

Mr. SESTAK 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.

EXTENDED COBRA CONTINUATION PROTECTION ACT

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

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask the House to quickly pass the Extended COBRA Continuation Protection Act to ensure health coverage for millions of Americans who, through no fault of their own, have lost their jobs and now, because Wall Street gambled with their savings, cannot afford the COBRA premiums to keep their health care from their former employer.

So, in the economic stimulus bill we provided 65 percent of the cost of those premiums, but those benefits are now running out for those who were laid off first. I ask this House to quickly pass the bill to extend those COBRA premium subsidies for 6 months.

Take a woman in my district. She pays \$535 for her 35 percent share of the premiums. It will go over \$1,500 very soon if we do not act. And she has a preexisting condition and must keep on her health care plan.

Hundreds have contacted my office regarding this, and I ask this House to quickly help. As we come out of this savage recession, it's not just economic security, but it's health security we must address.

CO₂ IS NOW A POLLUTANT

(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. Madam Speaker, yesterday was a historic day. It will be a day which lives in economic infamy. The EPA administrator yesterday unsheathed the dagger at the heart of our economy when she announced an endangerment finding. Yes, CO₂ is now a pollutant. That means everyone in this Chamber, anyone who out there might be hearing us, you are now polluters. With every breath you take you emit CO₂.

This was never, ever, conceived by Congress when it passed the Clean Air Act. We now have a situation in which administrators are going to effectively control the entire economy and the way in which we live and the way in which we breathe. This is not the idea of freedom. This is, in fact, not an endangerment finding about clean air. This is an endangerment finding about our freedom.

Our freedom took a vicious blow yesterday, and we, as representatives of our people, must act.

ARE WE FIGHTING OR FUNDING THE TALIBAN?

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, U.S. contractors are paying U.S. tax dollars to the Taliban in order to protect the delivery of U.S. shipments of U.S. goods to U.S. soldiers so that our soldiers can fight against the Taliban.

In an investigative expose, *The Nation* magazine reveals "how U.S. funds the Taliban," and "with Pentagon cash, contractors bribe insurgents not to attack supply lines for U.S. troops." Another quote from the investigation: "The real secret to trucking in Afghanistan is ensuring security on the perilous roads controlled by warlords, tribal militias, insurgents, and Taliban commanders." The American executive I spoke to was fairly specific about it: "The Army is basically paying the Taliban not to shoot at them," and then the Taliban uses that money to shoot at our troops. What a racket.

Are we in Afghanistan to fight or to fund the Taliban or both?

NETWORKS IGNORE CLIMATEGATE SCANDAL

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, ABC, CBS, and NBC are the winners of this week's Media Fairness Caucus' highly uncoveted "Lap Dog Award" for the most glaring example of media bias. The networks took 2 weeks to devote any coverage to the Climategate scandal on their evening news programs.

We now know that prominent scientists were so determined to advance the idea of human-made global warming that they worked together to hide contradictory temperature data. But for 2 weeks, none of the networks gave the scandal any coverage on their evening news programs, and when they finally did cover it, their reporting was largely slanted in favor of global warming alarmists.

The networks have shown a steady pattern of bias on climate change. During a 6-month period, four out of five network news reports failed to acknowledge any dissenting views about global warming, according to a Business and Media Institute study.

The networks should tell Americans the truth, rather than hide the facts.

FINANCIAL REGULATORY REFORM

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

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, last fall our economy began a tailspin into the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. For years, greed and irresponsibility was allowed to run wild.

Now, we find ourselves beginning to climb out of this hole.

This week, we will consider a comprehensive financial package that is loud and clear: No more, and I state, no more, no more will we allow financial institutions to engage in abusive behavior with other people's money. No more will we allow corporate executives to receive cash bonuses for failed investments. No more will we let consumer protection take a back seat to the bottom line of Bank of America or Citibank. The age of taxpayer funded bailouts is over.

Last fall, Americans lost faith in this country's ability to regulate corporate greed. This week, we have a chance to deliver reform Americans demand. We cannot let them down.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

SERVICE ACADEMY APPLICATIONS

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, all too often we come to this floor to talk about problems in the country. Today, however, I want to mention some good news about the future of America and the next generation of patriotic men and women.

In my district this year, applications to the military service academies increased by 30 percent. Today's youth, more than ever, are looking to serve this country. And our academies are among the finest universities in the world.

While it may seem counterintuitive that a nation at war would see increased interest in military service, I think that we have remarkable young people who value the sacrifices made by previous generations. They know the value of freedom and liberty and are willing to defend these precious gifts. They're willing to serve a cause greater than themselves.

We just celebrated Thanksgiving, and I believe we need to be thankful for men and women who are eager to wear the uniform and become leaders in our military services.

WE'RE NOT DOING ENOUGH

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

Mr. TEAGUE. Madam Speaker, Congressional Quarterly recently reported that more American military personnel have taken their own lives in 2009 than have been killed in either the Afghanistan or Iraq wars this year, with 334 members of the military service committing suicide. This staggering number means one thing. We're not doing enough.

We're not doing enough to provide adequate mental health care for our returning servicemembers. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2009 was