

lives of these families threatened. Yet all of this devastation and upheaval could have been prevented if the National Park Service had not blatantly ignored key information.

The National Weather Service informed the Park Service hours before a controlled burn was to begin that weather conditions were actually a blueprint for spreading a fire. But in spite of this warning, the fire was started, anyway.

Our heartfelt sympathies go out to all those families who have lost everything as a result of this man-made disaster and our deepest appreciation goes out to the firefighters now risking their lives battling a wildfire which should never have occurred.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the negligence and incompetence of the National Park Service, an agency supposed to be responsible for protecting our national land.

FEDERAL RESERVE RATE INCREASE TARGETS WORKING FAMILIES

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. The economic pundits only question how much of an interest rate increase the Fed will do today. They miss the basic question. Why? Core inflation is about 2 percent, less than it was a year ago.

Federal Chief Greenspan spent another sleepless night last night, not because he is worried about the damage the rate increase is going to do to working families, everyone who has to borrow money to buy a house, buy a car and finance major purchases. They will pay billions to finance his crusade. No, he had a sleepless night because he kept looking under the bed and in the closet for the chimera of inflation that does not exist.

What is the real agenda? If it is irrational exuberance, raise the margin rates on Wall Street. But maybe the real agenda is that he wants to drive up unemployment and drive down wages. God forbid American workers should get a wage increase. That is the real agenda of the Federal Reserve. It is targeted at the working families of America.

OBSCENITY LAW ENFORCEMENT

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, 80 percent of the American people say they want obscenity laws vigorously enforced. That same 80 percent do not believe the Government is doing its job, and they are right. Between 1992 and 1998, prosecutions for violations of Federal obscenity laws dropped 86 percent. A leading distributor of pornographic videos told TV Guide that the President was, and I quote, on our team. He said,

"It's not that Clinton has been outwardly supportive of the adult industry but rather that he hasn't tried to quash it the way Republicans did back in the 1980s."

Even the public airwaves are not safe anymore. Sexual material on TV was more than three times as frequent in 1999 as it was in 1989. Foul language was more than five times as high. But the FCC has not collected a single fine or forfeiture or refused to renew a license due to broadcast indecency in 15 years.

Our children deserve better protection. The Justice Department and the President need to start enforcing the law on obscenity.

MILLION MOM MARCH

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I spent last Sunday with hundreds of thousands of American moms on the Mall who had come to ask Congress to help protect their families from gun violence. And it was hard. It was hard to listen to mom after mom tell their stories of the loss of their children. But the reason it was hard was not just the heartache. The really hard part for me was to realize that 300 feet away from these hundreds of thousands of moms was the U.S. Capitol building, the place where we are charged to help American families, where this year the U.S. Congress has done nothing, nothing, nothing to help these families be protected from gun violence.

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There is no protection with trigger locks, no closing of the gun show loophole. While this torrent of gun violence sweeps across us, the U.S. Congress does nothing. If this Congress refuses to act, may the heavens have mercy on us, because this November these mothers will not.

BIPARTISAN SUPPORT OF GUN PROPOSALS NEEDED

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to listen to the 1 minutes today, and I was wondering if the previous speaker happened to mention how his vote was on the bill that we had on the floor that actually did require trigger locks, that did close the loopholes at gun shows, and did put a ban on certain kinds of assault weapon clips?

We had that vote. Interestingly, the Democrats voted against it. Why did they vote against it? Because the loophole that was being closed in the gun show was not great enough for them, and it is odd, because it was actually offered by a fellow Democrat.

Now, that motion was something that I think a lot of Members of Congress would support. But, unfortunately, and it pains me, and I hope some of this was conveyed to some of these mothers, that the Democrats fought it. They had a shot at trigger locks, they had it in their hand to ban certain clips, and, of course, to close the loopholes on gun shows, but they voted no.

We might get another chance. I hope this time the Democrats put their rhetoric in front of their politics and put philosophy in front of politics and try to do the right thing.

SENIORS DESERVE CHOICE ON PRESCRIPTION DRUG NEEDS

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, anyone developing a health plan these days would not think of omitting prescription drugs as a benefit, yet Medicare does. However, despite this lack of coverage in Medicare, fully two-thirds of America's 39 million seniors currently have prescription drug coverage, so any new plan must be voluntary and not force seniors out of their current plans.

Seniors deserve the flexibility to determine what type of drug coverage they want and need. A one-size-fits-all program will not work.

One thing that is crystal clear to me is that seniors should not have to choose between putting food on the table and buying their medicine. A senior's choice should be the plan that best meets their prescription drug needs.

FIXING THE JUNK E-MAIL PROBLEM

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

Mr. GARY MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call on this House to pass legislation to fix the unsolicited commercial e-mail problem, referred to as "spam," that is harming the Internet.

Millions of unsolicited commercial e-mails, which contain advertisements for pornography, dubious products or get-rich-quick schemes are clogging up the computers of individuals, business systems and the entire information superhighway.

The receiver pays for e-mail advertisements. Junk e-mail is like postage-due marketing, or a telemarketer calling your cell phone, or receiving a bill at the end of the month for all the junk mail you have received.

The spam problem is increasing because there is an incentive for shady marketers to send as many advertisements as possible. After all, they do not spend more for sending one million

than for sending one. We need to fix this skewed incentive.

Mr. Speaker, I want to especially thank the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN), the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BLILEY) for their dedication and hard work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back all the unsolicited invasive pornographic e-mail messages that invade your home and that we are forced to pay for.

THE RISK OF DOING NOTHING TO SAVE SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Governor of Texas came out with a proposal that we have got to do something on Social Security to save it. He suggested that some of the tax that American workers pay in should end up in their own name invested to bring in more returns to Social Security and to those individuals when they retire.

I think that when AL GORE suggests that it is risky to invest any of that money in indexed funds, or in 401(k) type funds or, for government workers, the Thrift Savings Account funds, where their performance has averaged a very high positive return, we should also note that there has never been a 12-year period in the history of this country where indexed stocks did not have a positive return. In fact, according to Mr. Jeremy Siegel, there has been a positive return of at least 1 percent for any 12-year period, even during the worst of times, and over 70 years there has been an average return of 7.5 percent.

Some suggest that it's risky to have real investments.

What is really risky is not doing anything and spending Social Security trust fund money on other government programs.

HEALTH PREMIUMS AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS SHOULD BE TAX DEDUCTIBLE ITEMS

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, today I plan to introduce a bill to allow health insurance premiums and unreimbursed prescription drug expense to be tax deductible. Under current law, employers can write off the cost of health care coverage purchased for their employees. Why cannot individuals also be allowed the same opportunity to write off premiums and unreimbursed prescription drug expenses?

The current Tax Code sets the threshold at 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income before an individual can

write off their medical expenses. This does not seem right to me. Currently in order to claim health care expenses, an individual must file an itemized tax return.

I believe that all taxpayers should be allowed to deduct these out-of-pocket expenses, and we need to include a place where this deduction could be taken on the short form, such as a 1040EZ and 1040A. My bill also applies to the self-employed, because individuals who are self-employed will not be eligible for a 100 percent write-off until the year 2003.

This type of relief is long overdue. Allowing individuals to write off certain costly health care expenses they may incur would be a tremendous benefit to them.

The National Taxpayers Union supports my bill. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor my bill.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules.

INTERNET ACCESS CHARGE PROHIBITION ACT OF 2000

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1291) to prohibit the imposition of access charges on Internet service providers, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1291

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Internet Access Charge Prohibition Act of 2000".

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION OF CHARGES ON PROVIDERS OF INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE.

Section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(1) PROHIBITION OF CHARGES ON INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection (b)(4) or (d) or any other provision of this title, the Commission shall not impose on any provider of Internet access service (as such term is defined in section 231(e)) any contribution for the support of universal service that is based on a measure of the time that telecommunications services are used in the provision of such Internet access service.

"(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall preclude the Commission from imposing access charges on the providers of Internet telephone services, irrespective of the type of customer premises equipment used in connection with such services."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1291.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes in support of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1291, the Internet Access Charge Protection Act of 2000, and I urge my colleagues today to show their support for this important pro-consumer legislation.

A number of Members have made this floor vote possible, and I would like to begin by noting their contributions. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) is the author of this most important legislation. He has identified the significance of this issue and has worked hard with the committee to ensure that the bill is balanced and represents a continued contribution to the public interest.

Let me also commend the leadership of the House, who showed an early and critical interest in bringing this legislation to the floor today. Finally, as always, let me note the work of the bipartisan leadership of our Committee on Commerce, its chairman, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BLILEY) and the ranking minority member, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), both of whom always contribute to the bipartisan spirit by which we bring legislation important to the Nation on telecommunication matters to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, this bill represents the best interests of this body. No matter how complex an issue is and no matter how controversial it may be, this institution can find a way to craft a balanced bill which serves the interests of consumers and of the technologies.

Over the years, the Committee on Commerce has labored hard to provide for universal access to the Nation's telephone network. While competition and innovation have been the hallmark of telecommunications policy, so too has universal service. We have balanced these goals over the decades, and we will do so again today with this legislation that is before us.

More to the point, H.R. 1291 will preclude the Federal Communications Commission from imposing permanent charges on Internet service providers when those charges are intended for the support of universal service. At the same time, it is important to note that this bill will permit the Committee on Commerce and the FCC to continue to