also regard us as the targets of their domestic defense. We seem to have become personae non gratae in the eyes of the government and we are often treated unfairly. Some of us have been beaten and kidnapped. The personal freedom of some of us is illegally restricted and some of us are illegally stalked by force. Some of us are forced to report our activities and some are driven out by our landlords due to pressure from the government. Some are threatened and given a disciplinary warning by Bureau of Justice and lawyers' associations. Some are simply fired by their law firms due to pressure from the government.

This year, the right defense attorneys as a social group are enduring more pressure than ever before. As far as I can confirm, there are now at least 17 attorneys at this time unable to practice law. These attorneys have always persisted in providing legal assistance or defense services for clients to safeguard their legitimate rights. They include victims of Sanlu poisonous milk powder, parents of children victimized in the earthquake, HIV carriers, peasants who have lost their land, detained Tibetans, house church Christians, Falun Gong practitioners, right defense activists, political dissidents, victims of family planning policies and clients from other various areas.

Judicial administrative departments in Beijing and other places have terminated attorneys' rights to practice on the ground that these right defense attorneys have not passed the so-called ''annual evaluation'' or that the law firms where they work have not passed the ''annual inspection.'' However, the ''annual evaluation'' for attorneys and the ''annual inspection'' for law firms themselves are not the administrative penalty that can terminate the right to practice of the attorneys or of their law firms. We can see that the ''annual evaluation'' for attorneys and the ''annual inspection'' of law

firms have degenerated into an illegal, disorderly and remediless administrative penalty in disguised form that overrides the disciplinary penalty in the industry and administrative penalty on the practicing attorneys.

What delights us is that on the one hand, the right defense attorneys have not given up their idea of safeguarding rule of law and human rights. Each time they negotiate with judicial administrative departments, they express their criticism on the illegal administration and their firm belief that China will certainly develop into a country under rule of law. On the other hand, the disadvantaged social groups whose rights are harmed also express their desire of ''attorneys for us, and we for attorneys.'' It is my belief that the appeal for rights by the ordinary people whose rights are harmed, and the sense of mission of the attorneys, will combine to form a powerful synergy in promoting the progress of our country in human rights and rule of law.

Though the road to rule of law and human rights in China will be hard and long, yet the long march of this time is attracting more and more people, including you, us and them. Given this situation, I, as a member of this social group of defense attorneys, personally am full of confidence for the ''Same World, Same Human Rights.''

Finally, let me express my gratitude for all my friends who are concerned about the rule of law in China and the progress in human rights!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 832, H.R. 1168, rollcall No. 833, H. Res. 291, and rollcall No. 834, S. 509 I was not present. Had I been present I would have voted ''yea'' on No. 832, ''yea'' on No. 833, and ''yea'' on No. 834.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE LIFE OF DR. WALTER C. BOWIE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I would like to request the House's attention today to pay recognition to the memory of Dr. Walter C. Bowie of Tuskegee, Alabama.

For many years, Dr. Bowie served as the Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine at Tuskegee University. Known as ''the Dean of Deans,'' Dr. Bowie was and is considered by many to be a mentor, friend, respected colleague, and a gentleman.

Dr. Bowie held a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Kansas State University, Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Cornell University and completed post-doctoral studies at the University of Michigan.

His 63-year tenure at Tuskegee University included positions as teacher, scientist, department head, administrator, associate dean, and dean emeritus. Dr. Bowie served as president of the American Association of Veterinary Physiologists and Pharmacologists, and the Alabama Heart Association. Dr. Bowie was among the founders, and later served as president, of the Association of Minority Health Professions Schools.

Dr. Bowie passed on October 25, 2009. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Cornelia (Connie), daughters Sibyl, Carolyn, and Colleen; many grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and other family members.

While Dr. Bowie will be sorely missed, his legacy will live on in the students he taught at Tuskegee University.

MR. RON GOOD

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I pay tribute to one of Northwest Indiana's most dedicated and selfless citizens, Mr. Ronald Good, of Lake Station, Indiana. After serving the people of Lake Station as a firefighter for 52 years, the last 16 of which he served as the department's Fire Chief, Ron retired from service at the end of 2007. In recognition of Mr. Good's service to his community, not only as a firefighter but also for his commitment to serving his community in many other capacities, a party will be held in his honor on Sunday, November 8, 2009, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9323 in Lake Station, Indiana.

Following a 3-year enlistment in the United States Marine Corps, Ron returned to his hometown and joined the fire department in 1956 at the age of 21. He credits his grandfather, Captain Solomon Hursey, a charter member of the fire department, which was then the East Gary Fire Department, with peaking his interest in his chosen career path. Mr. Good, as a child, would often go on fire calls and was immediately drawn to the idea of following in his grandfather's footsteps. Later on in his life, it must have made Ron quite proud to see two of his sons keep the family tradition alive through their service as Lake Station firefighters.

Aside from his incredible 52 years of service on the fire department, Ron's contributions to Northwest Indiana and beyond through his service on various firefighters' associations and service organizations have also touched the lives of many people. Mr. Good is a lifetime member of both the Indiana Volunteer Firefighters Association and the Indiana Firefighters Association, for which he has served on the Board of Directors. He is also a lifetime member of both Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9323 and American Legion Post 100, and he has been an active member of the Lake Station Lions Club for the past 30 years. Never one to shy away from taking a leadership role when it comes to service to his community, Mr. Good also served for several years as a representative on the Lake Station City Council.

Ron Good's commitment to his community has been matched only by his commitment to his family. A husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, Ron and his adoring wife of an astonishing 54 years, Beverly, have 7 children, 15 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in commending Mr. Ronald Good for his lifetime of leadership, service, and dedication to the residents of Lake Station, Indiana. He has touched the lives of countless citizens, and his commitment to the safety of his community and to the improvement of the quality of life for the people of Lake Station is to be admired.

REMEMBERING APOLLO 11

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, ''One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.'' Forty years ago, Neil Armstrong spoke the words that would soon resonate across a nation, and with them bring renewed pride and a sense of patriotism to the American public. It was in 1961 that President Kennedy expressed in a speech before Congress his belief ''that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth.'' Eight years later, on the 20th of July, that goal was achieved, and with it a new watershed moment in American history.

The legacy of the Apollo project is a multifaceted one; it demonstrated the unmatched American capacity to meet and overcome challenges, while stimulatingly establishing national prominence over rival nations. As observed in the November issue of Science magazine in 1968, ''NASA has not been our largest national undertaking, but. . .it may turn out that [the program's] most valuable spin-off of all will be human rather than technological: better knowledge of how to plan, coordinate, and monitor the multitudinous and carried activities of the organizations required to accomplish great social undertakings.''

With the Soviet Union a distant memory for many Americans, it is easily forgotten how the perception of the Soviet leadership in space and technology affected the country's perception of itself. So, as we look back on the Apollo Project, and in particular on the flight of Apollo 11, it is important to remember the political tides that fueled its origins and set the stage for an era of renewed American esteem. Yet let us not lose the greater lesson: that when met with adversity, Americans will rise to the challenge and reaffirm within themselves their ability to meet challenges in order to prosper as a nation.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, pursuant to the Republican Leadership standards on earmarks, I am submitting the following information regarding earmarks I received as part of H.R. 3619—the Coast Guard Authorization Act, 2010.

Requesting Member: Rep. PETER KING

Bill Number: H.R. 3619

Section: 1321

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Nassau County Police Department

Address of Requesting Entity: 1490 Franklin Avenue, Mineola, NY 11501

Description of Request: The transfer of two excess 41-foot utility boats from the U.S. Coast Guard to the Nassau County Police Department. The conveyance of these vessels will enhance the port and homeland security capabilities within the region.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DOC HASTINGS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I wish to record that had I been present I would have voted in favor of H.R. 1168, the Veterans Retraining Act; H. Res. 291, Recognizing the crucial role of assistance dogs in helping wounded veterans live more independent lives; and S. 509, to authorize a major medical facility project at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Walla Walla, Washington. The late notice by the Majority of this week's schedule made it impossible to secure a flight back from my district in time for these votes.

S. 509 is of particular importance, as it authorizes $71.4 million to design and construct a new veterans outpatient clinic and renovate existing facilities at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center at Walla Walla, Washington State. The Walla Walla facilities serve 70,000 veterans in Oregon, Idaho and Washington State, including many in my own Congressional district. This bill has my strong support and I commend my colleagues for supporting it.

RECOGNIZING THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF ASSISTANCE DOGS IN HELPING WOUNDED VETERANS

SPEECH OF

HON. RON KLEIN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 2, 2009

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H. Res. 291, a resolution honoring the work of Tower of Hope, an organization that provides assistance dogs to disabled veterans.

Thanks to modern medicine, more and more of our brave men and women are able to survive wounds that may have been fatal in the past. This is a blessing, but it requires new tools in order to ensure that these soldiers lead productive lives.

Tower of Hope helps to keep America's promise to disabled veterans and helps improve their quality of life after their service. Tower of Hope helps veterans cross the street, go to work, take their medications, and visit the doctor's office. Tower of Hope has also helped me to craft H.R. 3266, the Wounded Warrior K9 Corps Act, legislation to reimburse organizations for the work they do in training assistance dogs and veterans.

I have seen these programs in action. These programs succeed, and I believe that every American who puts on a uniform and risks their life for this country should have the full support of this Congress.

I thank my colleague from Florida, Mr. HASTINGS for his leadership on this resolution and the staff and supporters of the Tower of Hope for their important work, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

HONORING DONALD K. WHITE, JR.

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, today I honor the life and work of Donald K. White, Jr. who passed away earlier this month after a truly courageous fight with cancer.

Don White was the Assistant Superintendent for the AOC's Capitol Superintendent's Office since 2000, and began his career with the Architect of the Capitol in June 1990. His service to our great country started with the U.S. Marine Corps.

Don White always took great pride in his work, and was committed to providing outstanding service to Congress and the visiting public. Under his direction, the American people have enjoyed several major events at the Capitol, including the past three Presidential Inaugurations. He was truly the personification of the excellent work and values that we strive to embody in our own service to the government.

Madam Speaker, Donald White, Jr. is survived by his children, Donald III and Ashley, and his grandson Matthew Alexander White. I know that I speak for all of my colleagues when I say that he will be remembered, and missed, for his lifelong work and service to our government and our nation.

HONORING WALTER M. LAWSON, JR., OHIO VETERANS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

HON. JIM JORDAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame will hold a ceremony in Columbus this week to mark the induction of its 2009 class. I am honored to commend to the House one of these inductees: the late Walter M. Lawson, Jr., of Lima.

A graduate of North High School in Columbus, Mr. Lawson earned his undergraduate degree at The Ohio State University in 1941. Following his distinguished service in the Second World War, he returned to his alma mater, completing his juris doctorate work in 1948. He later served in the Korean Conflict, achieving the rank of captain.

Aside from his time in Korea, Mr. Lawson served the Lima community in private legal practice from 1948 to his death in 2006. Additionally, he was Lima's law director for four years, preceded by seven years as assistant law director. From 1974 until his death, he also served the Village of Elida as its solicitor. He was president of the Ohio State Bar Association and the Allen County Bar Association, and was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States.

Mr. Lawson's devotion to community service provides us with an outstanding model of civic participation. A past president of the local Jaycees and past chairman of the Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission, he was a charter member and longtime leader in Ohio Optimist International, which honored him with inclusion in its hall of fame and also with the 2007 Humanitarian Award. His devotion to the youth of Lima and Allen County was well known from his service to the Lima Area Youth Orchestra, the Boy Scouts of America, and the Junior Achievement Board. He held numerous offices at Lima's Market Street Presbyterian Church, where he was a member for more than a half century.

Mr. Lawson was a life member of the Allen County chapter of the Disabled American Veterans, Post 96 of the American Legion, Post 1275 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Lima AMVETS chapter, and the Korean War Veterans Association. Additionally, he served as president of the Allen County Veterans Service Commission.

Madam Speaker, selection for the Hall of Fame is a high honor accorded to only 20 Ohioans each year. To be considered for induction, individuals must not only serve the nation honorably in the military, but also reflect the high value of service to others in their post-military careers.

I am pleased to join in the accolades for Mr. Walter M. Lawson, Jr., and his inestimable record of service as he is inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame.

TRIBUTE TO EVA MAE HARDEN

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to the life and legacy of the late Ms. Eva Mae Harden. It is with both profound sadness, but also an enduring sense of gratitude that I recognize her for the tremendous inspiration she provided to the South Florida community.

Ms. Harden was born on March 15, 1914, in Leesburg County, Georgia to the late Charlie and Roxie Brown. She later married the late Fletcher Harden. Once Ms. Harden relocated to Miami, Florida in 1951, she began her journey through traveling with the church and crossing the border of many foreign countries.

She remarried her husband Fletcher Harden in 1981 and the two celebrated their Golden Anniversary in the same church she diligently served in for 60 years. Moreover, Ms. Harden served on the Deaconess Board, the Board of Missions and the Senior Saints at Bethel Full Gospel Baptist Church. She was relentless when it came to giving to the church, and she paid her tithes and offerings throughout her 60 years of membership.

Ms. Harden was blessed with a loving family who took pleasure in every aspect of her life and her interests. I offer my heartfelt condolences to her five children and a total of 135 grandchildren; great grandchildren; great, great grandchildren; and great, great, great grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and all the members of this esteemed legislative body to

join me in recognizing the extraordinary life of Ms. Eva Mae Harden. She will be missed by all who knew her, and I appreciate this opportunity to pay tribute to her before the United States House of Representatives. While she will indeed be missed, her legacy, as well as the outstanding contributions she made to Bethel Full Gospel Baptist Church will live on.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, on Monday, November 2, 2009, I missed rollcall Nos. 832, 833, and 834. If present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 832, 833, and 834.

RECOGNIZING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MENDOCINO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the Mendocino Presbyterian Church on the occasion of the congregation's 150th anniversary. The Mendocino Presbyterian Church in the village of Mendocino on California's north coast is the oldest active Presbyterian Church in California. Eight local residents including six women chartered it in 1859.

The Mendocino Presbyterian Church is California Historic Landmark Number 714 and is listed on the Federal Register of Historic Places. Its spire and English gothic design are iconic symbols exemplifying Mendocino's history and much photographed architecture.

The Church sanctuary is entirely built from local redwood. It was designed by San Francisco architects S.C. Bugbee and Son, who previously designed the Crocker and Stanford mansions, which were destroyed by the 1906 earthquake. Donations by local citizens and businesspeople such as pioneering residents Jeremy Ford and Henry Meiggs made the building possible. The first pastor in 1861 was Reverend David McClure and the first written record of the sermon was on October 19, 1861.

A thousand pound cast iron bell was shipped from one of the most prestigious foundries in the New World, the Meneeley Foundry in West Troy, New York, around the Horn and installed in 1870. It has rung to signal Sunday services ever since. In addition to ringing for weddings and memorial services, since 2006 the bell has also tolled on Friday evenings in honor of our service men and women and Iraqi and Afghan civilians who died the previous week. Inside the bell tower is covered with chalk signatures, including every pastor, and others who have climbed the stepladder to the top. The bell rope, which extends to the reception area of the sanctuary, includes one knot for each ordained pastor who served. Symbolic sections join the knots as a historical record related to events around the nation and the world. A framed document interprets the bell rope significance.

While the original chandeliers and wall sconces have been electrified and gilded, most of the interior of the Sanctuary remains the same as when it was constructed. The cork floor between the pews is a scuffed record of the many shoes from high heels to logging boots worn by those who have attended services.

The Mendocino Presbyterian Church has been home to Rainbow pre-school welcoming children of all denominations since 1978. The Church sponsors the Mendocino Christian Camp, Bible Study and schools in Nicaragua as part of its mission and outreach. In addition, the adjacent Preston Hall is a popular community center for events such as art auctions, book sales, the Christmas bazaar, and receptions and meals. The Church is a popular wedding location and was featured in a Kodak commercial in the 1970s. In 1947, Warner Brothers filmed a scene for the movie Johnny Belinda inside the sanctuary with the Church choir performing.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring 150 years of invaluable religious, civic and community service by the Mendocino Presbyterian Church.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. WALLY HERGER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, pursuant to the House Republican standards on earmarks, I am submitting the following information regarding earmarks I received as part of H.R. 3619, Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010.

Requesting Member: Congressman WALLY HERGER

Bill Number: H.R. 3619

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: J.E. McAmis, Inc.

Address of Requesting Entity: 621 Country Drive, Chico, CA 95928

Description of Request: This request does not authorize or appropriate any Federal funds, but modifies current statute to authorize the Coast Guard to issue a certificate of documentation for operation in the coastwise trade for the vessel *Maya*, United States official number 1107319. The *Maya* is a flat deck barge that was built in Louisiana in 2001; however, it was briefly reflagged under the Mexican registry while it was transferred to that country for a project. The *Maya* was purchased in 2008 by J.E. McAmis, Inc., a California-based and U.S. citizen-owned company located in my congressional district. The barge is needed to carry equipment and supplies to and from heavy construction or dredging jobs generally located in the greater Pacific Northwest region. J.E. McAmis, Inc., worked vigorously for several years to locate a U.S. flagged and registered vessel prior to purchasing the *Maya*. These types of vessels, however, were unavailable because they were being used to support the Gulf Coast reconstruction after Hurricane Katrina. Additionally, efforts to build a barge were stymied by the credit crisis and banks' unwillingness to lend for such a project. Following the purchase vessel has undergone extensive work and repairs in Oregon, has been registered under the U.S. flag, and has received its certificate of inspection.

IN MEMORY OF VICTOR J. HERLINSKY, SR.

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of Victor J. Herlinsky, Sr., of Mahwah, NJ who passed away on August 14th after a long struggle with Parkinson's disease.

Mr. Herlinsky was born in Ukraine to parents Adam and Augusta on July 10th, 1927 and lived in Germany and Brazil before immigrating to the United States in 1956. Embodying the American dream of self-made success, Mr. Herlinsky was one of the founding partners of the 4–H Brothers trailer-body manufacturing and repair company in Wallington, NJ.

Mr. Herlinsky was also an active athlete who excelled in a variety of sports. He was a golden glove boxer in Munich, a semi-professional soccer player in Brazil, and a member of the Ukrainian Carpathian Ski Club. An avid tennis player, Mr. Herlinsky was awarded lifetime memberships to the Nutley Tennis Club and the KLK Ukrainian Sports Club.

Mr. Herlinsky is survived by his wife of 44 years, Irene, their children Victor Jr. and Donna, and granddaughters Larissa and Alexa, as well as his surviving siblings Tamara, Ivan, and Walter.

Madam Speaker, as an immigrant, athlete, entrepreneur, and family man Victor Herlinsky embodied the most important qualities and ethics of the American identity. I express my deepest condolences to his family for their loss and pay tribute to the memory of this astounding individual.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HARRY TEAGUE

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. TEAGUE. Madam Speaker, on Monday, November 2, 2009, I was traveling in my district on official business and was not present for the vote on H.R. 1168, the Veterans Retraining Act of 2009. Had I been present, however, I would have voted "yes" on the bill and for creating greater opportunities for our veterans to establish economic independence and security.

H.R. 1168 is a common-sense bill that ensures that our veterans are making a smooth transition from their career in the Armed Services to a life in the civilian world. A provision in this bill also creates the flexibility that allows for our veterans to train for positions that are currently in demand, which lets us develop our workforce in a way that meets the present economic needs. This type of program will help us adapt to the ever-changing economy and keep our nation's competitive edge.

I would like to thank and commend the gentleman for introducing this bill. I thank my colleagues for supporting it.

HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF DR. HAROLD HILD

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of Dr. Harold Hild. I met Dr. Hild when he was my English professor at Northeastern Illinois University. Dr. Hild was well known for his special commitment to the Latino students at the University, and we were many. A large number were native English speakers who needed improvement in writing, and others were learning English as a second language. Dr. Hild stood by us and believed in our potential even after so many had written us off as ill-prepared. He worked tirelessly to develop an English-language program at the University that included tutoring and guidance for students who wanted to improve their language skills and succeed at the University.

Long before the culture wars, we were fighting to learn English, and he was fighting beside us. He defended us like we were his own children. When Northeastern Illinois University refused to give Dr. Hild tenure and attempted to let him go, I organized a group of students to stage a sit-in to demand that he be reinstated. We were successful, and Dr. Hild was placed back on the faculty. Dr. Hild later became the Chairman of the Communication, Media and Theater Department. Dr. Hild defended us, and so it was our duty to defend him. In fact, Madam Speaker, I think that this probably represented my first steps as a community organizer.

Dr. Hild and I worked together on the English-language program to ensure that Latino students at the University had every opportunity to succeed. That program still continues today, and is part of his significant legacy not only to the University but also to students everywhere. He saw the potential in me, and he saw the potential in all of us. Dr. Hild is and should always remain an inspiration to countless generations of Northeastern Illinois University students. I only hope that those of us who were touched by his life will continue to be inspired to make a difference in someone else's life.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, I want to state for the record that yesterday I missed the three rollcall votes of the day. Unfortunately I missed these votes because I was detained in my district.

Had I been present I would have voted Yea on rollcall vote No. 832 On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended—H.R. 1168—Veterans Retraining Act of 2009.

Had I been present I would have voted Yea on rollcall vote No. 833 On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree—H. Res. 291—Recognizing the crucial role of assistance dogs in helping wounded veterans live more independent lives, expressing gratitude to The Tower of Hope, and supporting the goals and ideals of creating a Tower of Hope Day.

Lastly, had I been present I would have voted Yea on rollcall vote No. 834 On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass—S. 509—To authorize a major medical facility project at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Walla Walla, Washington, and for other purposes.

REPUBLICAN ALTERNATIVES TO HEALTH CARE

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, A 2,000 page, 1.2 trillion dollar health care takeover is headed to this floor. Given its abrupt arrival, I hope the Speaker will open the floor to the 53 alternatives presented from Republicans.

Republicans continue to offer positive health care solutions, but our alternatives are not being scheduled. Our solutions will give Americans access to affordable, accessible, and quality health care that is centered around the patient.

Unlike PELOSI's health care takeover, our alternatives do not contain any of the cuts to seniors' Medicare benefits. Or the costly tax increases and job-killing mandates. Our alternatives will not sever the doctor-patient relationship, or put a trillion dollar price tag on the backs of our children and grandchildren—threatening devaluation of seniors' fixed incomes.

We need to promote the vision German Chancellor Angela Merkel described today for America to be the land of unlimited opportunity. The Big Government takeover will limit opportunity.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11th in the Global War on Terrorism.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEVIN NUNES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. NUNES. Madam Speaker, on the legislative day of Monday, November 2, 2009, I was unavoidably detained and was unable to cast a vote on a number of rollcall votes. Had I been present, I would have voted: rollcall 832—"yea;" rollcall 833—"yea;" rollcall 834—"yea."

CELEBRATING UT DALLAS: CREATING THE FUTURE SINCE 1969

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker it is a great honor to recognize a fine higher educational institution—the University of Texas at Dallas. Beginning this fall, the University of Texas at Dallas marks its 40th year as a Texas public university and a member of The University of Texas system.

Born at the dawn of the information age, UT Dallas helped pioneer new fields in science and technology and created sought-after degree programs that did not exist a generation ago. These include geospatial information science, neuroscience, bioinformatics, nanotechnology and materials science, among others.

The University has a unique past: built from the top down, first a research institute, then a graduate school, and finally becoming a full university with the admission of its first freshman class in 1990.

Located in the center of one of the most dynamic economic and demographic regions in the nation, UT Dallas owes its existence to three entrepreneurs, Eugene McDermott, Cecil Green and J. Erik Jonsson, who deeply valued education and entrepreneurial activity.

These individuals, who also founded Texas Instruments, found themselves importing talent from outside the state while the region's bright young people pursued educations elsewhere. Having identified the need, the Founders took action to serve both their enterprise and the region, establishing the Graduate Research Center of the Southwest, which in 1961 was renamed the Southwest Center for Advanced Studies, SCAS. The center recruited some of the best scientific talent in the nation.

In 1969, the founders bequeathed the Southwest Center for Advanced Studies to the State of Texas, and then-Governor Preston Smith signed the bill establishing UT Dallas, thus fulfilling the mandate to create science and technology educational opportunities in North Texas. By law, the University offered only graduate degrees until 1975. In 1990, the University admitted its first freshman class.

The transition from a graduate research facility to a university with an emphasis on engineering, mathematics, the sciences and management has been facilitated by the excellence of the UT Dallas faculty. Among them are four members of the National Academies—Dr. Ray Baughman, Dr. David Daniel, Dr. Brian Berry and Dr. Don Shaw—and Nobel laureate, Dr. Russell Hulse. Other Nobel laureates have included the late Dr. Polykarp Kusch and the late Dr. Alan G. MacDiarmid.

During the past decade, the University's teaching mission has expanded, its external research funding nearly doubled, its program offerings grew and its reputation has gained notice nationally. The student body has grown, even as quantitative markers of excellence—average entering SAT scores, graduation rates, numbers of distinguished scholarship holders and national merit scholarship winners—have also moved up.

UT Dallas has a unique past, and its aspirations to become a top national research university promise an even more remarkable future. Congratulations to everyone who helped make 40 years of educating the best and brightest a reality at UT Dallas. Thank you for all you do to improve Texas. God bless you and I salute you.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE LATE SENIOR DISTRICT JUDGE SOLOMON CASSEB, JR.

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the late Senior District Judge Solomon Casseb, Jr., for his dedication and contributions to the city of San Antonio and South Texas community.

Judge Casseb was born in 1915 in San Antonio, Texas. He attended St. Mary's University and University of Texas Law. By 1938, he was admitted to practice and later was enlisted as a Private in the United States Air Force at the break of World War II. After his service overseas, he was honorably discharged with the rank of Major to return home to a private practice of law. Thereafter, he was appointed for 2 terms as Judge of the 57th District Court and later served as Presiding Judge of the District Courts of Bexar County, as well as Presiding Judge for the Fourth Administrative District. It was 1985 when Judge Casseb acquired senior status and began serving as Senior District Judge of Texas. Shortly after in 1987, he received the Texas Bar Foundation's Outstanding Jurist Award. He was a member of the Advisory Committee to the Supreme Court of Texas and the Joint Task Force. Judge Casseb's contribution to the community of law was further recognized when he presided over the critical phases of the Pennzoil versus Texaco case, which resulted in the largest jury award in American jurisprudence. The judgment of that case has been upheld by the Appellate Courts of Texas and proves monumental to the state and Judge Casseb's work.

The progression of Judge Casseb's career went hand and hand with the numerous awards, recognitions, and appointments he received. Early on in his career, he was chosen the Outstanding Ex-Student of St. Mary's University. In 1965, Judge Casseb was named Outstanding Judge of 1965 by the Texas Trial Lawyers Association. Thereafter, he received Lifetime Achievement Awards from the San Antonio Bar Association, San Antonio Bar Foundation and the Laredo/Webb County Bar Association. By 1991, Judge Casseb was named Mr. South Texas at the Annual Washington Birthday Celebration in Laredo. A year later, the University of Texas Law School established the Judge Solomon Casseb, Jr., School in his honor.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to have had the time to recognize the dedication, accomplishments, and commitment of the late Senior District Judge Solomon Casseb, Jr., and I thank you for this time.

IN HONOR OF U.S. ARMY SERGEANT FIRST CLASS JOSE ''ROY'' PARRA

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of U.S. Army SFC Jose ''Roy'' Parra, a Salinas, CA native who gave the ultimate sacrifice in service of our nation in 1950.

Born in 1927, Army Sergeant First Class Parra spent his days as a young child delivering the newspaper, The Salinas Californian. Roy learned early on the importance of family and hard work by contributing his wages to his family. At the age of 17, he joined the Merchant Marines and later joined the Navy before enlisting in the Army. After receiving a post in Germany for 3 years, Mr. Parra returned to Salinas in 1949, only to be called to active duty the following year to serve on the Korean peninsula.

As a forward observer for artillery, Mr. Parra found himself on the front lines fighting north across the 38th Parallel and up to Pyongyang. His unit was ordered farther north and halted about 50 miles away from the Chinese border to await supplies. Just three months after being deployed, Mr. Parra was killed in action after he bravely took over a machine gun whose operator had been killed to repel waves of advancing enemy infantry. Sergeant First Class Parra was buried alongside 150 fellow American soldiers in a North Korean field where local Koreans placed unmarked crosses above the fallen.

It took three years before his family learned of his courageous efforts in the moments before he was killed and decades longer until they learned the fate of his remains. In 1954, after three years in a prisoner-of-war camp Lt. Walter Mayo, Parra's commanding officer, wrote to Parra's family detailing how the young man from Salinas sacrificed his life protecting his unit. The prolonged wait to return Sergeant First Class Parra to the U.S. ultimately ended when a recent excavation of a burial field in North Korea turned up remains. As soon as the identity of the remains was confirmed, an Army sergeant was assigned to escort the body of Sergeant First Class Parra home. After an agonizing wait of over 60 years, in August 2009, his family was finally able to bury their fallen hero in Arlington Cemetery.

For his dedication and service, U.S. Army Sergeant First Class Parra was awarded the Purple Heart, the Korean Service Medal, the UN Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Presidential Unit Citation, and the Republic of Korea War Service Medal.

U.S. Army SFC Jose ''Roy'' Parra was laid to rest with full military honors. Mr. Parra's sister, Lucille Withers, led the fight to identify and bury his remains.

Madam Speaker, I am deeply honored to have the privilege to share his story with you today and on behalf of my colleagues, want to thank U.S. Army SFC Jose ''Roy'' Parra and his family for their service to our Nation.

HONORING THE SONOMA VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, today to honor the 100th anniversary of the Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has long served as a spirited defender of the Valley's interests, by encouraging new industry, organizing beautification projects and managing flood control efforts.

The Chamber began the evening of April 10, 1909, when 32 businessmen convened over dinner to discuss how they could stimulate commerce for the benefit of local merchants and professionals.

Membership quickly grew to 100 and the Chamber began their first initiatives, like publishing marketing material and establishing committees to begin tackling an ambitious agenda. In the early years, the Chamber called for transportation improvements and successfully lobbied Congress to protect a local federal facility from closure.

During the Great Depression, the Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in addressing needs of a paralyzed business community. To generate renewed interest in the organization, the Chamber hosted an event benefitting street and driveway improvements.

In the subsequent years, the Chamber pioneered many efforts, including the creation of a commuter bus service to San Francisco, the endorsement of a municipal water system, support for State Parks and advocacy for underground utility and telephone lines. Notably, the Chamber raised local matching funds for a job stimulus program that was part of President Roosevelt's New Deal.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Chamber was designated as a farm labor office tasked with steering workers to local farmers. In the years following the war, the Chamber focused on supporting an adequate sewage system, the introduction of local hospital and the adoption of a zoning plan.

By mid-century, the Chamber hosted an industrial conference, boldly escalating efforts to bring new industry to the Valley.

Today the Chamber has expanded its membership to more than 700 leaders who continue to help ensure a thriving economy through advocacy, promotion, networking, education and services.

Operating under the mantra that ''Strong businesses make strong communities'', the Chamber hosts events, publishes a business magazine and offers comprehensive business, community and visitor resources. The Chamber also leads recognition efforts, honoring the business of the year and green businesses.

Madam Speaker, it is appropriate at this time that I acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce. In years to come, this organization will remain an integral and powerful force that continues to enrich the business community for the benefit of all Sonoma Valley residents.

RECOGNIZING THE 101ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE POINT ARENA LIGHT STATION

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 101st anniversary of the Point Arena Light Station on the magnificent Mendocino Coast in northern California.

A beacon to mariners since the original Point Arena Lighthouse was constructed in

1870, the Point Arena Light Station was rebuilt following its destruction by the devastating 1906 earthquake along the San Andreas Fault. The old brick and mortar construction was replaced with a new design featuring steel reinforcement rods encased in concrete to withstand future earthquakes. Point Arena Light Station was the first lighthouse to be built in this manner.

The new Lighthouse stands 115 feet tall and began operation in 1908, nearly 18 months after the quake. The Light Station is home to a First Order Fresnel Lens built in France and one of very few left in the United States. It is six feet in diameter and weighs more than six tons. The lens is made up of 666 hand-ground glass prisms all focused toward three sets of double bull's eyes. It gave the Point Arena Lighthouse its unique ''light signature'' of two flashes every six seconds. This incredible optic, that holds an appraised value of over $3.5 million, is set in solid brass framework.

Prior to the introduction of electricity, the lens was rotated by a clockwork mechanism. The Keepers, or ''wickies'' as they were called, had to hand crank a 160-pound weight up the center shaft of the lighthouse every 75 minutes to keep the lens turning. Later, two 1,000 watt electric lamps were installed to replace the oil lamp, and an electric motor was installed to replace the clockworks.

In 1977, an automated aircraft-type beacon on the balcony tower, and the historic First Order Fresnel Lens was discontinued. The 400-pound aircraft beacon was recently replaced by a modern rotating light that incorporates the Fresnel principles for the efficient projection of light. In addition, a radio beacon, with a 50-mile signal that originates from the station, also assists mariners. The original oil lamp was visible for approximately 18 miles, the 1st Order Fresnel Lens for 20 miles and the current modern rotating light can be seen for 16 miles. In 1978, the fog signal at the station was silenced, and a bell buoy was placed nearby.

In 1984, The Coast Guard and the U.S. Department of Transportation transferred the Point Arena Light Station to the Point Arena Lighthouse Keepers, a nonprofit organization as part of a 25-year land lease. In 2000, the PALK became the official owners of the property due to their diligent historic preservation and educational efforts. Daily visitation, gift store sales, memberships and the rental of the historic Keeper's homes on the property as vacation houses, provide income for ongoing preservation, facility upgrades and educational endeavors.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in recognizing the ongoing contribution and historic significance of one of America's treasures, the 101-year-old Point Arena Light Station.

WELCOMING HIS ALL HOLINESS BARTHOLOMEW, ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE, NEW ROME, ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH

SPEECH OF

HON. DINA TITUS

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 27, 2009

Ms. TITUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.Res. 838. I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this important resolution which welcomes His Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, to the United States of America.

His Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has been a tireless advocate for religious freedom, Muslim-Christian dialogue, and international environmental protection. He has been internationally recognized for his work to improve our worldwide community in many ways.

His work in the Muslim world advocating for religious understanding and tolerance and his efforts with victims of soviet oppression have earned him the title of ''Patriarch of Peace.'' In 2008, His Holiness was named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by Time Magazine.

Madam Speaker, while I am pleased that the House of Representatives is expressing our strong support for Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and his leadership on many important issues, it is equally as important that I address the fact that the Patriarchate itself operates under numerous unfair restrictions imposed by the Turkish Government, where the Patriarchate is located. Unfortunately, the Patriarchate's property rights, its ability to open religious schools, and other issues of religious freedom must be properly addressed by the Turkish Government. I hope that the United States and the world community will work with the Government of Turkey to end this terrible crime of inhibiting religious freedoms.

I am pleased to welcome His Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the United States and I look forward to joining with our country's leaders to formally welcome His Holiness to Washington. I look forward to learning from him and working with the Greek Orthodox Community in the United States to bring full religious freedom to the Patriarchate. His Holiness has been instrumental in bringing light to those who have lived in darkness and helping those who need it most. We all benefit from his teachings.

I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE PASSING OF WINSTON WALKER

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Winston Walker, a Korean War veteran and a Northwest Florida community leader who passed away on October 29, 2009. Mr. Walker spent his life serving his country and his community, and I am proud to honor his dedication and his service.

Born in Baker, Florida on December 10, 1925, Winston was a life-long Florida resident. He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1949 and became an Air Force officer. After serving honorably during the Korean War, Winston returned to Okaloosa County, Florida in 1954. He was appointed to fill a vacant seat on the Fort Walton Beach City Council in 1957, and then became City Manager shortly thereafter.

Winston worked for the city for 23 years as City Manager, and many credit him for being instrumental in transforming Fort Walton Beach from a small town into the thriving city it is today. He retired as Chief Executive Officer of Ready Bank. He was also a 32nd Degree Mason and a lifelong member of St. Simons on the Sound Episcopal Church.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize Winston Walker as a Northwest Florida leader. Winston will be remembered as an important part of the fabric of our community. My wife Vicki and I offer our prayers for his family as we remember and honor the life of Winston Walker.

ST. SAVA SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with great honor and enthusiasm that I congratulate Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox Church as they join together in celebration of their 95th anniversary. The parishioners, along with Parish Priest, Father Marko Matic, and Parish President, Mr. Dennis Svilar, will be celebrating this very momentous occasion on Sunday, November 8, 2009. Festivities will begin with Divine Liturgy, followed by a banquet and program featuring Mr. Nicholas Chabraja as the guest speaker. This special event will take place at Saint Elijah Hall in Merrillville, Indiana.

Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox Church, which was founded in Gary, Indiana, and is now located in Merrillville is one of the Midwest's oldest parishes. The tradition of Saint Sava's is well-known throughout Northwest Indiana because of the continued efforts of the clergy and parishioners over the past 95 years to perpetuate the Serbian Orthodox faith and traditions. In 1914, the founders proclaimed the mission of their new church before the Secretary of State in Indianapolis, Indiana. Their mission is as follows: ''The purpose of this parish is to preach the Word of God (the Lord Jesus) and take spiritual care of its members; to spread goodness, justice, brotherly love, and respect among its members.''

Named for Saint Sava, the first Archbishop of the Serbian church, Saint Sava's first formal church-school congregation was organized in 1914, followed by the first church in 1915. From there, the parishioners built the first church and school on 20th Avenue and Connecticut Street in Gary. Through difficult economic times, the parishioners at Saint Sava continued with their mission, and after the Great Depression, the parish built an even larger church, school, and parish hall on 13th Avenue and Connecticut in Gary in order to accommodate their rapidly growing membership. This building remained until a devastating fire consumed it in February of 1978, causing Saint Sava's to quickly relocate to a newly constructed chapel in a parish hall they had built years earlier. This hall, located in Hobart, Indiana, had been utilized as a place for summer meetings and family picnics.

From 1978 until 1991, Saint Sava's Liturgy continued to be performed in the Hobart chapel. However, it was during this time that longtime parish priest, Very Reverend Father Jovan Todorovich, and the church board

began to assemble ideas for the construction of a new church. With Father Todorovich's leadership and committed efforts, as well as the vast efforts of many parishioners, the people of Saint Sava were able to move into their current place of worship. In May of 1991, the parish celebrated a ''new beginning'' when a brand new building was constructed. This magnificent building opened in Merrillville, where relics which survived the fire were blessed and installed into the new church. Today, Saint Sava's members continue to gather there to worship and to celebrate, as well as to continue with the mission of their founding members.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring and congratulating Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox Church on their 95th anniversary. Throughout many hardships and trials, the members of Saint Sava have dedicated themselves to providing a spiritual and guiding light through the protection of the Serbian Orthodox faith and traditions for all of Northwest Indiana. Their constant dedication and commitment is worthy of the highest commendation.

CELEBRATING THE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION'S 30 YEARS OF FIGHTING FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, San Francisco's Community Alliance for Special Education (CASE) was formed in 1979 in response to an unmet need to protect the educational rights of children with disabilities. As CASE celebrates its 30th anniversary, we can all celebrate their good and inspired work supporting children with disabilities by ensuring the fair and just implementation of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and state special education laws.

Perhaps most impressively, CASE recognizes the financial hardship that can beset a family raising a child with a disability and has never turned away a client based on their ability to pay.

Their excellent work has led to impressive results over the past three decades, including 94% of children served by CASE receiving appropriate educational services and 95% of clients being connected to local parent networks to help them address other family needs.

Over the last thirty years, CASE has provided more than 20,000 consultations to parents and professionals, represented upwards of 3,000 families and trained in excess of 25,000 people. In addition, their handbook, Special Education Rights, is the most widely-used resource guide in California on the special education process.

Madam Speaker, you and I are both blessed to represent what San Francisco legend Herb Caen called ''The city that knows how''. I am happy to report that CASE furthers San Francisco's proud legacy by successfully harnessing the power of collaboration and communication to engage children, parents, educators and the community to advance the admirable goal of improving educational opportunities for children with disabilities so that they, too, can become happy and productive members of the community.

It is with great admiration that I commend the Community Alliance for Special Education for making our world a better place by advocating for those who otherwise might not be heard. I congratulate everyone who has had a part in making CASE the success story it is and look forward to more great work over the next thirty years.

TRIBUTE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION MONTH

HON. DONNA F. EDWARDS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Madam Speaker, In recognition of October as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, I would like to thank the United States Army for the work it has done lately to raise awareness about domestic violence. So many resources are expended ensuring that our soldiers are equipped to fight wars abroad, however, upon their return, soldiers and their families should not be subjected to war at home in the form of domestic violence. It takes a community and an ongoing commitment to address the epidemic of domestic violence. No sector of society is immune from domestic violence, including the armed services.

Fortunately, progress is being made by raising awareness about domestic violence and assisting families impacted by domestic violence. Yet, so much work remains to be done because senseless acts of violence continue to occur in homes and communities across America every day.

The 2009 Army Domestic Violence Awareness Month observance theme is ''Make the Right Choice! Act to Prevent Domestic Abuse.'' This theme stresses the need for each person in the Army to know that he or she can do something to prevent domestic violence. For instance, the Army's Family Advocacy program is working hard to address domestic violence by providing counseling and other resources to Army families.

A critical component of these prevention efforts is to support soldiers when they return home so that the effects of conditions such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or other reactions to the combat experience, do not contribute to domestic violence. These resources provide soldiers with the counseling and support they need to cope with the violence they were subjected to while at war.

However, we know that PTSD does not cause domestic violence; we must direct resources to address the inter-generational cycle of violence and support victims in violent relationships. We must foster an atmosphere of no tolerance for domestic violence, no matter the rank or status of the perpetrator of the violence or that of the victim.

I would like to take this opportunity today to join the Army in its commitment to educating soldiers and their families about domestic violence and recognize the collective responsibility of all of us to prevent domestic violence wherever it occurs.

I hope we can all reaffirm our commitment to raising awareness about domestic violence, and most importantly, breaking the silence and stigma surrounding domestic violence. We do this by encouraging atmospheres of openness and responsiveness in support of victims instead of punishing them. The war against domestic violence is one that has waged far too long, but with ongoing commitment and hard work, we can win this war!

WATCHING THE GIANTS, AND AMBUSHED BY ZOMBIES

HON. CAROLYN McCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Madam Speaker, I enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an essay published in the New York Times and written by a constituent of mine, Mr. James H. Burns (Jim Burns) of Valley Stream.

[Oct. 23, 2009]

WATCHING THE GIANTS, AND AMBUSHED BY ZOMBIES

Columbia Pictures Images from ads for films such as ''Zombieland'' can startle or frighten unwary TV viewers.

Halloween has always been the season when Hollywood unleashes some of its most suspenseful and supernatural offerings. When I was a child in the late '60s and early '70s, the horror slate was a splendid array, ranging from the relative innocence of monster-ramas to the erotically tinged creature flicks of Britain's famed Hammer Studios. Somewhere in between were the less stylish but often enjoyable low-budget drive-in fare from America's exploitation studios (almost all of which went out of business years ago) and the occasional major-studio horror movies often rereleased at this time of year.

But this mostly imaginative crop devolved to the dime-a-dozen, cut-'em-up-and-watch-'em-bleed movies, of which ''Friday the 13th'' is perhaps the most famous example. Although I was one of the earliest group of writers for Fangoria, the horror-movie magazine, and also acted in a couple of horror films years ago, my opinion of the genre's more grotesque examples has changed.

I used to believe that slasher movies—or ''gore-or,'' as I started calling them in the 1980s—were like a celluloid roller coaster, a relatively harmless catharsis. But now I think that the intensity of Hollywood's blood-and-guts barrage and the ability of such films to desensitize at least a portion of the audience cannot be denied. And they certainly should not be advertised on television during what are supposed to be family viewing hours.

Sometime back, I was stunned to look up from a halftime snack to see horrifying images from one of the ''Hostel'' movies—rapidly edited for maximum terrifying impact—being run as a commercial during a 4 p.m. football game.

A few weeks ago, the Giants game included an advertisement with a zombie child (dressed in her chiffonlike finest, a pink bow in her hair) being dragged behind a car, and a bikinied beauty running in a parking lot, her mouth covered with a darkened ooze. (The spot, an ad for ''Zombieland,'' ended with a ''hero'' threatening an obese ghoul with an oversized pair of garden shears.)

Last Sunday about 2 p.m., Giants fans saw possibly even more disturbing sequences—an apoplectic screamer, a man having convulsions, and an almost subliminal shot of a foreboding, wraithlike alien—even though

the movie being advertised, ''The Fourth Kind,'' has been rated PG–13. Late afternoon also had a particularly creepy ''Criminal Minds'' clip about forced impregnation, with a chilling baby-doll motif. Comparable commercials have been shown during early-evening prime-time broadcasts.

This is the week when we're reminded of how much fun can be derived from a sense of the fantastic, and how deeply the desire for terrifying thrills is imbued in many film fans. But the choice of whether to be confronted with these images should clearly still belong to each person. Innocent bystanders should not be ambushed by these kinds of graphically violent, disturbing scenes.

IN MEMORY OF NORMAND BEST

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of my father-in-law, Normand Best.

TRIBUTE TO AN EVERYDAY AMERICAN: NORMAND A. BEST

Normand Audrey Best was born in Omaha, Nebraska on November 3, 1928, to his proud parents, Catherine and Paul Best. He was born and raised in the country's heartland where his mother's family, the Kelleys, had farmed since the late 1880s. The nation was on the verge of the Depression and ultimately Paul's work would take them to California, and then on to Washington State, but it was his midwestern values and work ethic that would serve him all of his life. He would often talk at Christmastime with great fondness of the farm in Nebraska, the small schools, and his family.

The Kelley girls—as Norm's mother, Catherine, and her sisters were called—made their mark in the community and the parish. The five daughters of John Kelley would remain close throughout their lives as pillars of both the parish and the community. They were a source of comfort and solace to one another. Norm has two sisters, Joan and Mildred, and a brother, Gordon. A nine-year difference in age didn't allow the brothers to get close until they were older; however, Gordon looked up to his older brother and more than Best Brothers they were Best Friends and great fishing buddies.

Norm had a quiet reserve about him, a humility that comes from being raised in hard times and the decency and demeanor of a gentleman and a soldier. Like most who served in his generation, he said little about his war experience. It's not a subject that one dwells on, but over a few Bellows, his drink of preference, he would reflect on his service in the Marine Corps and how the training and discipline had served him well.

Norm enlisted in the United States Marine Corps during World War II and served with distinction. He spoke rarely but poignantly of having to escort home the bodies of fallen heroes. He recalled how painful it was to go to the door of the Marines' parents and give them the news. He was proud of the Marines and the way they conducted themselves and the honor and respect they paid to those who had given the full measure of devotion to their country.

He had a mind that was perhaps predisposed to math and engineering. He had a clearheaded way of making decisions and an acute ability to analyze data and information. These skills would serve him well in his profession as a flight engineer for Pan American, as a trouble shooter for Pratt and Whitney Aircraft, and even in a game of pinochle.

How a boy from Nebraska develops an aptitude for flight and engineering is a story in itself. It was in pursuit of this career that his life would be transformed when he met Carolyn Tasse. Carolyn, as his brother Gordon aptly described her, had a smile you could see a block away and lighted up any room she entered with its warmth. They were the quintessential American couple—he looking like Glen Ford and she a short-haired Donna Reed. They met at Pan Am, so even before they married they got to travel and see the world together. This Midwestern man and New England woman fell in love and were married. His job carried them to Minnesota and then on to San Antonio, where they started their family of four: Leslie, Louise, Warren and Allen. Ultimately his job would lead them to East Hartford, Connecticut, where he would live, work, and raise his family for the rest of his life.

It's hard to comprehend how at 39 years of age he dealt with Carolyn's passing. She died of Cancer in 1967, leaving him with four little children—the oldest, Leslie, who was nine and the youngest, Allen, who was just four. Nothing in his life experience could have prepared him for this, yet he met the circumstance with the resolve to keep his family together. To those ends he gave the full measure of his devotion both to his deceased wife and his children.

He and Carolyn were a love story before Ryan O'Neil and Ali McGraw had portrayed a similar saga in the movie ''A Love Story.'' He never remarried and dedicated himself to his children and his work. He made sure that he took the family on interesting vacations that they all still recall fondly whenever they gather together. He cooked, cleaned, and showed up at all of their events. He was their compass and their rock. There was no doubt of his love and selfless devotion.

I was fortunate to meet him through his daughter, Leslie, and eventually became his son-in-law. I treasured my conversations, dinners, birthdays, holidays and especially the times when his brother Gordon or his mother were in town. The card games and the stories had all of the sentimentality that makes the bond of family so strong. If I close my eyes, I can still hear the laughter of their voices lingering in the night.

He was proud of his children and their accomplishments and especially proud of his grandchildren, whom he also showered with the full measure of his love and devotion. He was the family support system, the go-to person in a crisis, and the unfailing steady rock on which everyone depended and whom he never let down.

He reminded me very much of my own Father, different but alike in many, many ways. Their values, work ethic, sense of responsibility and character are examples that I only wish I could emulate. He was an everyday man who minded his own business and tended to his individual needs and family responsibilities. He asked little for all he had sacrificed.

I often wondered when I'd see him drift off or reflect while he was listening to his music if he wasn't thinking of he and Carolyn traveling the world, creating a family and how short their time was together. Having given the full measure of his devotion, it's heart-rending to know he was reunited with Carolyn on August 6, 2009. Norm completed his circle of life, and while he is dearly missed, we are comforted knowing his journey has brought him to a place his heart never left—back home to her.

THANKING BOB LARSON ON HIS EXEMPLARY SERVICE TO CENTRAL ILLINOIS

HON. AARON SCHOCK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

Mr. SCHOCK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Bob Larson, a true community leader in my hometown of Peoria, Illinois. People in Central Illinois know Bob very well from his work as a WMBD 31 News anchor and his efforts in community service. This Friday, November 6th, Easter Seals of Central Illinois is honoring Mr. Larson at its 19th Annual Tribute Dinner. Each year Easter Seals recognizes individuals who have served the Central Illinois community in extraordinary ways. Past honorees include Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood and Congressman Bob Michel.

Bob Larson began his work in the community at a very early age. When the owner of WRMI Radio in Morris, Illinois heard Bob's voice, he offered him a job and soon the once shy 16-year-old boy was on the air and his passion for broadcasting began.

Larson eventually went on to Texas Christian University and graduated in 1971. Upon graduation, Bob returned home to Illinois and began his career at WMBD in Peoria, which was then both a television and an AM/FM radio station. In his 38 years at WMBD, Bob served as a movie host, weatherman, reporter, and anchor. He has been honored by the Associated Press for Best Downstate Radio Newscast and Best Downstate TV Newscast, as well as being named ''Best News Anchor'' by the Illinois Broadcasters Association.

However, Central Illinois residents don't only have to turn on their televisions to see Bob Larson at work. When he joined the Peoria community, Bob made a commitment to dedicate his time and skills to dozens of local charities and events. He began volunteering for the Easter Seals telethon in the 1970s, and in 1981 when the usual hosts unexpectedly could not attend, it was Bob who rose to the occasion and hosted the program. He was such a great host that in 1993 he was designated as one of the official emcees, a role he has filled ever since. Each year Bob and WMBD produce preview stories about the children of Easter Seals. Over the years he has watched these children grow and make their own positive contributions to the community.

Bob is also an active supporter of the American Heart Association, a cause he became involved with after a news story he was working on ended up saving his life. As part of the story, Larson allowed himself to be scanned by a new piece of equipment at Methodist Medical Center in Peoria, Illinois. A simple demonstration became a life-changing moment when doctors discovered Larson had a dangerous blockage of his heart. The story turned into a three-part series following Larson through the whole experience and inspiring men who were watching at home to get their own hearts checked.

Larson also volunteers for St. Jude, the Salvation Army, the Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Cancer Center for Health Living, and Junior Achievement. He hosts the annual telethon of the Muscular Dystrophy Association and has emceed the annual Santa Claus parade since 1974.

In summary, Madam Speaker, Bob Larson is an exceptional example to all Americans of what the phrase ''service to community'' truly means. In these challenging times for America, it's folks like Bob Larson who illustrate the best of our country. I wish to sincerely thank Mr. Larson for all he has done for the people of Peoria and beyond, and congratulate him on his much deserved honors.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

House and Senate met in a Joint Meeting to receive Her Excellency Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S11007–S11062

Measures Introduced: Four bills were introduced, as follows: S. 2722–2725. **Page S11048**

Measures Passed:

National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month: Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 291, expressing support for the goals of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month by promoting national awareness of adoption and the children awaiting families, celebrating children and families involved in adoption, and encouraging Americans to secure safety, permanency, and well-being for all children, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S11061**

Measures Considered:

Unemployment Compensation Extension Act: Senate continued consideration of H.R. 3548, to amend the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 to provide for the temporary availability of certain additional emergency unemployment compensation, taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S11009–23**

Pending:

Reid (for Baucus/Reid) Amendment No. 2712, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S11009**

Reid Amendment No. 2713 (to Amendment No. 2712), to change the enactment date. **Page S11009**

Reid Amendment No. 2714 (to Amendment No. 2713), of a perfecting nature. **Page S11009**

Reid Amendment No. 2715 (to the language proposed to be stricken by Amendment No. 2712), to change the enactment date. **Page S11009**

Reid Amendment No. 2716 (to Amendment No. 2715), of a perfecting nature. **Page S11009**

A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the bill at approximately 11:30 a.m., on Wednesday, November 4, 2009, and all post-cloture time be considered expired, all amendments to the substitute and bill be withdrawn, no further amendments be in order, and the substitute amendment be agreed to; that the Senate then have general debate until 12:15 p.m., with the time equally divided and controlled between the two Leaders, or their designees; that a 12:15 p.m., Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the bill, and that if cloture is invoked, the post-cloture time be considered to have begun running as if cloture had been invoked at 11:45 p.m., on Tuesday, November 3. **Page S11061**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Victoria A. Lipnic, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for the remainder of the term expiring July 1, 2010.

Victoria A. Lipnic, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term expiring July 1, 2015.

Paul R. Verkuil, of Florida, to be Chairman of the Administrative Conference of the United States for the term of five years. **Page S11062**

Messages from the House: **Page S11047**

Measures Referred: **Page S11047**

Executive Communications: **Pages S11047–48**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S11048–50**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S11050–61**

Additional Statements: **Pages S11046–47**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S11061**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S11061**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:02 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, November 4, 2009. (For Senate's program, see

the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S11061.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee began markup of S. 1733, to create clean energy jobs, promote energy independence, reduce global warming pollution, and transition to a clean energy economy, but did not complete action thereon, and will meet again on Wednesday, November 4.

INCREASING HEALTH COSTS FACING SMALL BUSINESSES

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine increasing health costs facing small businesses, after receiving testimony from Sandy Praeger, Kansas Insurance Commissioner, Topeka, on behalf of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners; Art Cullen, The Storm Lake Times, Storm Lake, Iowa; Walter Rowen, Susquehanna Glass, Columbia, Pennsylvania; Douglas Holtz-Eakin, DHE Consulting, LLC, Arlington, Virginia; Karen Bender, Oliver Wyman Actuarial Consulting, Inc., Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Jonathan Gruber, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 28 public bills, H.R. 3986–4013; and 3 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 207; and H. Res. 886–887 were introduced. **Pages H12287–88**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H12288–89**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H. Res. 884, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3639) to amend the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009 to establish an earlier effective date for various consumer protections (H. Rept. 111–326) and

H. Res. 885, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2868) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to extend, modify, and recodify the authority of the Secretary of Homeland Security to enhance security and protect against acts of terrorism against chemical facilities (H. Rept. 111–327). **Page H12287**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein she appointed Representative Blumenauer to act as Speaker Pro Tempore for today. **Page H12199**

Recess: The House recessed at 8:15 a.m. and reconvened at 9:00 a.m. **Pages H12200–01**

Recess: The House recessed at 9:02 a.m. for the purpose of receiving Her Excellency Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. The House reconvened at noon, and agreed that the proceedings had during the Joint Meeting be printed in the Record. **Page H12201**

Joint Meeting to receive Her Excellency Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany: The House and Senate met in a Joint Meeting to receive Her Excellency Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. She was escorted into the Chamber by a committee comprised of Representatives Hoyer, Clyburn, Larson (CT), Becerra, DeLauro, Berman, Slaughter, Delahunt, Carnahan, McMahon, Boehner, Cantor, Pence, McCotter, McMorris Rodgers, McCarthy (CA), Dreier, Ros-Lehtinen, Wilson (SC), and Poe; and Senators Reid, Durbin, Kerry, Merkley, McConnell, Kyl, Alexander, Murkowski, Cornyn, and Thune. **Pages H12201–04**

Suspensions—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures which were debated on Monday, November 2nd:

Veterans' Small Business Assistance and Servicemembers Protection Act of 2009: H.R. 3949, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, and the Servicemember Civil Relief Act, to make certain improvements in the laws relating to benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 382 yeas to 2 nays, Roll No. 835; **Pages H12204–05**

Recognizing the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift's success: H. Res. 398, to recognize the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift's success, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 367 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 836; **Pages H12205–06**

Expressing support for designation of a National Veterans History Project Week: H. Res. 866, to express support for designation of a National Veterans History Project Week to encourage public participation in a nationwide project that collects and preserves the stories of the men and women who served our nation in times of war and conflict, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 389 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 837; **Page H12206**

Max J. Beilke Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic Designation Act: H.R. 3157, to name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Alexandria, Minnesota, as the "Max J. Beilke Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic", by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 398 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 839; and **Pages H12245–46**

Honoring President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address on "Dedication Day", November 19, 2009: H. Res. 736, to honor President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address on "Dedication Day", November 19, 2009, by a ⅔ recorded vote of 393 ayes with none voting "no", Roll No. 840. **Pages H12246–47**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and agree to the following measure:

Calling on the President and the Secretary of State to oppose unequivocally any endorsement or further consideration of the "Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict" in multilateral fora: H. Res. 867, amended, to call on the President and the Secretary of State to oppose unequivocally any endorsement or further consideration of the "Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict" in multilateral fora, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 344 yeas to 36 nays with 22 voting "present", Roll No. 838. **Pages H12232–45**

Moment of Silence: The House observed a moment of silence in honor of the men and women in uniform who have given their lives in the service of our nation in Iraq and Afghanistan, their families, and all who serve in the armed forces and their families. **Page H12245**

Suspensions—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measures under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed:

Recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: H. Res. 641, amended, to recognize the 60th anniversary of the founding of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; **Pages H12247–49**

Condemning the illegal extraction of Madagascar's natural resources: H. Res. 839, amended, to condemn the illegal extraction of Madagascar's natural resources; **Pages H12249–52**

Calling on the United States Government and the international community to address the human rights and humanitarian needs of Sri Lanka's Tamil internally displaced persons (IDPs) currently living in government-run camps: H. Res. 711, amended, to call on the United States Government and the international community to address the human rights and humanitarian needs of Sri Lanka's Tamil internally displaced persons (IDPs) currently living in government-run camps by supporting the release of such IDPs, implementing and facilitating an independent oversight of the process of release and resettlement, and allowing foreign aid groups to provide relief and resources to such IDPs; **Pages H12252–54**

Recognizing the scourge of pneumonia, urging the United States and the world to mobilize cooperation and prioritize resources to fight pneumonia and save children's lives, and recognizing November 2 as World Pneumonia Day: H. Res. 863, amended, to recognize the scourge of pneumonia, to urge the United States and the world to mobilize cooperation and prioritize resources to fight pneumonia and save children's lives, and to recognize November 2 as World Pneumonia Day; and **Pages H12254–56**

Congratulating the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) on its 40th anniversary and recognizing its significant accomplishments and contributions: H. Res. 858, to congratulate the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) on its 40th anniversary and to recognize its significant accomplishments and contributions. **Pages H12256–57**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Five yea-and-nay votes and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H12204–05, H12205–06, H12206, H12245, H12246 and H12246–47. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 8 a.m. and adjourned at 11:19 p.m.

Committee Meetings

SPORTS ANTI-DOPING PROGRAMS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection held a hearing entitled "The NFL StarCaps Case: Are

Sports' Anti-Doping Programs At A Legal Crossroads?'' Testimony was heard from Roger Goodell, Commissioner, National Football League; DeMaurice Smith, Executive Director, National Football League Players' Association; Rob Manfred, Executive Vice President, Labor and Human Resources, Office of the Commissioner of Baseball, Major League Baseball; Michael S. Weiner, General Counsel, Major League Baseball Players Association; and public witnesses.

RADIOACTIVE IMPORT DETERRENCE ACT

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Energy and Environment approved for full Committee action, as amended, H.R. 515, Radioactive Import Deterrence Act.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES

Committee on Financial Services: Continued consideration of the following: an Amendment in the nature of a substitute October 16, to H.R. 2609, Federal Insurance Office Act of 2009; a Committee Print (October 29, 2009) of the Financial Stability Improvement Act of 2009; and H.R. 3904, Overdraft Protection Act.

Will continue tomorrow.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response approved for full committee action, without amendments, the following bills: H.R. 3837, Strengthening and Updating Resources and Equipment Act; H.R. 3978, First Responder Anti-Terrorism Training Resources Act; and H.R. 3980, To provide for identifying and eliminating redundant reporting requirements and developing meaningful performance metrics for homeland security preparedness grants, and for other purposes.

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN MANAGEMENT

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service and the District of Columbia held a hearing entitled ''Managing the Thrift Savings Plan to Thrive.'' Testimony was heard from Greg Long, Executive Director, Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board; and public witnesses.

EXPEDITED CARD REFORM FOR CONSUMERS ACT OF 2009

Committee on Rules: Granted, by a non-record vote, a structured rule providing for consideration of H.R. 3639, the Expedited CARD Reform for Consumers Act of 2009. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill except clauses 9 and 10 of rule XXI. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules, shall be considered as adopted and provides that the bill, as amended, shall be considered as the original bill for the purpose of further amendment under the five-minute rule and shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against bill, as amended. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules. The amendments made in order may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against the amendments in part B of the report except for clauses 9 and 10 of rule XXI are waived. The rule provides that for those amendments reported from the Committee of the Whole, the question of their adoption shall be put to the House en gros and without demand for division of the question. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. The rule provides that the Chair may entertain a motion that the Committee rise only if offered by the chair of the Committee on Financial Services or his designee and that the Chair may not entertain a motion to strike out the enacting words of the bill (as described in clause 9 of rule XVIII). Testimony was heard from Chairman Frank of Massachusetts; and Representative Markey of Colorado.

CHEMICAL FACILITY ANTI-TERRORISM ACT OF 2009

Committee on Rules: Granted, by a non-record vote, a structured rule providing for consideration of H.R. 2868, the ''Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Act of 2009.'' The rule provides 90 minutes of general debate equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Homeland Security, the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. The rule provides that in lieu of the amendments in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committees on

Homeland Security and Energy and Commerce now printed in the bill, the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part A of the report accompanying this rule shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment and shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against the amendment in the nature of a substitute except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI. The rule makes in order only those amendments printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report of the Committee on Rules, may be offered only by a Member designated, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. All points of order against the amendments printed in part B of the Committee report are waived except for clauses 9 and 10 of rule XXI. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. The rule provides that the Chair may entertain a motion that the Committee rise only if offered by the chair of the Committee on Homeland Security or a designee. The rule provides that the Chair may not entertain a motion to strike out the enacting words of the bill. Finally, the rule authorizes the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules at any time through the legislative day of November 7, 2009. The Speaker or her designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or his designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this rule. Testimony was heard from Representatives Thompson of Mississippi, Markey of Massachusetts; Oberstar, Jackson-Lee of Texas, Hastings of Florida; Dent, Austria and Scalise.

Joint Meetings

RUSSIAN NEWSROOMS

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Commission received a briefing on life in a Russian newsroom from Dmitry Muratov, Nonaya Gazeta, Maxim Trudolyubov, Vedomosti, and Grigory Shvedov, The Caucasian Knot, all of Moscow, Russia.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2009

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard, to hold hearings to examine the future of ocean governance, focusing on building national ocean policy, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks, to hold hearings to examine S. 1369, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate segments of the Molalla River in the State of Oregon, as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, S. 1405, to redesignate the Longfellow National Historic Site, Massachusetts, as the ''Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site'', S. 1413, to amend the Adams National Historical Park Act of 1998 to include the Quincy Homestead within the boundary of the Adams National Historical Park, S. 1767 and H.R. 1121, bills to authorize a land exchange to acquire land for the Blue Ridge Parkway from the Town of Blowing Rock, North Carolina, S. Res. 275, honoring the Minute Man National Historical Park on the occasion of its 50th anniversary, H.R. 2802, to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the Adams Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in honor of former President John Adams and his legacy, H.R. 3113, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate a segment of the Elk River in the State of West Virginia for study for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and H.R. 1287, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into a partnership with the Porter County Convention, Recreation and Visitor Commission regarding the use of the Dorothy Buell Memorial Visitor Center as a visitor center for the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, 2:30 p.m., SD–366.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: business meeting to continue consideration of S. 1733, to create clean energy jobs, promote energy independence, reduce global warming pollution, and transition to a clean energy economy, 10 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Michael W. Punke, of Montana, to be a Deputy United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador, Department of State, Islam A. Siddiqui, of Virginia, to be Chief Agricultural Negotiator, Office of the United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador, and Michael F. Mundaca, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Jide J. Zeitlin, of New York, to be Alternate Representative to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during his tenure of service as Representative to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform, and to be Representative to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform, with the rank of Ambassador, Frederick D. Barton, of Maine, to be Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador, and Carmen Lomellin, of Virginia, to be Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States, with the rank of Ambassador, all of the Department of State, Gustavo Arnavat, of New York, to be United States Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank, and Daniel W. Yohannes,

of Colorado, to be Chief Executive Officer, Millennium Challenge Corportation, 2:30 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: business meeting to consider S. 1649, to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to prepare for attacks using weapons of mass destruction, S. 1862, to provide that certain Secret Service employees may elect to transition to coverage under the District of Columbia Police and Fire Fighter Retirement and Disability System, H.R. 553, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a strategy to prevent the over-classification of homeland security and other information and to promote the sharing of unclassified homeland security and other information, S. 1755, to direct the Department of Homeland Security to undertake a study on emergency communications, H.R. 730, to strengthen efforts in the Department of Homeland Security to develop nuclear forensics capabilities to permit attribution of the source of nuclear material, S. 1825, to extend the authority for relocation expenses test programs for Federal employees, S. 1860, to permit each current member of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance to serve for 3 terms, H.R. 955, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10355 Northeast Valley Road in Rollingbay, Washington, as the ''John 'Bud' Hawk Post Office'', H.R. 1516, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 37926 Church Street in Dade City, Florida, as the ''Sergeant Marcus Mathes Post Office'', H.R. 1713, to name the South Central Agricultural Research Laboratory of the Department of Agriculture in Lane, Oklahoma, and the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 310 North Perry Street in Bennington, Oklahoma, in honor of former Congressman Wesley ''Wes'' Watkins, H.R. 2004, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4282 Beach Street in Akron, Michigan, as the ''Akron Veterans Memorial Post Office'', H.R. 2760, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1615 North Wilcox Avenue in Los Angeles, California, as the ''Johnny Grant Hollywood Post Office Building'', H.R. 2972, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 115 West Edward Street in Erath, Louisiana, as the ''Conrad DeRouen, Jr. Post Office'', H.R. 3119, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 867 Stockton Street in San Francisco, California, as the ''Lim Poon Lee Post Office'', H.R. 3386, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1165 2nd Avenue in Des Moines, Iowa, as the ''Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Memorial Post Office'', H.R. 3547, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 936 South 250 East in Provo, Utah, as the ''Rex E. Lee Post Office Building'', and H.R. 2215, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 140 Merriman Road in Garden City, Michigan, as the ''John J. Shivnen Post Office Building'', 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on Indian Affairs: to hold an oversight hearing to examine the Federal acknowledgment process, 2:15 p.m., SD–628.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Thomas I. Vanaskie, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, Christina Reiss, to be United States District Judge for the District of Vermont, Louis B. Butler, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Wisconsin, Abdul K. Kallon, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama, and Victoria Angelica Espinel, of the District of Columbia, to be Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator, Executive Office of the President, 2 p.m., SD–226.

House

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection and the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology and the Internet, joint hearing on Driven To Distraction: Technological Devices and Vehicles Safety, 9:30 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, to mark up H.R. 3817, To provide the Securities and Exchange Commission with additional authorities to protect investors from violations of the securities laws, and for other purposes; and to begin consideration of a Committee Print (October 29, 2009) of the Financial Stability Improvement Act of 2009, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, hearing on Copenhagen and Beyond: Is There a Successor to the Kyoto Protocol? 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on House Administration, to consider the following: H.R. 3224, To authorize the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution to plan, design, and construct a vehicle maintenance building at the vehicle maintenance branch of the Smithsonian Institution located in Suitland, Maryland, and for other purposes; H.R. 28843, Architect of the Capitol Appointment Act of 2009; H.R. 3489, To amend the Help America Vote Act of 1972 to prohibit State election officials from accepting a challenge to an individual's eligibility to register to vote in an election for Federal office or to vote in an election for Federal office in a jurisdiction on the grounds that the individual resides in a household in the jurisdiction which is subject to foreclosure proceedings or that the jurisdiction was adversely affected by a hurricane or other major disaster, and for other purposes; H.R. 1719, Voter Registration Modernization Act of 2009; H.R. 3542, State Admission Day Recognition Act of 2009; Committee Resolution (111–6), to adopt voucher documentation standards; and Committee Resolution (111–7), to prohibit text messaging while driving on official business, 11 a.m., 1310 Longworth.

Committee on the Judiciary, to mark up the following measures: H.R. 3845, USA PATRIOT Amendments Act of 2009; H.R. 984, State Secret Protection Act of 2009; and H. Res. 871, Directing the Attorney General to transmit to the House of Representatives certain documents, records, memos, correspondence, and other communications regarding medical malpractice reform, 12:30 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, hearing on the following bills: H.R. 3742, To amend the Act of June 18, 1934, to reaffirm the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to take land into trust for Indian tribes; and H.R. 3697,

To amend the Act of June 18, 1934, to reaffirm the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to take land into trust for Indian tribes, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife, hearing on H.R. 3583, American Samoa Protection of Industry, Resources, and Employment Act, 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Science and Technology, Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation, to mark up the Cybersecurity Coordination and Awareness Act, 10:30 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, hearing entitled ''Small Businesses and the Estate Tax: Identifying Reforms to Meet the Needs of Small Firms and Family Farmers,'' 1 p.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, hearing on Recovery Act: Progress Report on Water Resources Infrastructure Investment, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, executive, briefing on Department of Defense Quarterly Update, 3 p.m., 304 HVC.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Wednesday, November 4

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond two hours), Senate will continue consideration of H.R. 3548, Unemployment Compensation Extension Act, and after a period of debate, vote on the motion to invoke cloture thereon at 12:15 p.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, November 4

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of H.R. 3639—Expedited CARD Reform for Consumers Act of 2009 (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

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