

EQUITY AND RELIEF NEEDED IN
PRESCRIPTION PRICE MAZE

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a letter, Mr. Speaker, from one of my constituents. It says, "Thank you for being a supporter in the right to correct the disparity in prescription medication as it pertains to seniors in this country. Below is a chart showing medicines my wife and I take on a daily basis."

They show that Mr. And Mrs. Olsen combined spend \$5,556 a year on their medication. Mrs. Olsen takes seven; Mr. Olsen takes three every single day.

It says, "How long can a person on a fixed income carry this financial burden? We do not expect these medicines to be given to us free; we expect to pay our fair share. We certainly know that they help us have an extended and quality life. Please help us find some equity and relief in this whole prescription price maze. May we hear from you soon, thank you."

Well, we could do something soon. I look at Zoloft, a prescription Mr. Olsen takes and he pays \$763 a year for that. He could go to Canada and get that for 68 percent less. He could go to Canada and get it less for the exact same drug, same package, same everything.

Mr. Speaker, we can reimport drugs and lower the cost.

RELEASE STRATEGIC PETROLEUM
RESERVE

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

Mr. SHERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, we are in a full blown energy crisis. Due to the lack of a coherent national energy policy, we are facing a winter which many in the Northeast will be forced to choose between heating their homes and buying food. This is a terrible dilemma that we saw in the Northeast last winter, and we are about to do it once again.

The United States' dependence on foreign oil has resulted in record-high crude oil prices, resulting in adverse economic impacts on our Nation's farmers, independent truck drivers, small business owners, and homeowners.

I have a letter here from Bernie Lapara at Lapara Oil in Carbondale, Pennsylvania, detailing the hardships faced by his customers.

Mr. Speaker, the solution is simple. We need more production and supply, but right now we could ease the impact by drawing down on the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to get over this winter heating oil crisis in the Northeast.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the President, please act now. Release the reserve for the sake of America's families and business people.

1015

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to pass legislation that would give a real prescription medicine benefit to our Nation's seniors. The Republican plan failed to meet the real problems that face our Nation's seniors. Our seniors have been receiving a bad deal when it comes to prescription medicine. Now is the time to give our seniors a good deal, a better deal, a fair deal.

The American people need and want a meaningful benefit that is voluntary, universal, affordable and accessible to all of our seniors. There is no room here to play partisan politics. No senior, but no senior should have to choose between putting food on the table and getting his or her heart medicine. This is not just, this is not right, and this is not fair.

My Republican brothers and sisters, this is our moral obligation, to do what is right.

SUPPORT PASSAGE OF THE DATA
ACT

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

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask for bipartisan support for the Data Act, and let me tell my colleagues why.

Over 100 million Americans today are on line using the Internet. Seven Americans go on line every second for the first time. There is great opportunity, whether in e-commerce or the technology sector, for millions of Americans. But millions of Americans are not participating, and that is called the digital divide.

I am pleased the private sector has stepped forward to address the so-called digital divide, because educators tell us they notice a difference in the classroom between children who have a computer at home and those who do not in their being able to do their homework and compete in the class. Ford, Intel, Delta and American Airlines have announced plans to provide 600,000 families computers and Internet access.

Think about that. The janitor, the laborer, the assembly line worker, the baggage handler, their children having computers and Internet access just like the CEO's kids. That is a great opportunity. But here is the hitch. The IRS wants to tax it. That is right, the IRS wants to tax those workers who accept those computers. For a worker making \$27,000 a year that is \$200 in taxes they would have to pay.

We have a solution, the Data Act, legislation making sure that these employer-provided computers and Inter-

net access are tax exempt for the workers. It is called the Data Act. I would ask for bipartisan support. Please join as a cosponsor and help us pass the Data Act.

SUPPORT REIMPORTATION
LEGISLATION

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago, in October of 1998, I released in my district the first study comparing the prices of prescription drugs in the United States to prices in Mexico and Canada. In that study we found that Mainers pay 72 percent more than Canadians and 102 percent more than Mexicans for the same drugs from the same U.S. manufacturers in the same quantities.

For 2 years, the Democrats here have been fighting for a prescription drug benefit, fighting for a discount for seniors. But today I rise to ask for support for legislation that would allow pharmacists to buy prescription drugs in other countries and bring them and sell them here. That would mean a substantial discount for our seniors.

We need to reduce prescription drug prices for seniors in this country. Seniors cannot wait until the next Congress to get relief from price gouging by the pharmaceutical industry. I urge my Republican colleagues to act now.

CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION
SHOULD STICK TO THE FACTS;
NOT MAKE UP STORIES

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, in 1992, then Governor Lawton Childs ran some negative ads about Jed Bush, saying that if elected governor, a Republican candidate would take away Social Security. It was a lie, but it was meant to scare people.

Recently, in Tallahassee, Florida, the Vice President went on to say that his mother-in-law and dog took the same drug and the dog was getting a better break. He lied. He made a story up, trying to confuse the voters.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SUNUNU). The gentleman will suspend.

The Chair will remind the Member that although remarks in a debate may level criticisms against the policies of the President and Vice President or against the nominated candidates for the offices of Vice President or President, remarks in debate should avoid personality and, therefore, should not include personal accusation or characterizations.

The gentleman may continue in order.

Mr. FOLEY. I thank the Speaker. I just suggest that the candidates for office use facts, not fiction; that they

tell the voters the truth and not make up stories about imaginary drugs being taken by their dog or mother-in-law.

I think the senior citizens of America deserve the truth and, regrettably, they do not get it, because they have to get made-up stories about drugs being taken by Fido, the dog, and the mother-in-law. I think the mother-in-law must be embarrassed today because her drug formulary has now been released to the public, despite the Vice President's insistence that we have privacy in medical records.

My colleagues, it is serious. People need prescription drugs. They need it in Florida; they need it now. But they certainly do not need conjured-up stories by the candidates for office proclaiming to know the facts about their own medical histories and lying to the American public.

SENIORS DESERVE EQUAL TREATMENT BY PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, today only the manufacturer of a drug can import a drug into the United States. Pharmaceutical companies have unfairly used this regulation to control prescription drug distribution at the expense of seniors.

Seniors know that people in other countries pay 20 to 50 percent less for their medications. Consider this: Zantac, made by GlaxoWellcome in the United Kingdom is marked up by 58 percent in the United States. Our seniors deserve better. They deserve the same medication at the same price. No one should have to choose between food and vital medications.

The Republican leadership should stop supporting the pharmaceutical industry's race for profit at the expense of seniors' financial security. They should stop their rhetoric and false issues and talk about the real issue, which is the cost of prescription drugs. We have the opportunity to support the safe reimportation of prescription drugs. We should do it, and we should do it immediately while we are still in this session of Congress.

Let me tell my colleagues that the Republican House leadership does not want to cover seniors through Medicare, and they do not want to bring the cost down through the reimportation of prescription drugs.

GET RID OF FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE AT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, back home in Colorado, school is just getting underway. Three of those kids in

public schools are my own, and I care about education. And I, like most parents, want the U.S. Department of Education to get the money that it spends to the classroom. I do not want to see the Department waste any more on bureaucracy and red tape, and I am tired of the theft, the fraud, and the abuse that goes on at the Department of Education that robs children of the precious resources they need.

Mr. Speaker, we spend \$40 million a year on accountants and overseers and auditors to make sure that the money the Department gets does get to the children and the classroom. But it was a car dealer in Hyattsville, Maryland, that found the latest fraud of Department employees defrauding \$2 million of the U.S. Department of Education into personal bank accounts. Mr. Speaker, let us get money to the classroom.

Let us get rid of the waste, fraud, and abuse at the U.S. Department of Education. Let us put children before crime and bureaucracy.

HCFA'S BAD ADVICE TO SENIOR CITIZENS IN HOUSTON

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, during the August district work period, I sponsored a senior citizens forum with invitations to representatives from the Social Security Administration and the Health Care Financing Administration, and they participated.

Seniors do want a prescription drug benefit as part of Medicare, but Houston seniors are worried because, at the end of December, they will be losing our biggest HMO provider for Medicare, NYLCare-65, one of our largest. They have given notice that they are not going to serve the Houston market. HCFA advised the over 100 seniors in attendance, some of whom are currently enrolled in NYLCare-65, not to worry, not to do anything until after October 1. That way they would have 3 months to decide where they would go before the end of the year because the contract lasted until December 31. This included enrolling in the one sole remaining HMO in the Houston market, Secure Horizons.

Yesterday, I found out that HCFA has granted a temporary capacity waiver to Secure Horizons, which basically freezes their enrollments effective October 1 for 120 days to February 1. This temporary capacity waiver will keep seniors from being able to have the opportunity to select the one remaining HMO. HCFA should have notified us; and they gave my constituents false information in August.

REPUBLICANS WANT TO PAY DOWN THE DEBT

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, would we go on a huge credit card spending spree if we knew that once the bill came we would leave it to our children; that they would be responsible for paying it off? Of course not. Most responsible Americans work hard to make sure they can give their kids a good life. They want to leave their children something when they die. Most responsible Americans would never dream of leaving their children a pile of debt for their inheritance.

That is exactly what the Federal Government has been doing for years. For 40 years, Democrats here in Washington spent money on bigger and bigger government and created a bigger and bigger debt. They knew our children would be the ones saddled with the bill, but they just kept spending. That was wrong.

Republicans are putting an end to that kind of spending spree and that kind of spend now and pay later mentality. That is why we want to pay down the debt. We want to pay off those bills so our children do not have to.

Let us work together to make sure our legacy to our children is a sound economy, lower taxes, safe neighborhoods and quality schools, instead of decades worth of bad debt.

LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

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

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues who have yet to do so to join almost 80 of my colleagues and myself in sending a bipartisan letter to the appropriators. That letter would support the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program.

As my colleagues have probably seen, news accounts have highlighted funding shortfalls in the National Health Service Corps. The Corps recruits health care professionals to work in medically underserved communities. Regardless of one's particular disposition concerning how to improve health care, it is widely accepted that this important program provides underserved Americans with vital health care.

We should not allow the current disagreement on health care matters to prevent us from properly funding this program and ensuring that not only the current participants can continue to provide this care but that we can attract enough clinicians to meet all the needs of these communities.

The \$49 million required to cover existing shortfalls is a fair price to pay to help our doctors and nurses help our neediest constituents. Let us take this opportunity to address this urgent need. If my colleagues have not already done so, I urge them to join us in this important effort.