

help move America in that direction. Many of our farmers are figuring it out. We need programs to help them finance the development of the new infrastructure and the production facilities that are necessary to green up this industry. They need the President's help to do it so they are not bought out by Big Oil and by companies that really don't want them to bring up this new industry. But the President really doesn't know how to create it. His Secretary of Agriculture isn't doing it.

We could have programs like title IX in USDA funded at \$1 billion. We struggle to even get \$25 million or \$23 million in our committee, which is laughable in terms of a trade deficit in oil of over \$60 billion and counting.

The President's Cabinet members are not energy-focused. The Secretary of Defense said energy isn't his job. He runs the largest instrument in this country that uses fuel, and energy independence isn't his job? He said that to us in committee.

Mr. Speaker, we need people in our country and the Presidency and this Congress who are self-made, not derivative, to lead America to a new independent energy age.

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

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SENATE HEALTH WEEK

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to applaud the United States Senate for bringing to the floor this week three critical pieces of health care legislation. Unfortunately, only one of the three still stands a chance to see an actual up-or-down vote on the Senate floor.

The rising cost of health care is an issue the Federal Government can no longer afford to ignore. The Department of Health and Human Services reports the cost of medical liability coverage and defensive medicine alone increases the amount taxpayers must pay for Medicaid, Medicare and other Federal health programs by as much as \$56 billion a year. So much more than the increased cost of malpractice premiums is the astronomical cost of defensive medicine.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government is seeing, as is every business and State legislature across America, their budget being crowded out by the skyrocketing costs of health care. We no

longer have the luxury to pretend that this is not a national crisis, and it demands not only our full attention, but our resolve to find real solutions.

Each and every year, the House of Representatives has tackled the tough issue of controlling the cost of health care. In this body, we have passed medical malpractice liability three times in the last 2 years. Each and every time, that piece of legislation has fallen victim to the inaction of the Senate, and each year our health care crisis continues to grow.

When someone we love brings a child into this world, we do not thank a trial lawyer for his hard work. When a family member is admitted to the emergency room after a heart attack, we do not feel relieved that there was a trial lawyer close by. And yet unless we do something soon to fix our medical liability system, we might discover it is far easier to find a lawyer in our community than to find a doctor.

Guaranteeing all Americans access to quality health care should be what drives this debate. Just think: The best medical care in the world goes to waste if there are not doctors in our community to deliver it.

There are many stories, Mr. Speaker, too numerous to tell, of quality physicians hanging up their stethoscopes to pursue other careers. When they are faced with soaring medical malpractice premiums and decreasing reimbursement, the best and the brightest are pursuing other career paths.

Ask your neighborhood physician if they would encourage their children to follow in their footsteps and to become a doctor. All too often you would get a resounding "no."

Unfortunately, there were not enough Senators yesterday who stood on the side of patients. There were not enough Senators yesterday who put quality health care above partisan politics. Once again, sensible medical malpractice reform legislation died in the Senate.

This sensible legislation is based on a proven system that is saving health care in Texas. H.R. 5, the Health Act, common-sense reform legislation for which I was the lead sponsor last year in this House is also based on a successful reform model from the State of California, that was enacted in 1978, called MICRA.

What we know, looking at these precedents is that reform works. Mr. Speaker, look at the medical malpractice premiums in 2003 for OB/GYNs in two different cities. In San Francisco, a city in a reform State, California, an average OB/GYN physician would pay \$40,000 a year for an annual policy. However, an OB/GYN physician practicing in Chicago, Illinois, a non-reform State, would pay an annual premium of \$139,000.

This is not a situation that can be righted overnight, but there are sensible reforms that provide necessary steps to transform the American health care system, and medical mal-

practice reform is certainly one of them.

Mr. Speaker, another good step towards transforming health care is Senate bill 1955, which the Senate is currently debating. The Health Insurance Marketplace Modernization and Affordability Act is legislation that is similar to H.R. 525, the Small Business Health Fairness Act, that we passed in this body. This bill was introduced by Representative SAM JOHNSON, and as I say, it passed the House last year. This legislation will reduce the cost of health benefits for small business and the self-employed by establishing the new national Association Health Plans, or AHPs, as they are known.

AHPs currently exist, but they are severely hampered by the administrative burden and the high cost of having to comply with 50 different sets of State insurance laws and regulations. These barriers have made it virtually impossible to start new plans, and they have forced many of these plans to close, thus greatly limiting the availability of affordable health insurance to small businesses.

Allowing an environment that will permit association or small business health plans to flourish will strengthen our health insurance markets by creating greater competition and more choices of health plans for small business. Greater competition will benefit consumers by driving down premiums and expanding access to coverage.

H.R. 525 is just another example of House Republicans showing the American people they get it done when it comes to healthcare reform. In regards to decreasing the cost of health care, expanding private insurance coverage to all Americans, and increasing the quality of the healthcare delivery system; patients across our country deserve our undivided attention and it's time for the Senate to act, or stand accountable.

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

(Mr. ETHERIDGE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank a great leader, our colleague, Congressman HONDA, and the Asian Pacific American Caucus, of which I am a very proud member, for organizing later this night a special order to honor the contributions of Asian Pacific Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but first recall and remind us of the great leadership of our beloved Congressman Bob

Matsui, whom we all knew so well, who led the fight for justice and reparations for Japanese Americans who were interned in our own country.

And it is in his memory tonight that I hope we will all reflect on the legacy and great contributions of not only Congressman Matsui, but so many Asian Pacific Americans who played a tremendous role in the development of our Nation.

I would like to acknowledge the late Congresswoman Patsy Takemoto Mink, our first woman of color to serve in the United States House of Representatives. She was a trailblazer for Asian Pacific Americans and women and all people of color. And it is wonderful to see that her impact is felt and that her legacy continues. We miss her tremendously.

API Heritage Month is especially important to my congressional district. Asian Pacific Island American culture has a very large impact in the cities in my district. My district is the birthplace of Amy Tan, a Chinese American woman, and the New York Times best-selling author of the Joy Luck Club. Many have read that novel and its subsequent film adaptation. She has received countless acknowledgments, including the Bay Area Book Reviewers Award. Tonight, Ms. Tan's novels and short stories are part of high schools and universities literacy curricula nationwide.

My district is also the birthplace of Fred Korematsu, born in Oakland to Japanese immigrants who challenged the World War II internment of Japanese American citizens. As an American citizen, Mr. Korematsu refused, he refused to go to an internment camp, but he was arrested. He was sent to one in 1942 and branded a spy by newspapers. He opposed the internment policy in the Supreme Court, but in its 1944 decision, the Supreme Court upheld that policy. Unbelievable.

In 1983, Mr. Korematsu, appealed his conviction which a Federal court overturned, acknowledging that the government's case at the time had been based on misleading and racially biased information.

President Bill Clinton awarded Mr. Korematsu the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998, honoring Mr. Korematsu for fighting for human rights and ensuring the very liberties that created this great Nation.

Today, the legacy of Asian Pacific American leaders such as Ms. Tan and Mr. Korematsu, Congressman Matsui, Congresswoman Patsy Mink is apparent in the numerous and remarkable programs and initiatives in our communities and especially throughout my district.

There are several that I would like to recognize, including Oakland's Asian Students Educational Services, also known as OASES. As the City of Oakland is one of three cities in the Bay Area that has the lowest high school graduation rates for Asian students, this organization works to decrease cultural gaps in education.

I would also like to recognize the Oakland Asian Cultural Center. This center works by employing the belief that upholding cultural traditions and honoring cultural heritage are the core of maintaining healthy and liveable communities.

My district is also home to several of the Nation's leading health care providers for the APA community. Asian Community Mental Health Services, for example, is an organization that offers access to and increases community acceptance of mental care, in which many APA communities remain taboo.

Lastly, I would like to bring special attention to Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice and its executive director, Ms. Eveline Shen. Founded in 1989, ACRJ has been a long-time leader in ensuring that APA women and girls are equipped with the tools to make important decisions about their reproductive health. I commend Ms. Shen and the ACRJ's dedication to assisting women to obtain America's promise of liberty and justice for all.

Mr. Speaker, again I would like to thank Mr. HONDA and the APA Caucus for inviting me to participate later tonight in this special order. Let us continue to unite and pay tribute to Asian Pacific Americans and remember the importance of their outstanding contributions to our Nation.

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand with my colleagues as we celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. I thank Congressman HONDA and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus for organizing tonight's special order.

Our theme for this year's festivities, Dreams and Challenges of Asian Pacific Americans, speaks to the many generations of Asian Pacific Americans who worked hard to overcome economic hardship, racism and other barriers in their pursuit of the American dream.

The theme reminds us of the Chinese who endured inhumane conditions to build our western railroads, and the Koreans who did the back-breaking work on the sugar plantations in Hawaii. And it reminds us of the Filipino Americans who fought bravely for our country, and the courageous Japanese Americans who fought for their country despite the shameful treatment toward their families in internment camps during World War II.

This year's theme also reminds us that in spite of these hardships, the API community has successfully met the challenges it faced and has enhanced greatly the richness and strength of our American society.

The contributions and cultural imprint of the API community is espe-

cially impressive in Los Angeles where many of the first Asian American immigrants made their home.

I have the pleasure of representing the Los Angeles communities of Little Tokyo and parts of Chinatown, and Filipinotown. As is true for all Angelenos, my life has been enriched by the magnificent culture of Asian Pacific Islanders and their positive impact on our city and on our Nation.

Asian Pacific Islanders contribute to our economy in many ways. They are leaders, for example, in our international trade. They are pioneers in our fashion industry. They are non-profit community leaders, restaurateurs and small business owners. They are patriots who continue to defend our Nation and our American way of life through the distinguished service in our Armed Forces.

The API community also enhances our lives throughout the year with its many cultural celebrations. In my own district of downtown Los Angeles, I look forward to riding in the annual Nisei parade in Little Tokyo and the Chinese New Years parade in Chinatown.

Mr. Speaker, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is a wonderful opportunity for our country to honor our country's API community and its many worthy contributions. And it is a wonderful time to explore their rich and diverse culture, customs and history.

I thank my API constituents who continue to enrich my life, the life of Angelenos, and our Nation. I am proud to join my congressional colleagues in paying tribute to the API community as we celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

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REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4297, TAX INCREASE PREVENTION AND RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2005

Mr. GINGREY, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-458) on the resolution (H. Res. 805) waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 4297) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 201(b) of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2006, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5122, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

Mr. GINGREY, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-459) on the resolution (H. Res. 806) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5122) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for military activities of the Department of