

LOWERING THE NUMBER OF THE UNINSURED

(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, I hesitate to disagree with my fellow representative; but, Mr. Speaker, the President's program and the House program this week is going to find a solution for the uninsured for health care. Small businesses are dropping health plans because they cannot afford it.

This week, the House is going to take up the Small Business Health Fairness Act, and it will allow small businesses that would otherwise be unable to afford health insurance to join together to form association health plans which, by the way, is one of those things that we have had out there for a long time and needs to be passed. It will insure more people with quality care at lower rates.

Another important step today will be lowering the cost of health care by putting consumers in the driver's seat through health savings plans. Those plans give more people options when it comes to their health insurance, and they are a great part of lowering the cost of health care and helping to lower the number of uninsured.

Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward in this Congress, and we are going to move forward on these issues today for a better America.

LIVING UP TO THE PROMISE OF EDUCATION FUNDING

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on the Bush administration and this Congress to live up to its promise on education.

Despite the White House's media event this week, the administration's own budget request for next year would cut \$9.4 billion from the President's own No Child Left Behind Act. In the first 3 years under this new law, this administration has shorted America's schools by \$27 billion. That is a pretty poor record and a failure of leadership.

This week, the White House claimed that the States have billions of dollars of unspent Federal education funds, as if there is a stack of money sitting on some bureaucrat's shelf. As the only former State school chief serving in this Congress, I can tell my colleagues that nothing could be farther from the truth. School officials are struggling to fill countless unmet needs for funding, and this administration's failure to provide our needed education funds is a crushing burden.

Democrats have a better way. I have introduced legislation to require full funding for No Child Left Behind. Democrats support school construction

and helping local leaders build new schools, relieve overcrowding, reduce class sizes, and improve security. We must make sure every public school works to educate our children to meet the needs of the 21st century.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, Congress needs to live up to its promises made on education.

WE NEED NATIONAL UNITY

(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, the Democrats are proud of saying, which they say often, that they oppose the war, but support the troops. That is kind of like saying the tank is not empty, but the car is out of gas. It just does not make any sense. How do you support the troops if you are opposed to what they are doing?

Of course, then again, the statements by their party leader said, I voted "yes" before I voted "no" on the supplemental appropriations bill that would have given the troops the armor and the ammunition and the food and the supplies they need, but that is Democrat thinking.

When the statue of Saddam Hussein was being pulled down and celebrated, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) said, well, we could have pulled that statue down for a lot less money. I am sure the U.N. would have gotten around to it eventually through their, what, another resolution? We did 17; maybe one more resolution and the statue would have come on down.

Mr. Speaker, winning a war is not easy, and when you have leading Democrats saying the war is unwinnable, it sends a very bad signal to the troops whom they allege to support. That is not what we need.

Right now what we need is unity, national unity, getting behind the cause, getting behind the soldier in the foxhole. Let us think of him and put politics aside.

PROVIDING HEALTH CARE FOR ALL AMERICANS

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

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, so much is in the news these days, it is hard for us to keep sight of any one thing; but as a great Nation, we ought to be able to do more than one thing at one time. One of the things we ought to be doing is taking care of our people in this country when it comes to delivering to them health care insurance.

We talk every day about how there are 44 million Americans who are uninsured, but what are we actually doing about it?

I often hear from my constituents who say to me, Congressman, if you

had to worry about your health insurance the way we have to worry about our health insurance every single day of the week, if you had to worry about your child the way we have to worry about our children, you would have health insurance for all Americans tomorrow.

Yet, we have Members of Congress who are coming here on the floor and saying that they are for health insurance. They say they are not for government insurance, no, no, they are against that, and yet name me one Member of Congress that does not sign up for the government-paid program in this Congress.

That is the hypocrisy we see in this Congress, not a Congress that is actually interested in the people's health care, but only their own.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE INVESTIGATION OF THE MURDER OF EMMETT TILL

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

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, 2 days ago, the Department of Justice announced that it would be forming a partnership with the State of Mississippi to investigate the 1955 murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till. As I heard the news, two thoughts ran through my mind. On the one hand, as the Member of Congress who introduced a resolution, a bipartisan resolution calling upon the Justice Department to investigate Emmett's murder, I feel a sense of relief. On the other hand, four words come to my mind: it is about time.

Mr. Speaker, many of us regard the murder of Emmett Till and the subsequent sham Jim Crow trial that acquitted Emmett's murderers as a mockery, as a miscarriage of justice, and as the single motivational spark for the civil rights movement. Young Emmett's savage murder and his open funeral casket made international news, and it galvanized African Americans and others interested in the cause of civil rights to take matters into their own hands and to demand basic human rights to which all citizens are entitled.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that now maybe Ms. Till-Mobley and Emmett Till can begin to rest in peace.

GIVE SENIORS THE HEALTH CARE BENEFITS THEY DESERVE

(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, I rise this morning, after having listened to Washington Journal, wherein the head of the Medicare-Medicaid program said, seniors are now, in fact, in a program with this discount drug card where they can pool their resources and get lower prices for their drugs.

If that is what we are doing with the discount drug card, why, in fact, did the legislation itself not allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to seek best prices on prescription drugs for seniors?

I say, as we talk about covering the uninsured this week, we ought to be covering our seniors. They ought to have a prescription drug benefit that gives them one card without all of this complication where they have to ruffle through cards, ruffle through the Internet when they do not even have access to be able to determine what is the best way for them to get their prescription drugs.

Cover seniors. Give them the benefit they have worked for; give them the benefit they deserve.

HEALTHY TROOPS ACT

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

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as I speak today, more than 170,000 of our servicemen and -women are serving in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan.

□ 1030

We are grateful for their service. We owe these brave men and women the best that we have to offer. At a minimum, we owe them what they were promised. I am talking about medical exams before and after we send them into combat.

A 1997 law requires the DOD to perform comprehensive pre- and post-deployment medical examinations on all deployed troops, including National Guard and Reservists. DOD has unilaterally decided to define these exams not as was intended, as a hand's-on examination by a doctor, but as a self-administered survey to determine if a service member is fit for combat or if he or she suffered as a result of war.

It is beyond irresponsible to base the health of our troops on their individual ability to self-diagnose. Therefore, today, I am introducing legislation to require the Department of Defense to comply with the 1997 law and guarantee each of our men and women will receive an actual clinical examination before and after they are deployed.

Today, I request my colleagues to join me and support the Healthy Troops Act. We owe our troops that much.

MEDICARE

(Ms. PRYCE of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, beginning May 3, seniors across the country can take the first steps towards a much-needed prescription drug benefit when they enroll in the new Medicare prescription drug discount card.

The plan gives seniors the power of choice. Seniors will select from a host

of prescription discount drug cards and choose the best option suited to their very own needs. On average, seniors will save 10 to 25 percent on their prescriptions.

Not only that, but choice encourages competition. Private companies will be making their prices available for seniors to compare. This, in turn, will foster new, lower prices in an effort to secure seniors' business. We already see this happening. By giving the seniors the choices they need, we also give them lower prices.

Mr. Speaker, the Medicare prescription drug coverage card is long overdue. I am proud of Republicans for providing a viable solution to America's seniors, and I encourage seniors across the country to take advantage of these added benefits.

EXTEND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, last week President Bush came through my State, the State of Ohio, in a bus trip to argue and defend his economic policies which have inflicted great damage on my State.

We have lost, since President Bush took office, 177,000 manufacturing jobs. One out of every six manufacturing jobs in Ohio has simply disappeared since President Bush took office. We have lost 200 jobs every single day of the Bush administration, and the President's answer is more tax cuts for the rich, hoping it trickles down and creates some jobs. That has not worked.

His other answer is more trade agreements like NAFTA, which frankly have shifted all too many jobs to China and Mexico.

Instead, Congress should extend the unemployment benefits for those workers who are trying to find jobs, 50,000 in Ohio, a million across the country, who are trying to find jobs, who have lost their jobs.

Extend unemployment benefits and pass the Crane-Rangel bipartisan bill which will give incentives to companies that manufacture in this country, rather than to give incentives and tax breaks to the President's biggest contributors, those corporations which shift jobs overseas.

OUTRAGE AND DISAPPOINTMENT OVER CRISIS IN IRAQ

(Ms. LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my outrage and disappointment over the crisis in Iraq.

I must start by condemning, in the strongest possible terms, the brutal decapitation of Nicholas Berg. The act was unconscionable, and I join all of my colleagues in sending my deepest

sympathies to his family and loved ones.

What kind of climate allows for such unbelievable, gruesome acts? What kind of climate are we creating with the abuses at Abu Ghraib?

Secretary Rumsfeld has dismissed the Geneva Convention. That sends the wrong message. That message clearly, however, stuck.

The horrifying photographs of the abuses in Abu Ghraib are symptoms of a much larger failure of leadership.

Earlier this week, President Bush said that Secretary Rumsfeld is doing a superb job. Of course, that is the same President who communicated that the mission in Iraq was accomplished over 12 months and 500 American lives ago.

Nothing is superb about this situation, and little has been accomplished. The buck stops with the Commander in Chief, and so does the responsibility for the disaster we now face.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4279, PROVIDING FOR DISPOSITION OF UNUSED HEALTH BENEFITS IN CAFETERIA PLANS AND FLEXIBLE SPENDING ARRANGEMENTS; H.R. 4280, HELP EFFICIENT, ACCESSIBLE, LOW-COST, TIMELY HEALTHCARE (HEALTH) ACT OF 2004; AND H.R. 4281, SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH FAIRNESS ACT OF 2004

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 638 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 638

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4279) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the disposition of unused health benefits in cafeteria plans and flexible spending arrangements. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; (2) the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by Representative Rangel of New York or his designee, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, and shall be separately debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4280) to improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening