

(CMS), determine that Obamacare is causing a net employment loss among small businesses or caused small group health care insurance premiums to rise. Comptroller General would be required to conduct this study every year and the employer mandate would be delayed for every negative finding. In addition, should the Comptroller General or CMS fail to submit a report as specified by this bill, the employer mandate will not apply for the following calendar year.

It is time for the Administration to be honest with the American people. It is time to protect our working class men and women who are going to feel the most negative impacts of Obamacare. The Certify It Act will prove once and for all that Obamacare causes job loss for small business and increases costs to small business health care. Mr. Speaker, it is time to protect the people and increase jobs.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

**HON. BILL FLORES**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 21, 2014*

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4031, The Department of Veterans Affairs Management Accountability Act of 2014. This bill would give the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) complete authority to fire or demote senior leaders based on performance.

This bill originated from an increasing amount of evidence supporting a lack of management accountability in the department's efforts to curb the disability benefits backlog. Now with the devastating discovery of a growing number of preventable deaths at VA medical centers across the country, this legislation has become more essential.

The department is failing to do its primary job, which is to provide the best health care and benefit services to our veterans. Sadly, the recent reports of mismanagement at VA medical centers only add to the growing list of problems that have plagued the VA. It is time that underperforming senior leaders are held accountable and punished for their poor performance, as opposed to the status quo of ignoring mismanagement practices and rewarding misconduct. Our nation's heroes deserve better.

With the passage of H.R. 4031, this bill would allow for the VA secretary to cut through the mounds of red tape to discipline and remove senior leaders. As an original co-sponsor of the bill, I was pleased to see the House take action and pass it with an overwhelming majority. By giving the secretary the direct authority to reprimand leaders it sends a clear message that mismanagement will no longer be tolerated.

The culture at the VA has clearly lost its way and is in need of leadership that can bring back the focus towards its core values of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence. These core values have been ignored for too long. It is time to put the interests of America's veterans ahead of the interests of federal bureaucrats so that we keep our promises to the brave men and women

who have protected so much for our freedom and liberty.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE NICARAGUAN CULTURAL COMMITTEE  
"JOSE DE LA CRUZ MENA"

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 22, 2014*

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Nicaraguan Cultural Committee "Jose de la Cruz Mena," and salute them for the wonderful cultural efforts they are producing for the residents of the City of Los Angeles.

Founded in 2010, the Nicaraguan Cultural Committee "Jose de la Cruz Mena" is a small but dedicated organization committed to raising awareness on the traditions and customs of Nicaraguans who reside in the City of Los Angeles.

Since music is fundamental to Nicaraguan culture and spirit, the committee opted to be named after Jose de la Cruz Mena, a pioneering artist who was the first to introduce classical music to Central America. Although he suffered from various illnesses that left him blind at the age of 22 and led to a premature death at the age of 33, de la Cruz Mena's special talent allowed him to participate in composing the Nicaraguan national anthem. The committee is honoring his legacy by sharing his story and music with Angelinos.

To increase appreciation for Nicaraguan music and culture, the committee successfully encouraged the City of Los Angeles and the State of California to officially recognize May 3rd as "Dia del Nicaraguense" (Nicaraguan Day). The Nicaraguan Cultural Committee celebrated this distinct recognition on May 4 by hosting the first Nicaraguan Folklore Festival in Pico Union where many Americans of Nicaraguan descent have lived since the 1980s. The festival highlighted special Nicaraguan traditions and featured artisan crafts from Nicaragua. To foster cultural exchange, the committee plans to host the Nicaraguan Folklore Festival annually.

I wish the Nicaraguan Cultural Committee "Jose de la Cruz Mena" continued success in its efforts to preserve and highlight Nicaraguan traditions!

IN MEMORY OF NEVIN WHITESIDE,  
JR.

**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 22, 2014*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this month Lexington County recognized the service of Nevin Whiteside, Jr., as a proud Navy veteran of the Korean War. The following obituary was provided by Caughman-Harmon funeral Home, Lexington Chapel.

Funeral services for Nevin "Neb" William Whiteside, Jr., 84, of Lexington, will be held at 2:00 p.m. Friday, May 2, 2014 at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, with interment in the church cemetery. The family will receive friends on Thursday, May 1, 2014 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00

p.m. at Caughman-Harman Funeral Home, Lexington Chapel. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 1130 St. Peter's Church Rd., Lexington, SC 29072. Mr. Whiteside was born November 28, 1929 in Leesville, SC and passed away on April 30, 2014. He was the son of the late Nevin William Whiteside and Bertie Earle Whiteside. Mr. Whiteside served our country in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. He retired from Kenan Transportation. He was a member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, VFW and Lexington Masonic Lodge 152. He loved to ride his Harley-Davidson and enjoyed working in the yard and cleaning his car. Mr. Whiteside is survived by his wife, Barbara "Bobbie" Sox Whiteside, of Lexington; sons, Stan and Wayne Whiteside of Lexington; daughter, Kim (Tim) French of Lexington; grandchildren, Lauren, Andrew, and Brandon Whiteside, Ashley (Bower) Butler and Malia and Devin French; great-grandchildren, Reece and Paxton Butler; sister, Doris Goff of Saluda and man's best friend "Bandit", (Poppy's Lil' Buddy). He is predeceased by his parents and his brother Horace Whiteside.

HONORING THE LIFE OF A MINNESOTA LEGEND: CONGRESSMAN  
JAMES L. OBERSTAR

**HON. BETTY McCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 22, 2014*

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, on May 3, 2014, our former House colleague and dear friend, Chairman Jim Oberstar, passed away. Congressman Oberstar served Minnesota and the families of the 8th Congressional District from 1975 to 2011, including four years as chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Prior to being elected, Jim served in the U.S. House for eleven years as a senior staff member on the Public Works Committee.

When I arrived in Congress in 2001, Jim Oberstar was the "dean" of our Minnesota congressional delegation. He was like a big brother to me. A brilliant legislator and a profoundly gifted man, Jim was also a very kind man, a true gentleman with a huge heart and a hearty laugh.

When I think of Jim and the ten years we served together, I remember a man who loved his family and made sure I always saw the latest photos of his grandchildren. He loved his work as a national leader and true expert on transportation and infrastructure issues. And, Jim Oberstar loved Minnesota and representing northern Minnesota's families in the House of Representatives.

Throughout his career Jim's commitment to improving America's transportation system saved thousands of lives, kept millions of Americans on the job, and strengthened Minnesota's and our nation's economy. During his tenure as chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Jim Oberstar was one of the most powerful men in America. He moved legislation and with his work on American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Jim Oberstar ensured millions of Americans stayed on the job and thousands of infrastructure projects were completed across our country.

One transportation project in my congressional district that Jim Oberstar supported and helped to make a reality was the restoration of St. Paul's Union Depot. This marvelous train depot is now open for Amtrak service and will soon be open for transit commuters. Jim loved the grandeur of the train station and the idea of preserving the past as a means of investing in the future.

During his career Jim Oberstar took thousands of votes and was an eloquent and effective champion for dozens of causes, including adoption, cancer research, and human rights. There are two instances that I remember vividly when Jim's voice, his vote, and his strength made a lasting impact on Minnesotans. In 2002, during the debate on whether to authorize military action in Iraq, Jim was a strong voice against the war in Iraq. I was proud to stand with Jim and Rep. Martin Sabo as the members of the Minnesota House delegation voting to oppose authorizing military action in Iraq.

The other issue that defined Jim Oberstar for me was his tremendous work for Minnesota following the collapse of the I-35W Bridge in Minneapolis on August 1, 2007. As the chairman of the Transportation Committee, Jim was in the right place at the right time to respond to this terrible tragedy. He moved with incredible speed to draft legislation and get it passed on the House floor within forty-eight hours of the collapse. The bill was signed into law on August 6th—less than one week after the disaster. I have no doubt in my mind had that disaster happened in any other state Jim Oberstar would have reacted in exactly the same manner.

At his funeral, Jim's daughters and son spoke lovingly and eloquently about their father. Most of us knew Jim Oberstar was a powerful Member of Congress, but he was also a committed father and a very good man. He cared about working people, the pursuit of social justice, and his Catholic faith. He loved cycling and made his passion for bicycles into national policy that Americans in every corner of this country take advantage of everyday.

I wish to extend my sincere condolences to Jim's wife, Jean, and his children—Noelle Tower, Monica Weber, Annie Oberstar, and Ted Link-Oberstar, as well as all of Jim's grandchildren.

My heartfelt condolences also go out to Jim's congressional family which includes the many dedicated and loyal staff in his Minnesota and Washington congressional offices and his Transportation and Infrastructure Committee staff. The hard work and professionalism of Jim's staff was always evident and I know Jim was very proud of them.

Finally, Jim's long-time chief-of-staff, Bill Richard, spent decades by his side and was essential to Jim's success. I also want to extend my sympathies to Bill for the loss of his friend.

I will always remember Jim as a friend, a mentor, and a public servant of epic stature. Most of all, Jim Oberstar was a truly wonderful man who lived not only a full life, but a life filled with joy and compassion.

## WATER RESOURCES REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

**HON. BILL SHUSTER**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 20, 2014*

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I submit a list of supporters for H.R. 3080: the Water Resources Reform and Development Act.

America's Cement Manufacturers, American Gas Association, American Association of Port Authorities, American Council of Engineering Companies, American Concrete Pavement Association, American Concrete Pipe Association, American Concrete Pumping Association, American Concrete Pressure Pipe Association, American Farm Bureau Federation, American Iron and Steel Institute, American Public Power Association, American Public Works Association, American Road and Transportation Builders Association, American Society of Civil Engineers, American Soybean Association, American Waterways Operators, Arkansas Waterways Commission, Associated Equipment Distributors, Associated General Contractors of America, Association of California Water Agencies, Association of Equipment Manufacturers, Association of State Dam Safety Officials, Big River Coalition, California State Assembly, CH2M HILL, City and Port of Los Angeles, City of Sacramento, Edison Electric Institute, Everglades Foundation, Everglades Trust, Friends of the North Natomas Library, Great Lakes Maritime Task Force, Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Fairness Coalition, Heritage Park Owners Association, Hilton Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort, International Union of Operating Engineers, International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, Lake Carriers Association, LiUNA, National Asphalt Pavement Association, National Association of Clean Water Agencies, National Association of Flood & Stormwater Management Agencies, National Association of Home Builders, National Association of Manufacturers, National Committee on Levee Safety, National Governor's Association, National League of Cities, National Precast Concrete Association, National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, National Rural Water Association, National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association, National Utilities Contractor Association, National Waterways Conference, Natomas Chamber of Commerce, Natomas Charter School, Natomas Community Association, Natomas Unified School District, Nature Conservancy, North Natomas Little League, Sabine Neches Navigation District, Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency, Texas Department of Transportation, Tennessee River Valley Association, Transportation Construction Coalition, Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, Portland Cement Association, United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters, United States Society on Dams, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Valley View Acres Community Association, Vinyl Institute, Water Infrastructure Network, Water Resource Coalition, Waterways Council, Inc., Westlake Master Association, Witter Ranch Community Alliance.

## MEDIA IGNORES THAT THE ADMINISTRATION KNEW ABOUT VA PROBLEMS

**HON. LAMAR SMITH**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 22, 2014*

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, America's brave men and women in uniform come home from military service only to find severe wait times to receive the medical care they have earned.

Recent reports claim that Veteran Affairs officials in various states, including my home state of Texas, have falsified medical appointment data to conceal these long wait times.

This is dishonest, deceptive, and harmful to veterans.

But ignored for weeks by the liberal national media is that the Obama Administration has long known about these extensive wait times.

According to documents received by the Washington Times, the Bush Administration warned the Obama Administration about the prolonged wait times for our veterans in 2008—six years ago.

But you wouldn't know this if you watched NBC or ABC. Or read many media publications.

The media owes it to the American people, and to our veterans, to give them all the facts.

## HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

SPEECH OF

**HON. GUS. M. BILIRAKIS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 21, 2014*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4435) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment, which would allow disabled veterans with service connected permanent disability rated as total to travel on military aircraft on a space-available basis.

The Space-Available program is administered by the Department of Defense (DOD), which allows active duty service members, their families, retirees and certain other individuals to fill empty seats on DOD flights.

Unfortunately, veterans who are 100 percent disabled do not qualify to participate in this program. My amendment will correct this unintentional oversight and provide equality to service members who were severely injured while serving their country honorably.

Had they not been medically discharged with a service connected disability in the line of duty, these veterans were likely to have served until retirement. At no fault of their own, these deserving individuals did not have the opportunity to continue their military careers. It is an injustice that they would be penalized from this benefit due to their bravery and valor.