

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH INSURANCE PROMOTION ACT

HON. MAX SANDLIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, with nearly 44 million Americans lacking basic health care coverage, it is time to take action. Health care is a basic necessity—not a luxury—for all Americans.

The House Republicans claim to be concerned about the uninsured, but actions speak louder than words. Consider what they've passed this year. Their budget resolution decimates Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). The Republican budget requires a \$2.2 billion cut in Medicaid funding, which will compromise the well-being of over 500 million children, their parents, seniors, and disabled individuals. This comes at a time when States are already in fiscal crisis, resulting in nearly every State cutting their own Medicaid program by slashing eligibility, cutting benefits, raising co-payments and reducing provider payments.

Republicans have also tried to allow \$1 billion in SCHIP funding to expire on September 30, despite the critical need to provide health care coverage to needy children. Earlier Federal and State cuts to Medicaid and SCHIP have already caused irreparable harm to families in Texas. Since SCHIP cuts in Texas took effect last September 1, 2003, enrollment for kids has dropped from over 507,000 children to 377,051. For those children fortunate enough to retain some health coverage, they have had to endure the loss of all dental, vision, and hospice benefits.

How is this acceptable? How can we tolerate cuts that will compound this problem?

Mr. Speaker, it is a commonly held misconception that people without health insurance are people who don't work. Nationwide, more than eight in ten of the nearly 44 million uninsured persons in 2003 lived in families where the head of the family worked. In fact, in most States today, a significant portion of the workforce is without insurance.

Too many hard-working, tax-paying Americans lack even the most basic health insurance coverage. It is time to move beyond the rhetoric and take action.

My home State of Texas actually leads the nation with 27 percent of our employed or self-employed workers without health insurance. This can be partially attributed to the fact that many of those uninsured are working in small businesses. In 2000 more than 17 percent of the labor force in Texas worked for businesses with 20 or fewer employees. The prohibitive expense of health insurance is a barrier to most small employers offering health coverage. The United States Chamber of Commerce recently estimated that it costs small businesses approximately \$9,000 a year to provide health insurance for each employee.

Mr. Speaker, join with 87 of my colleagues today in offering legislation that will provide immediate, concrete relief by introducing the Small Business Health Insurance Promotion Act today. This legislation will help secure affordable coverage for millions of self-insured individuals and employees of small businesses.

As an incentive to provide coverage, the Small Business Health Insurance Promotion Act would make small businesses or self-employed individuals eligible to receive a 50 percent tax credit for four years to defray the cost of health insurance. The bill would also authorize funding to create state and national multi-insurer pools to provide comprehensive and affordable health insurance choices to small employers and the self-employed.

To receive the tax credit, participating employers must offer all of their employees coverage through either the qualified state or national health insurance pools. These purchasing pools would ensure comprehensive and affordable health insurance. Participants would receive a choice of plans virtually identical to those available to Members of Congress and other Federal employees.

I also join my fellow democratic colleagues today in introducing the FamilyCare Act and the Medicare Early Access Act. The former builds upon the Medicaid and SCHIP programs by providing new funding to cover working parents. This legislation is expected to cover over 7.5 million low-income parents as well as improve coverage of children. The Medicare Early Access Act addresses the serious problem faced by the many retirees who lose or do not have health coverage in retirement but are not yet eligible for Medicare. This legislation will allow uninsured people between the ages of 55 and 64 to purchase Medicare. Enrollees will be given a 75 percent refundable, advanceable tax credit which will make it affordable. This legislation could result in coverage of 3.5 million previously uninsured people.

There are grave consequences for families without health insurance. People without coverage are less likely to get important preventive care and therefore are concomitantly more likely to suffer from serious health complications as problems go untreated. It also harms our economy. Sick people are not productive people. It makes sense to fortify the health of our nation.

The Small Business Health Insurance Promotion Act, FamilyCare Act and Medicare Early Access Act that we are introducing today offer real solutions to real problems. Together these initiatives could provide health coverage to more than 1/2 of the 44 million uninsured Americans. They represent a great step in the right direction that I am proud to be a part of.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF PEACE OFFICERS MEMORIAL DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 2004

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 622, supporting the goals and ideals of Peace Officers Memorial Day and urge my colleagues to support its adoption.

Pursuant to a joint resolution approved October 1, 1962, Congress authorized and requested the President to designate May 15 of each year as "Peace Officers Memorial Day" and the week in which it falls as "Police Week."

In this regard, I applaud my colleagues JOEL HEFLEY, TOM DAVIS, HENRY WAXMAN and BART STUPAK, a former Peace Officer himself, for sponsoring H. Res. 622 to further encourage the observance of a day of remembrance for the more than, 1600 Federal, State, and local peace officers who were killed or disabled in the line of duty in past 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, Police Memorial Day 2004 will be a particularly sad one for my constituents in the Virgin Islands and me because of the passing of Virgin Police Officer Cuthbert Chapman who was shot several times on April 17 as he tried to stop a robbery.

Officer Chapman, also known as "Chappy," "Kimba" and "Cutty," was remembered as a soft-spoken and kind-hearted friend who was always willing to give a helping hand. He was a 12-year veteran on the force. He joined the police department on June 15, 1992, and was assigned to the Bicycle Patrol Unit at Wilbur Francis Command in Frederiksted. Chapman also served in various units and bureaus in the department.

As we remember and pay tribute to Officer Chapman, I must also mention and recognize some of the other Peace Officers, including Randy Stevens, Steven Hodge, Richard Callwood, Dexter Mardenborough, Wilbur Francis, Allen William, and Patrick Sweeney, who lost their lives striving to keep the streets and communities of the Virgin Islands safe.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting that we acknowledge and commend the courage and dedication shown by all Peace Officers who have given their lives for their fellow citizens. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

FEDERAL FUNDING FOR POLICE OFFICERS

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak today regarding my grave concerns about funding for our Nation's police, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

This week is National Police Week—a time we set aside to remember and honor the brave men and women protecting our streets and communities.

I would like to note that the names of nine New York police officers who are being added to National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial at a candlelight vigil on Thursday, May 13, 2004. These police officers fell as far back as 1906 and as recently as last year. They are:

1. Rodney J. Andrews, Detective, New York City, New York.
2. Michael F. Brophy, Sergeant, City of Utica, New York.
3. James Ivan Broughton, Police Officer, Middletown, New York.
4. Jeffry Todd Edelson, Sergeant, New York State Police.
5. Neil A. Forster, Police Officer, New York City, New York.
6. James Verneuil Nemorin, Detective, New York City, New York.
7. Fred Preston, Police Officer, Patchogue, New York.
8. Glenn Matthew Searles, Deputy Sheriff, Onondaga County, New York.
9. George A. Stillwell, Deputy Sheriff, Suffolk County, New York.

We here in Congress do many things to honor our police officers. Just this term, I authored legislation to name a Post Office in my district for Edward O'Grady, Waverly Brown and Peter Paige. Twenty-three years ago an armed gang attempted to rob a Brinks Armored Truck in the middle of the day at a crowded mall and these three brave souls fell in the line of duty. But, Congress has another important job to do when honoring our "finest." We have a responsibility to provide funding to help our police—and in fact all first responders—do their jobs.

The President shares this responsibility. Yet, his budget for fiscal year 2005 is woefully inadequate. A few simple figures:

Provides only \$97 million for COPS, a \$659 million cut below the 2004 enacted level—and in FY04 COPS was funded at \$748 million;

Totally eliminates the Byrne formula and discretionary grants, yet in FY04 formula grants were funded at \$495 million and discretionary grants were funded at \$208 million; and

Also it eliminates Local Law Enforcement Block Grant grants, which were funded at \$223 million in FY04.

As a New Yorker who was watching from my home in the Bronx on September 11—watching as the greatest attack on U.S. civilians was ever undertaken—I am greatly disappointed by the President's poor request. As a New Yorker who watched the greatest act of heroism I can remember—hundreds of firefighters and police officers running into the World Trade Center as they burned, I am saddened by the President's weak request. As a New Yorker who watched in abject horror as the towers fell, killing thousands, including hundreds of firefighters and police, I am angered by the President's insufficient request.

Later, I learned that a police helicopter was circling the Trade Center site and could tell the second tower would soon fall. Yet, the police could not warn the firefighters inside because they used a different radio system. I pledged to myself and my constituents that I would do everything I could to make sure this never happened again. Thus, I joined my colleagues, Mr. FOSSELLA and Mr. STUPAK, in au-

thoring legislation to provide funding to our states and localities to purchase interoperable radio equipment. H.R. 3370, the Public Safety Interoperability Implementation Act would use proceeds from spectrum auctions to help our police and firefighters and EMS personnel.

I urge my other colleagues to join us in this effort.

I also urge my colleagues to join me and the other speakers here tonight in fighting for the funding needed to make our districts safer.

IN RECOGNITION OF REV. DR.
LARRY PICKENS

HON. J. DENNIS HASTERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor our guest chaplain, Rev. Dr. Larry D. Pickens, a well-known pastor in my Congressional district. Currently senior pastor at First United Methodist Church in Elgin, Illinois, Rev. Pickens recently was named top staff executive of the United Methodist Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Affairs. In this role, Rev. Pickens will direct the Methodists' relations with other churches and work to build unity among the denomination's 8.3 million members.

A former pastor in inner-city congregations in Chicago for fifteen years, Rev. Pickens has also served as a delegate to a "people-to-people" seminar on the legal system of South Africa. Within the church, Rev. Pickens has spent the last four years as a member of the Judicial Council, giving him a better understanding of church governance.

Admitted to both the Illinois Bar and the South Carolina Bar, Rev. Pickens holds a J.D. degree from DePaul University College of Law. He also holds degrees from Chicago Theological Seminary, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, and North Park University.

We are honored to have Rev. Pickens with us this morning. His involvement in his community and his new role in seeking unity among all denominations underscores his devotion to doing God's work for the betterment of humanity.

Thank you, Rev. Pickens, for being here this morning to open the United States House of Representatives and for your continued service and dedication.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO SHAWN
MITCHELL

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Shawn Mitchell and thank him for his extraordinary contributions to the State of Colorado as a member of the Colorado General Assembly. As a three-term member of the State House of Representatives, he will be remembered as a legislator with the utmost dedication and talent, and will continue to be known as a leader in the community. As he moves on in his ca-

reer, let it be known that I, along with the people of Colorado, are eternally grateful for all that he has accomplished in his tenure in the Colorado House of Representatives.

One of Colorado's top lawyers, Shawn was elected to serve the people of District 33, representing parts of Adams, Boulder, Broomfield, and Weld Counties in 1998. During this last term he chaired the Information and Technology Committee, and served on the State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee. While serving as a legislator, Shawn has maintained a private law practice in the Denver area, and has previously served as Special Counsel to former Colorado Attorney General Gale Norton, now our Secretary of the Interior. His civic involvement includes serving as president of the Colorado Chapter of the Federalist Society, and three years on the Denver Rocky Mountain News Board of Editorial Contributors.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that State Representative Shawn Mitchell has ceaselessly dedicated his time and efforts to serving his district and the people of Colorado in the Colorado General Assembly. I am honored to bring his hard work and commitment to the attention of this body of Congress and this nation today. Thank you for all your service Shawn, and I wish you and your wife Yvette all the best in your future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING E. ROBERT
STEPHENS

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. E. Robert "Bob" Stephens for volunteering his services for 31 years to the East Norriton Fire Engine Company.

Bob Stephens is a citizen who has dedicated much of his life to helping people. He has done so through his extensive volunteer work at the East Norriton Fire Company. Bob joined the East Norriton Fire Company in 1973 and is still an active member today.

One year after Bob joined the East Norriton Fire Engine Company, he was put on the Drivers List. In 1976, he was promoted to Assistant Chief Engineer and held that position until 1986. Later that same year, Bob was again promoted, this time as Chief Engineer of the East Norriton Fire Engine Company. In 1980, eight years after he joined the East Norriton Fire Engine Company, Bob was awarded Life Membership.

During his service, Bob made many significant contributions to the Fire Company and to the community. Bob attended as many county and state fire schools as he could in order to learn as much as possible about his volunteer work. As a ranking member of the Fire Company, Bob served on many different committees where he was able to use the expertise gained in the fire schools to better the Fire Company in which he volunteered. Bob actively served on the banquet, building, truck, and uniform committees and later became a member of the East Norriton Fire Engine Company's Board of Trustees.

Bob has also been the recipient of numerous awards from the East Norriton Fire Engine Company. Bob was the three-time recipient of