

small business create additional jobs. On the top of the list was passage of Association Health Plans.

Three months later, on July 26, 2005, the House passed Association Health Plans with a wide margin of 263-153.

I applaud the Senate for taking up this important debate today, and I urge them to act now to pass Association Health Plans.

MEDICARE PART D ENROLLMENT DEADLINE

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, the May 15 Medicare part D enrollment deadline is now 6 days away; but a significant number of eligible beneficiaries do not even know that. The enrollment deadline is 6 days away, and eligible beneficiaries don't know about the penalty fee they would incur for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, the enrollment deadline is 6 days away, but call centers are still giving eligible beneficiaries inaccurate or incomplete information. This Sunday, sons and daughters should be spending time with their mothers taking them to brunch or showering them with gifts, not trying to navigate a complex Web site or holding onto the phone.

The administration's insistence on this deadline is offensive to millions of Medicare beneficiaries. Many of them are telling me just that, and many are the most vulnerable in our society.

I urge my colleagues to press for extending the deadline for part D enrollment. We owe it to the unenrolled seniors and seniors who are disabled, who need more time to figure out this complex program. We owe it to all beneficiaries so that we can continue fixing the many flaws of the Medicare prescription drug plan.

THE HERO ACT

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1499, the Heroes Earned Retirement Opportunities Act. I introduced this bill after learning our current Tax Code prohibits many of our men and women serving in combat zones from taking advantage of individual retirement accounts.

Most of our troops serving in these combat zones are paid in wages designated as military hazard pay. These wages are not taxed, nor should they be. However, since this compensation is nontaxable, the wages are not eligible for IRA contributions. IRAs are an excellent tool for responsible retirement savings.

Our troops defending America in harm's way should not be excluded from full participation in this impor-

tant investment opportunity because of a glitch in our Tax Code.

The HERO Act will correct this glitch by designating combat hazard pay earned by members of the Armed Forces as eligible for contribution to retirement accounts. This bill has been endorsed by the Reserve Officers Association and the MOAA.

I encourage my colleagues to support this important bill this afternoon and give our troops the opportunity they deserve to save for their future.

MEDICARE PART D DEADLINE

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to call attention to the May 15 deadline for seniors to enroll in the Medicare part D prescription drug plan. The fact is, seniors who are eligible for Medicare part D who do not sign up by May 15 will face a higher monthly premium if they enroll at a later time. This puts a lot of pressure on the seniors.

I had a town hall meeting and lots of seniors came. Most of them knew nothing about how to do it or did not understand it.

But, seniors, as hard as we have tried, we cannot extend this deadline beyond May 15. There are nearly 48,000 residents aged 65 and older in Dallas, Texas. Not that many came to the town hall, but quite a few. I am concerned that they are not getting the message.

Missing May 15 may have expensive consequences. We would like to have a bit more compassion. America's health is about more than just numbers on an insurance company's roll book.

SIX DAYS AWAY

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, 6 days. In just 6 days, that is when the deadline for the Medicare prescription drug program is: May 15.

Thirty million Americans have already signed up. However, there remain other seniors who would benefit from this voluntary program, and they should take these next few days to see if Medicare part D is right for them.

To help facilitate the enrollment process in my district, I have held Medicare seminars to educate seniors on the options available, including two just last Friday. Many have said they are happy with the choices they have, and they are grateful for the time we took to sit down and explain this new program.

Yesterday I also had the chance to visit two pharmacies in my district and speak with the pharmacists and their staffs. This offered a great, behind-the-scenes look at the process these phar-

macists have used to help local seniors understand and utilize this new prescription drug plan.

The general sense is that the kinks have been worked out and most seniors are truly gaining great benefit, better health.

Over the next 6 days, I urge all of my colleagues in Congress to do all that we can to provide seniors whatever assistance they may require to sign up for and navigate their new plan.

MEDICARE PART D AND THE LATINO COMMUNITY

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the Medicare part D plan, as written, in my opinion is bad for Latino seniors. Latinos are less likely to have worked at firms with employer-provided pension plans, tend to work at a lower-paying job resulting in less accumulated savings and smaller Social Security checks. And 62 percent have incomes below 150 percent of the Federal poverty level.

Yet more than 1 million Latino seniors have not yet even enrolled in this program because of cultural, language and economic barriers. That is more than 30 percent of all eligible Latino seniors who lack coverage.

The lack of detailed, easy-to-understand culturally competent information makes it even more difficult for community organizations to focus resources on this vulnerable population. Our Latino seniors and all seniors need our help.

I urge my colleagues to pass legislation to extend the enrollment deadline, take away the fear of penalty, and give Medicare beneficiaries more time to check their facts, know their options, and make informed decisions about part D.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL RESTRAINT

(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, Webster's dictionary defines emergencies as serious situations or occurrences that happen unexpectedly and demand immediate attention.

As Congress considers this year's emergency supplemental spending bill, I hope all of my colleagues will remember the definition of an emergency and support Majority Leader BOEHNER's strong efforts to ensure that we spend taxpayer money on America's most urgent needs.

Last week I was proud when he clearly articulated that the House will not take up an emergency supplemental bill that spends \$1 more than the President's budget request. By declaring that Congress will use this funding for

troops' efforts in the global war on terrorism and rebuilding communities throughout the gulf coast, Majority Leader BOEHNER is leading House Republicans to rein in the Federal budget and spend taxpayer dollars wisely.

As the budget process continues, I am confident that Majority Leader BOEHNER will continue to define the difference between irresponsible wishes and American emergencies.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

DARFUR PEACE AGREEMENT

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise to welcome the news of the signing of the Darfur peace agreement. It is important to recognize the hard work that our international partners and the administration have done on this issue. Specifically, President Bush has done an outstanding job, as have Secretary Rice, Deputy Secretary Zoellick and Roger Winter; and there should be special gratitude expressed to Secretary Zoellick who went out there and spent 5 days to bring this to fruition.

Their efforts have moved the parties to an agreement, and the United States now must remain steadfast in this effort. It is my hope this agreement will be a stepping stone toward achieving lasting peace and security for the people of Darfur.

The international community and the American people now have an opportunity to take meaningful steps to improve the lives of the people of Darfur.

Most of the food in Darfur where I visited is coming from the United States Government and from the American people as a result of what the Bush administration has done. However, we must remember that women and children are still dying in the camps. Men are still being killed, and the genocide is still taking place. We must build on that momentum.

But the efforts of the administration are to be commended. And although the road ahead is long, this administration and Bob Zoellick have done an outstanding job. And the people who rallied on the Mall last week ought to be congratulated, too.

STAR-SPANGLED BANNER SUNG IN ENGLISH

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, Americans hail from many different backgrounds, but we are united by our freedoms, our democratic government, and our language. It goes without saying that the Star-Spangled Banner should be sung in English. This Spanish-language anthem is nothing but a cynical

attempt to divide our country during the debate on this most vigorous and divisive issue of immigration and illegal immigration.

It will not distract from the critical tasks at hand, securing our borders. I am committed to enforcing our immigration laws and effectively reforming our immigration system without providing amnesty, and I believe that all of our colleagues should join in cosponsoring the legislation offered by our colleague from Kansas (Mr. RYUN) H. Res. 793, which will underscore the fact that the Star Spangled Banner should be sung in English.

□ 1415

URGING A CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN'S SAFETY ACT

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, despite the fact of having a bit of laryngitis, I rise today on a very important issue. I want to commend the Senate for passing Senate 1086, the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act.

Now that the Senate has joined the House in passing legislation to protect our children, I urge the appointment of a conference committee so that we can see this actually enacted into law this year.

Nine-year-old Jessica Lunsford lost her life at the hands of a convicted sex offender more than a year ago. This monster assaulted her, buried her in a plastic garbage bag, and killed her just across the street from her home and her family.

We cannot let one more minute go by without closing the loophole in the law that her tragic death revealed. I can't go back to my district and tell Jessica's father that Congress's schedule was too busy and that we will pass something into law next year. The time to act is now.

MEDICARE PART D

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, this Sunday is Mother's Day. I know there must be people out there, who, like me, are looking for a last minute gift for their mothers, and I have a great suggestion.

If your mother or father, and Father's Day is coming up soon too, if either of them is a senior, you can give them the gift of health by helping them enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan.

The initial enrollment period for Medicare part D ends next Monday, May 15, the day after Mother's Day. That means seniors have less than a week remaining to enroll in a plan and be guaranteed the lowest premiums and the most savings.

Already, more than 30 million seniors have enrolled, and those seniors are saving an average of \$1,100 a year on their medications. A recent survey showed that 90 percent of seniors say their plan is convenient to use, and 85 percent say their plan is affordable and covers the medicines that they need.

As a physician, I know if seniors can't afford their medication, they will go without to the detriment of their health.

After years of promises, Mr. Speaker, President Bush and this Republican Congress have finally delivered on prescription drug coverage under Medicare. Now, in this final week, I encourage all seniors to sign up and start saving.

RESPECT FOR AMERICA'S FALLEN HEROES ACT

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to draw to the attention of the House H.R. 5037. This is the Respect For America's Fallen Heroes Act, and I would like to encourage each Member of this body to join me and my colleagues in this act. What it is going to do is to put in place criteria that will prohibit a person from carrying out demonstrations at the funeral of one of our fallen heroes.

We are going to have a press conference, Mr. Speaker, at 2:30 today to talk more about this, and I want to commend my colleagues, Representative ROGERS from Michigan, our Veterans Affairs' Committee Chairman, Mr. BUYER of Indiana, Mr. CHABOT of Ohio, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. CARTER of Texas, and Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey for joining with me on this piece of legislation and for joining to honor the members of the Patriot Guard Riders, who stand with our families to honor our fallen heroes.

COMMUNICATION FROM HON. NANCY PELOSI, DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
OFFICE OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER,
Washington, DC, May 9, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to clause 5(a)(4)(A) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I designate the following Members to be available for service on an investigative subcommittee of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct: Mr. Becerra of California, Mr. Capuano of Massachusetts, Mr. Chandler of Kentucky, Mr. Delahunt of Massachusetts, Mr. Schiff of California, Mr. Scott of Virginia, Ms. Solis of California, Mr. Stupak of Michigan, Ms.