

the number of livable-wage jobs, we are gutting re-training and reemployment opportunities. These policies will pull the rug out from under people's lives in the name of some kind of pseudo-fiscal discipline that legislators declare will do this Nation some good.

For yet another week, the Republican-led Congress has turned its back on the number one issue in this country—jobs. Instead of brainstorming a way to fix the massive problems sequestration presents, the House is considering legislation which guts 40 years of bipartisan engagement in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs. This bill would consolidate or eliminate successful initiatives like YouthBuild, the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, Women in Apprenticeship and Non-traditional Occupations, and Community-Based Job Training Grants.

Last week, House Republicans also passed H.R. 890, the partisan welfare bill that would overturn the Obama Administration proposal to allow States the flexibility to move more Americans from welfare to work.

Looking forward to the week ahead, this Congress will move closer to making massive sequestration cuts permanent for millions of Americans. Instead of alleviating suffering, these bills will add to the woes of my constituents and Americans across the country.

We need to come together to find a way to help the people in this country keep their jobs and become gainfully employed, not slashing and cutting when there is no emergency that really warrants these measures. We must not balance the budget on the backs of the poorest and most vulnerable Americans, especially when closing common-sense loopholes could easily raise the revenue we need.

Every day, millions of Americans go to bed hungry because they have fallen into poverty. They were evicted from their homes and have lost their jobs. This Congress has turned a blind eye to their suffering and seems to be determined to pile on more. When will we do the work of policy and put aside partisan politics? How can we look our constituents in the eye, knowing these changes will do them harm?

We are here to help solve the problems of America, not create more problems for this country. Legislators can do better; we must do better.

BRIANNA ESQUIBEL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 18, 2013

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Brianna Esquibel for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Brianna Esquibel is an 8th grader at Mandalay Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Brianna Esquibel is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Brianna Esquibel for winning the Arvada

Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE AND INVESTING IN LIFELONG SKILLS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 15, 2013

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 803) to reform and strengthen the workforce investment system of the Nation to put Americans back to work and make the United States more competitive in the 21st century:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Chair, today's legislation is a missed opportunity. As our economy recovers, job training services are more essential than ever, and we should be reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act to ensure that these services are delivered efficiently and effectively. Unfortunately, H.R. 803 will not do that.

This bill establishes a single block grant for Workforce Investment Act funds, creating a one-size-fits-all model and jeopardizing services for the most at-risk populations, including workers with disabilities, older workers, disabled veterans, and youth. It also weakens Workforce Investment Boards by eliminating representation requirements for community-based organizations, community colleges, and labor. Without these important stakeholders, Boards will lose vital expertise in training and placement.

While Democrats believe the Workforce Investment Act needs to be updated to meet today's job training needs, H.R. 803 is not the way to do it. I support the substitute offered by Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Mr. MILLER that would streamline programs and improve accountability without threatening services for underserved populations. It would authorize the President's Community College Fund to expand the role of community colleges in job training and allow them to offer specialized skills and recognized credentials. It would increase access for work experience programs, including summer employment, internships, and pre-apprenticeship programs, so workers can receive training on the job. And it would establish common reporting and performance measures across all programs so we can better assess what is working. It is a better approach and I regret that the Republican Majority did not work with us to incorporate these ideas into the final bill.

Unfortunately, H.R. 803 on the floor today is a step backwards, dismantling protections and access for underserved populations and weakening community involvement in job training and placement. I urge my colleagues to vote against this legislation and come together to in a bipartisan way to responsibly reform our workforce development programs.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PATRICK T. MCHENRY

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 18, 2013

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, on March 14, 2013, I was unavoidably absent from the House and missed rollcall votes 70, 71, and 72. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall votes 70, 71, and 72.

On March 15, 2013, I was unavoidably absent from the House and missed rollcall votes 73, 74, and 75. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall votes 73 and 74, and I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote 75.

BRANDON HELLER

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 18, 2013

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Brandon Heller for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Brandon Heller is an 8th grader at Moore Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Brandon Heller is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Brandon Heller for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SYLVIA MEHAS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 18, 2013

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, today, along with my colleague, Mr. NUNES, we pay tribute to the life of Sylvia Mehas who passed away on March 9, 2013 at the age of 94. Sylvia will be remembered in the hearts of many as a passionate woman who loved her heritage, family, and faith.

Sylvia grew up in an immigrant family that was from a small village in Greece. Her roots were from the old country; therefore, strong values and morals were instilled in Sylvia early on. Sylvia knew the importance of hard work, and she understood that a little tough love was necessary every once in a while. Her children: Tulla, Peter, and Georgia, appreciate their mother for the lessons she taught them and for the principles that are now ingrained in them.

Sylvia was married to her late husband, George, for over 53 years. Together, they