

Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, I sent a letter to President Obama regarding an approaching problem that is unique to Puerto Rico and the other U.S. territories and that can be called the Medicaid funding cliff. This morning, I rise to advise my colleagues about this cliff, which each territory will reach by 2019 and which Puerto Rico could reach by 2018 or even 2017.

My goal is to ensure that Federal officials have advance notice of the problem so we can begin working together now on a fair, thoughtful, and bipartisan plan to address this problem before it arrives. Timely action is critical. Inaction would be unacceptable from a moral and public policy perspective.

Let me outline the problem. The territories are treated unequally under Medicaid, which is funded in part by the Federal Government and in part by each State or territory government. In the States and D.C., Medicaid is an individual entitlement, meaning there is no limit on the amount of funding the Federal Government will provide so long as the State in question provides its share of matching funds. The Federal contribution, known as FMAP, can range from 50 percent in the case of the wealthiest States to 83 percent in the poorest States.

By contrast, Mr. Speaker, there is an annual ceiling on Federal funding for the Medicaid program in each territory. When I took office in 2009, Puerto Rico—home to 3.5 million American citizens—was subject to a ceiling of \$280 million a year and had the minimum statutory FMAP of 50 percent. Indeed, because of the annual ceiling, our true FMAP was less than 20 percent a year. Puerto Rico was spending more than \$1.4 billion in territory funds each year to provide healthcare services to about 1.2 million low-income beneficiaries and receiving only \$280 million from the Federal Government.

To place this in context, consider Mississippi, which has a 73 percent FMAP. In 2014, Mississippi—home to fewer people than Puerto Rico—paid \$1.3 billion in State funds and received \$3.6 billion in Federal funds. Or take Oregon with a 63 percent FMAP which paid \$1.8 billion in State funds and received \$5 billion in Federal funds. Again, Puerto Rico was receiving just \$280 million a year.

The Affordable Care Act provided a total of \$7.3 billion in additional Medicaid funding for the five territories, with Puerto Rico receiving \$6.3 billion of that amount. Each territory's FMAP was also increased from 50 percent to 55 percent. The result is that, instead of receiving about \$300 million a year from the Federal Government, Puerto Rico now draws down about \$1.1 billion to \$1.3 billion annually.

That is a major increase, and I can not adequately express how hard we

had to fight for it. But let me be clear. Our funding is nowhere close to State-like treatment and remains deeply inequitable.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, this additional Medicaid funding for the territories expires at the end of fiscal year 2019—the only coverage provision in the law that sunsets in this manner. The Puerto Rico Government has less than \$3.6 billion of its \$6.3 billion in funding remaining. This is the cliff. It is coming, one way or another; it is just a question of whether it will arrive in 2017, 2018, or 2019. If this pool of funding is not replenished, Puerto Rico will go back to receiving less than \$400 million a year.

In the coming months, I will continue to brief Federal officials on this subject. I will explain how inaction will deepen the current health, migration, and fiscal crisis in Puerto Rico, and why action is not only in Puerto Rico's interest, but also in the national interest. In short, I will fight as hard to continue this essential funding as I fought to obtain it in the first place.

IN RECOGNITION OF PETER SHIPMAN, CRAFTSMAN FOR THE CAPITOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOLD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Peter Shipman and his many accomplishments for this great institution and his community. He is one of the many unsung champions of this body who kept the House running over the course of his career.

Peter began his career for the United States House of Representatives on November 1, 1979, shortly after graduating from VCU with a degree in arts, specializing in furniture making and design.

Peter soon established himself as a highly regarded craftsman among a shop of senior cabinetmakers. As his passion and talent for his craft became apparent, he soon earned the role of producing more high-profile projects.

Peter's drive for perfection, creativity, and attention to unique details were second to none. Many of his co-workers still are using his techniques today. From the time he became shop foreman until his retirement, Peter had a hand in the design of most of the pieces of newly constructed furniture built by the craftsmen in the Cabinet Shop. His hard work and dedication to his craft and to this House earned him the much sought-after job of shop foreman in 2001 and, indeed, manager of the shop in 2007.

Upon his retirement in 2012, Peter was asked about his proudest accomplishments during his service here in the United States House of Representatives. Peter said he was "proudest of the individuals who have made up the Cabinet Shop, Finishing Shop, Drap-

ery, Upholstery and Carpet Shops, and my association with all past and present individuals who have been part of these groups. Sincerely this is my proudest achievement."

A small sample of the projects that Peter was involved with includes the construction of the Speaker's Chair, Madam Speaker. He also designed and managed the construction of the podiums that we are using here on the House floor, the sideboard for Speaker Gingrich, the hand-painted hummingbird desk for Speaker Foley, and the display cabinets for Leader Bob Michel.

Examples of Peter's superior talents, along with his loyalty to this House, will live on for many years in the Capitol and in the House Office Buildings. His artistic approach to furniture design added a special touch that few craftsmen possess. He was truly dedicated to his art and the talented individuals whom he mentored along the way.

Madam Speaker, he will surely be missed by his peers who knew and loved him as well as by the entire House community. Peter is survived by his wife, Jennifer; their son, Walker; stepson, Derek; brother, Tourne; and sisters, Carie, Airlie, and Mellick. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and his colleagues who continue his tradition of beautiful craftsmanship today.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 59 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

Reverend Larry Kendrick, Archer's Chapel United Methodist Church, Brownsville, Tennessee, offered the following prayer:

Father God, we place before Your throne of grace this day the United States of America and its government. Father, in Your Word, we are told that You reprove leaders for our sakes so that we may live a quiet and a peaceable life in godliness and honesty.

O God, as You anointed leaders and called prophets of old, lead us to recognize our true representatives and authentic leaders, men and women who love Your people, who walk with and among them, who feel their pain and share their joys, who dream their dreams and strive to help them achieve their common goal.

In Your spirit, empower us to serve Your people, to bring praise and glory to Your name.

We believe today that the hearts of these leaders are in Your hands, and their decisions will be divinely directed of the Lord.

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.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. 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, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PITTENGER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PITTENGER 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.

WELCOMING REVEREND LARRY KENDRICK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FINCHER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. FINCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the pastor who gave our opening prayer this morning, Brother Larry Kendrick, who preaches at my home church, Archer's Chapel United Methodist Church in Frog Jump, Tennessee.

I just want to tell him how much we appreciate his service to the kingdom. His wife and daughter, Karen and Vicki, are here with him also—and their service to God's kingdom—and we wish them the best.

God always be with you. Thank you for coming today and opening us up with prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests

for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING AN UNSUNG HERO

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, sometimes, a tragedy has to happen for us to recognize unsung heroes.

On Monday, I received word that Lowell Ensel had passed away. Lowell was an intern here in our D.C. office for the past 3 months. His passing was sudden; it was unexpected, and it was painful to our entire office family.

He was just 20 years old; but, while Lowell's years have been short, his reach was very long. That was reflected when over 200 students attended a vigil earlier this week at the University of Maryland.

Lowell's love of life had a big impact on our office as well. He handled every project we gave him with a positive attitude and a smile on his face.

I offer my thoughts and prayers to Lowell's parents, Ellen and Fendwick, as well as his extended family and countless friends during this time of suffering, as difficult as it is.

To my colleagues, I know that each one of you have special people like Lowell in your office. These are young people who work long hours for little or no pay because they want to make a difference in this country.

In honor of Lowell, please take a moment and thank these unsung heroes that work in our offices every day.

FUNDING THE VA IS A SACRED RESPONSIBILITY

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, recently, I met with two veterans and their families who traveled to Buffalo for medical treatment. Initially, I thought they were receiving care at our highly-regarded VA hospital, but in fact, they were brought to Buffalo by Operation Backbone, an organization that works with private doctors to provide specialty care that is not available within the VA system.

The families expressed frustration that they could not obtain through the VA the highly specialized and efficient care they were receiving in Buffalo. It was not until Operation Backbone arranged their treatments and the Buffalo Sabres hockey team facilitated recovery that these men received the care they needed.

I commend Operation Backbone and the Buffalo Sabres for their commitment to our veterans, but their work is necessary only because Congress is failing in its responsibility to these men and women. When we ask our service-members to put their bodies on the line, we incur a moral obligation to get them the best possible care when injury occurs.

Last year, Congress provided funding for the VA to hire more physician specialists. It was a good first step, but making sure the VA has the resources to care for our veterans is a sacred responsibility that will require our attention this year and for many years to come.

SOUTH CAROLINA HEROES ON THE HONOR FLIGHT TO WASHINGTON

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this morning, I was especially grateful to meet the Honor Flight members from South Carolina during their trip to Washington. These World War II and Korean war veterans are heroes for their honorable service in defense of American families.

I appreciate the Honor Flight network, coordinated by Bill Dukes, for enabling these veterans the opportunity to visit the memorials built to honor their service and sacrifices.

I was privileged to visit with Medal of Honor recipient Corporal Kyle Carpenter, a constituent and resident of Lexington, whose service and heroic actions in the United States Marine Corps during Operation Enduring Freedom saved the lives of countless Americans.

I have no doubt that, because of Corporal Carpenter's service, American families are more secure. Thank you, Kyle. And I thank all of the Honor Flight veterans who are visiting today, and thank all the veterans and military families in South Carolina and across our Nation for your dedication to America.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and the President by his actions should never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

Our sympathy to the family of Lowell Ensel.

RECOGNIZING MAY 2015 AS STROKE AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight my introduction of H. Res. 256, a resolution to recognize May 2015 as Stroke Awareness Month.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly stand here today because of our Nation's commitment to greater awareness about stroke and funding to find treatments for stroke survivors.

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States, killing nearly 130,000 Americans per year. On average, someone in the United States has a stroke every 40 seconds, while one American dies of stroke every 4 minutes.

In light of these sobering statistics, I am reintroducing my resolution recognizing May as Stroke Awareness