

scheduled for today, Monday, May 16, 2005. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on H.R. 627, designating the "Linda White-Epps" Post Office in Hamden, CT (rollcall No. 171); "yea" on H. Res. 266, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Peace Officers Memorial Day (rollcall No. 172); and "yea" on H.R. 2107, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial and Maintenance Fund Act of 2005 (rollcall No. 173).

UPPER HOUSATONIC VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA ACT

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

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO), chairman of the Committee on Resources, for bringing out today and through this House H.R. 938, legislation that establishes the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area and designates a number of other National Heritage Areas as well.

This program of National Heritage Areas is really a wonderful program. The 29 towns that encompass the Upper Housatonic Valley have worked together, their first selectmen, their historic societies, and a very large group of volunteers to inventory the historic, the economic, and the environmental assets of this area. And truly, in my district as in the others, they are unique areas, uniquely important historically and uniquely endowed environmentally.

By having a structure within which they could work together with the technical experts from the Federal level, they have developed a knowledge that enables them to plan and will enable them to strengthen the economy through thoughtful tourism programs. Truly this is a partnership between the Federal Government and very small local governments that will bless every life in the Upper Housatonic Valley and the other Heritage Areas throughout the country.

IMPORTANT ISSUES NOT BEING ADDRESSED

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, how disappointing that instead of using the first months of this new Congress to address the important issues facing our Nation, we have spent most of our time on issues that cater to special interests.

Instead of helping retirees by strengthening our pension system, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are seeking to dismantle Social Security. They want to take away the safety net, a safety net that seniors depend on, in favor of giving even more money to Wall Street.

Instead of developing a meaningful energy policy to lessen our dependence

on foreign oil, we spend time on the House floor passing an energy bill that will do nothing to relieve rising gas prices, but instead give tax incentives to big oil and gas companies.

The Republican leadership must stop abusing this body and the people we represent. They are doing it for their own self-interests, and it is time the people take this House back. It is the people's House.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES AND THE COST OF HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, for those Members who are going home and having town hall meetings and meeting with constituents, the one issue that comes up with almost every small business, big business, medium-sized businesses, and it comes up with families and school boards, as well as coming up with representatives of State legislatures, it is the cost of health care.

One of the issues we talk a lot about in Minnesota, because we are so close to the Canadian border, is the difference between what we pay for prescription drugs and what people on the other side of the Canadian border pay for the same drugs.

I have in my hands two boxes of Celebrex. We had a hearing last week in the Committee on Government Reform and I held these up and asked: Can anyone tell me which one of these drugs came from another country and which one came from the United States? Well, the answer is you cannot tell because they are exactly the same. Another question, though, about the Celebrex, is which one is safe? Well, according to the FDA, and now according to the company itself, depending upon the condition you may have with your heart and blood, neither one of them may actually be safe.

What I want to talk a little bit about tonight is the differences between what we pay here in the United States and what they pay in Germany for the same drugs. I have a list here, and we have some pharmacies now around the world who, on a regular basis, will send us via e-mail what the pricing is right then for anyone who walks in off the street to buy the drugs.

Here are a few examples. I am going to talk later about the drug Nexium. You can buy that at the Metropolitan Pharmacy in Frankfurt, Germany, for \$60.25. That same drug, same potency, same everything, made in the same

plant, sells at a local pharmacy in Rochester, Minnesota, for \$145.33.

Look at Prevacid. In Germany, it is \$35.22, American. In the United States it is \$146.47. Zocor. This is an interesting drug. You can walk in off the street with a prescription and you can buy it in Germany, 30 tablets, 10 milligrams, for \$23.83. That same drug in Rochester, Minnesota, will be \$85.

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But what I want to talk about is the Germans. Even if we add up 10 of the most commonly prescribed drugs, in Germany you can buy all of those for \$455.57. Those same drugs in the United States would be more than double that at \$1,040.04.

That is bad enough, but what makes it even worse is the Germans are looking at cutting the cost that they paid for prescription drugs. Recently, the German health care system announced that they would not pay for Lipitor. Why not? Well, the ministry decided last year it could no longer cover the high prices of some of the branded drugs because they were deemed to have the same medical efficacy as available generics.

The point is even though they are buying Lipitor considerably cheaper than we buy it here in the United States, they still think it is too much and the manufacturers cannot justify the price.

The other story is from The Washington Post where even the Department of Defense is starting to get it right. They are saying they will not reimburse for Nexium except in rare circumstances. Nexium is the new purple pill, and it came out to replace Prilosec. That is why we have to pay so much for these drugs, because these are blockbuster drugs.

The truth of the matter is by their only filings with the FDA, Nexium is not much more effective than Prilosec. As the Department of Defense says in the article, Nexium is not worth the money. It goes on to say it is pretty dubious to pay \$4 a pill for Nexium when over-the-counter Prilosec is 67 cents.

Mr. Speaker, I think Americans ought to have access to world-class drugs. I think we ought to pay our fair share. I think we ought to be willing to subsidize the starving people in sub-Saharan Africa, but I do not think Americans should have to subsidize the starving Swiss. I do not think Americans ought to be forced to pay the world's highest prices for these drugs. No one can tell the difference. These are the same drugs. They come from the same plants; and yet as Members can see, we are paying many times 50, 60, 70 percent more for the same drugs.

I am asking Members to join in this effort by cosponsoring my Pharmaceutical Market Access bill. We have been working on this for several years. It has passed the House a couple of