

PROMOTE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

(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, 735,000 jobs; 735,000. That is the estimate of the number of jobs that will be created if the President gets to sign a comprehensive energy bill that reduces our dependence on foreign sources of oil.

This body has done its part. Last August the Republican-led House with the support of the President passed the most comprehensive energy package this country has seen in decades.

Unfortunately, our friends on the other side of the Capitol see things a little differently. They voted to ignore working families and some of their own supporters, and instead keep the status quo when it comes to America's dependence on foreign countries for our energy needs. That is too bad because most of our foreign oil comes from the Middle East, which is the least stable part of the world. This is the same Middle East which is the home to thousands of al Qaeda operatives, and this is the same Middle East that houses Saddam Hussein and his tyrannical dictatorship.

Let us put that number, 735,000, in perspective. That number would equal one job for every person in the district I represent. I do not know about the other side of the aisle, but when I can vote to create one job for every citizen in my district, I will not hesitate to do so.

HOME OWNERSHIP MONTH

(Mrs. JONES of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, as many Members know, June is Home Ownership Month. This past weekend in the great city of Cleveland in the 11th Congressional District of Ohio, we hosted a housing summit. It is wonderful that more than 500 people came out to the housing summit. We had the opportunity to have people get free credit reports. More than 275 people got free credit reports, and we were able to counsel them.

Mr. Speaker, home ownership is a wonderful opportunity. It is an American dream, and this weekend in the 11th Congressional District in Ohio in conjunction with the Congressional Black Caucus Housing Summit, we were able to help Americans realize that dream, for which I am very thankful.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, last night in the Committee on Ways

and Means we marked up the biggest change in Medicare in 37 years. It was a good change. What we did in the Committee on Ways and Means last night was provide a comprehensive prescription drug benefit for seniors. We recognize on both sides of the aisle that seniors have problems paying for their medicines.

Medicare is an outdated program. It was written in 1965, and in 2002 it is basically giving seniors 1965 health care. What we have accomplished in this committee and what we are about to accomplish in this Congress is to give seniors a prescription drug benefit that gives them the choice of plans, comprehensive benefits, catastrophic stop-loss coverage, a discount in the price of their drugs, and coverage from dollar one.

This is important, Mr. Speaker, because we also recognize the need that low income seniors who cannot afford deductibles and premiums have a fully subsidized prescription drug benefit. When the other side gnashes their teeth, just remember this: We are acting, we are moving, and we are providing a comprehensive prescription drug benefit for all seniors on Medicare.

SAFE RETURN OF MIRANDA GADDIS AND ASHLEY POND

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

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House today for the fourth time to again plead for the safe return of two missing girls from my district, Miranda Gaddis and Ashley Pond.

Those who saw the May 23 People magazine cover story on the plight of these girls surely understand the pain and anguish the families of the girls are facing, and also realize that Oregon City, as any small community would be, has been changed drastically by the tragedy.

Unfortunately, these types of abductions are not as rare as we would like. While the vast majority of missing children are due to those who have gotten lost, run away, or been abducted by a parent embroiled in a custody battle, roughly 4,400 are taken each year by nonfamily members who often release them a short time later.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children says parents should urge children to remember three steps: No, go, and tell.

They should know it is okay to resist adults and make noise. They should run away if they can; and if they break loose, they can help identify their abductors by remembering details and telling a trusted adult.

Mr. Speaker, we need to protect America's children; and if anyone has any information about Miranda and Ashley, please contact the local FBI office.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

(Mrs. MINK of Hawaii asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Ways and Means has reported out a very modest bill to deal with the issue of prescription drugs. All of us have spoken to senior citizens, gone to their meetings. The issue is not how much can the Congress provide in Medicare coverage, and I must say that the plan that we are going to be debating provides very modest coverage. It does almost nothing until there is \$4,500 worth of bills to pay. The real issue for seniors is that the price of prescription drugs has gone completely out of hand.

Unless Congress deals with that issue, no matter how much coverage we give under Medicare, the problem is not solved. The issue is what are we going to do about the skyrocketing costs of these drugs.

Tonight's celebration that the Republicans are all going to is typical of the problem. They are in bed with the pharmaceutical companies. Until we break apart this coalition, the seniors are going to suffer and have to pay more and more. Instead of taking one pill a day, they take one pill every 2 days.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

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

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, not a day goes by without my hearing from a senior who is struggling to pay for prescription drugs. Recently a senior in the town of Westminster, Colorado, told me how she has to visit the food bank once a week so she can afford her prescription drugs. Another told me how she plays her own version of the lottery. She puts all of her bills in a fish bowl, draws one bill, and the one she draws is the one she puts off paying so she can afford to take the drugs that the doctor tells her she needs.

Unfortunately, these women are not alone. Medicare only covers two-thirds of its enrollees. No senior should be faced with a choice of paying for food, paying the electrical bill, or buying critical lifesaving medicines. We have an obligation to our Nation's seniors to provide them with the lifesaving drugs that they need and deserve.

Mr. Speaker, when we take up, and we need to take up a prescription drug bill next week, we must provide a Medicare drug benefit that is affordable and dependable, without gaps or gimmicks in coverage. Members of Congress, government employees, employees of major corporations have this kind of coverage today. It is time our seniors did, too.