

Representative CHELLIE PINGREE, the Voluntary State Discount Prescription Drug Plan Act of 2011—a completely voluntary, common-sense way to offer prescription drugs at affordable prices to millions of Americans currently struggling without prescription drug coverage.

With the enactment of the Affordable Care Act, millions of uninsured Americans will gain access to health insurance and prescription drug coverage. However, the expansion of coverage won't happen until 2014.

In the meantime, high prescription drug costs will continue to be a burden for millions of Americans. This legislation would enable states, at their option, to create state discount prescription drug plans that extend Medicaid-negotiated rebates to citizens up to 300 percent of the poverty line and thereby provide discounts of roughly 40 percent to 50 million uninsured Americans—all at their local pharmacies. Just like HMOs and insurance plans in the private sector, participating states would simply leverage their purchasing power to secure better prices on behalf of their citizens. In that regard, our bill would explicitly authorize recent prescription drug affordability initiatives in states like Maryland, Maine, and Vermont by removing barriers that have to date not been embraced by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

In 2005, my home state of Maryland passed a state discount prescription drug plan law with the near unanimous support of our General Assembly and our then Republican Governor Robert Ehrlich. Unfortunately, that plan was subsequently blocked by the Bush Administration for reasons that have never been credibly explained. As a result, the broad bipartisan will of our state has been thwarted and hundreds of thousands of Marylanders have been deprived of needed access to affordable prescription drugs. In fact, according to an analysis of U.S. Census data conducted by Families USA and the Center for Policy Alternatives, an estimated half million Marylanders would become eligible for immediate prescription drug price relief under this legislation.

Since these plans are created at the state level, we don't believe states should have to ask the federal government's permission in order to establish them. For that reason, our legislation makes clear that Maryland—and any other state that chooses—can set up a state discount prescription drug plan without petitioning CMS for a Section 1115 waiver. Additionally, since these plans rely on government purchasing power rather than government outlays to produce price discounts, we remove CMS's somewhat contrived requirement that states expend some undefined amount of their own money as part of these plans. Beyond modest administrative costs, it simply isn't necessary.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation represents a significant opportunity to empower states to deliver prescription drug affordability to millions of our citizens who don't currently have it. I hope Congress seizes this opportunity, and I invite my colleagues' support.

IN HONOR OF THOMAS G.  
MASARYK

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 9, 2011*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Thomas G. Masaryk and in commemoration of the statue that is being dedicated in his honor at the Bohemian National Hall in Cleveland.

Thomas Masaryk was both the founder and the first president of the Czechoslovak Republic. The Czechoslovak Republic was established in 1918 in the aftermath of the First World War; Thomas made two visits to Cleveland in his lifetime, one in 1902 and another in 1918 where he spoke at the National Bohemian Hall.

The statue is a plaster cast of a similar statue that is located in the Czech Cultural Garden at Rockefeller Park. The statue's curator, Frank L. Jarouch, has been a Cleveland resident all of his life and originally dedicated the statue to the Czech Garden in 1961.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please rise with me today in honor and recognition of the dedication of this statue of Thomas G. Masaryk. It is a benefit to the community that stands in memory of a man who chose to make a difference with his life.

THE FEDERAL FIREFIGHTER  
FLEXIBILITY AND FAIRNESS ACT

**HON. JOHN P. SARBANES**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 9, 2011*

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to re-introduce the Federal Firefighter Flexibility and Fairness Act which passed the House of Representatives by voice vote in the 111th Congress. This legislation would correct a longstanding disparity between professional firefighters who are employed by States, counties, or municipalities and Federal firefighters.

In 1985, Congress amended the Fair Labor Standards Act so that firefighters around the country could engage in a practice called "trade time." Trade time allows two firefighters, solely at their option and with the approval of their supervisor, to trade shifts without affecting the pay of either firefighter. The Congress made this change because firefighters work uncommon schedules involving 24-hour shifts and 72-hour workweeks, followed by a period of time away from the firehouse. Trade time enables firefighters to meet personal obligations such as attending a child's birthday or assisting a sick family member without exhausting their annual leave. It also ensures that firehouses across the country can maintain staffing requirements and keep our communities safe.

Federal firefighters are not covered under the Fair Labor Standards Act and therefore have been ineligible for trade time. I am re-introducing this legislation to amend Federal employee labor law to fix this problem.

Federal firefighters work side-by-side with their non-federal colleagues, so this is an issue of equity. Correcting this inequity will help Federal agencies recruit and retain fire-

fighters. Just like other firefighters, Federal firefighters risk their lives on a daily basis. They also accept the irregular hours that their jobs require. This legislation merely gives them some modest flexibility to balance that irregularity and meet their family obligations.

I hope my colleagues will support this bipartisan commonsense legislation.

THE RED ROUTE HIGHWAY  
THROUGH THE TOWN OF GARNER

**HON. RENEE L. ELLMERS**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 9, 2011*

Mrs. ELLMERS. Mr. Speaker, the Army Corps of Engineers is working to put a highway straight through the town of Garner, in my district, slicing it in half.

I rise today for the Town of Garner, whose voices must be heard.

The Red Route would pass through the living room of Brenda and Jerry Summer, older residents whose children and grandchildren have moved back to Garner to be close to them.

They say it will be the worst thing in the world if they had to move, and have no idea where they would go. Heartbroken, is how Mrs. Summer described the situation.

I rise for the seniors at the Village at Aversboro that moved in with the confidence they are buying their final home.

Instead, they're being put through an emotional period of stress, not knowing where they'll end up.

I stand for the thousands of families that would be displaced and have to find new homes.

I rise for the 140 year old Springfield Baptist Church, and the 2,000 parishioners, who would literally lose all of their property which is some fifty acres of land.

All because of the Clean Water Act and the Army Corps refusal to remove the Red Line from consideration.

The oppressive regulations under the Clean Water Act are stifling economic growth and job creation.

The Act allows a Dwarf Wedge Muscle and a portion of wetlands to paralyze a town and displace countless families and businesses.

It gives the Army Corps of Engineers the power to stop development and job growth in their tracks.

The situation is especially frustrating since the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the North Carolina Turnpike Authority say they will never build the highway.

Even though the road is not a real option, the Army Corps insists on moving forward, spending hundreds of thousands in taxpayer dollars to study road that will never be built.

Meanwhile, the town of Garner is "Closed for Business" and economically crippled as the state spends years studying a road with no future.

I'm not saying the highway should not be built.

I'm simply asking why the federal government is spending millions in tax payer dollars on a road with no future.

Common sense dictates the Army Corps should find a viable option.

Common sense dictates the Army Corps should remove the Red Line from the Map today.