

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this morning I would like to highlight two new reports out over the last week that once again demonstrates how the pharmaceutical industry is benefiting from the new prescription drug plan, while American seniors and the American taxpayers are paying even larger bills.

The first study, done by AARP, concluded that wholesale prices on the most popular drugs used by American seniors increased by 3.9 percent over the first 3 months of the year. Pharmaceutical companies promised drug prices would go down when the Republican plan took effect, but now it is clear they have actually increased at four times the rate of inflation.

The second study was conducted by Families USA, which found that American veterans are paying 43 percent less for their drugs than their counterparts under the Republican prescription drug plan. Our veterans get cheaper rates because the VA negotiates to get better deals from the pharmaceutical companies.

Contrast that with the Republican drug plan that restricts Medicare from negotiating on behalf of the American seniors.

NATIONAL SECURITY LEAKS

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, last week newspapers disclosed the details of a secret program used to track terrorist financial activity. Some newspaper editors make vague references to the public interest as their justification for publishing national security secrets. The greater public interest is protecting our homeland from another savage terror attack.

Our terrorist enemies are crystal clear about their intention. They seek the death not of hundreds or thousands but tens of thousands of innocent Americans. The program revealed last week by the media had been successful in stopping the terrorists from achieving their murderous aims. But now, thanks to the media, one more tool used to protect each and every one of us has been compromised.

Should this disclosure contribute to another attack on America, I wonder how the media will explain itself to the husbands, wives, sons, and daughters of those killed.

Mr. Speaker, the media got it wrong in this case. Because of them, we are in greater danger today than we were yesterday. In a time of war, this is truly disgraceful.

DO WHAT YOU CAN WITH WHAT YOU GOT WHERE YOU ARE

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

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, FDR once said, "Do what you can with what you got where you are."

We have west coast salmon fishermen that can't fish because of the government's stupidity. The administration released water in the Upper Klamath Basin to water intensive crops that killed the downstream fish, the breeding stock of wild salmon. The result is that fishermen can't fish.

The governments of the States have asked the administration to call for an emergency declaration to aid these fishermen. They have refused.

Today, the House of Representatives will hear about the plight of the fishermen and the failure of the GOP leadership to help them. We will do what we can with what we got where we are.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JOHN BURSON

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend a brave and giving man from my district, Dr. John Burson.

Dr. Burson is the CEO of Chattahoochee Healthcare in Carrollton, Georgia; and he was recently honored with a Healthcare Hero award for his selfless efforts on behalf of injured civilians in Iraq.

As a physician myself, I know many doctors but few with the tenacity of Dr. Burson. At age 71, he packed his bag for Baghdad, where he worked all during the day at the United States Embassy clinic and by night at the Combat Support Hospital treating injured Iraqi citizens. He even treated ABC news anchor Bob Woodward after he was injured by a roadside bomb.

Dr. Burson is a retired Lieutenant Colonel from the United States Army Reserves, where he spent 30 years serving our country. Thankfully, his retirement from the Reserves has not ended his commitment to service. In fact, Dr. Burson traveled to Iraq last November so he could relieve younger military doctors who wanted to spend the Christmas holidays with their families.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Burson has used his skill and passion to improve the lives of patients from Georgia and Iraq; and I ask you to join me in saluting this brave American.

KEEP IMMIGRATION ISSUE ALIVE

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to keep the immigration issue alive today. In spite of extraordinary efforts by our President and the Senate, the House majority is stalling any real negotiations by insisting on time-consuming hearings aimed at taking the temperature of the American public.

We know a clear majority of Americans want action and reform. Should we attempt border security first, which I believe we should, we still need to face the fact that comprehensive reform is necessary. This must include a guest worker program and dealing with the 11 million people who are here today that are contributing to our economy.

Need I remind my colleagues of the difficulty we had in just moving a few hundred thousand people from the gulf coast during the Katrina hurricane? Let us convene now the conference committee on immigration and deal with the issue and develop a bipartisan solution.

Delaying the conference committee with this proposed dog and pony show does the Nation no good. Further discussions need to begin. Delaying the difficult decisions will not make it go away. The American public wants and deserves action, not the politics of division.

REPUBLICAN PRINCIPLES ON IMMIGRATION

(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, last week, House Republicans outlined five principles that we want included in any immigration reform legislation before it is sent to the President. They are:

Republicans want to put a premium on border security and provide the resources necessary to strengthen our Border Patrol.

Republicans want to strengthen the enforcement of immigration laws and stiffen the penalties for those who break those laws.

Republicans want to hold employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens accountable and strengthen the penalties on them.

Republicans oppose any and all efforts to reward those who break our immigration laws.

And last, Republicans believe that immigrants must come here legally, obey our laws, and assimilate into American society by learning English.

Mr. Speaker, House Republicans passed a bill last December that incorporated these principles. Unfortunately, some of our colleagues in the Senate are pushing for legislation that would actually weaken our borders.

Mr. Speaker, this is neither what the American people need nor want.

RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, in one week House Republicans have shown where their priorities lie, who they are willing to help, and who really gets left behind.

I am sure the American people are not shocked to hear that Republicans once again sided with the wealthiest in our Nation when they repealed the estate tax last week. Meantime, Republicans refused to join Democrats in providing nearly 7 million Americans a pay raise.

It is truly mind-boggling that House Republicans continue to believe that minimum-wage workers can still get by on \$5.15 an hour. Don't they know if you take inflation into account the minimum wage is at its lowest level in 50 years? Don't Republicans know this is the second-longest amount of time minimum-wage workers have gone without a pay raise? Don't they know that nearly three-fourths of minimum-wage workers are not just taking care of themselves but also a family?

Mr. Speaker, this is totally immoral. In this great Nation it is unbelievable that nearly 7 million people must struggle to this extent to make ends meet. It is only fair we give these workers a raise.

Democrats are not giving up, and we will continue to fight to give these workers their first pay raise in 9 years. It is only fair.

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY AND ISRAEL

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

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, last night, we watched as Israel launched a targeted operation on the Gaza Strip to recover Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit, who had been kidnapped during an attack by members of Hamas' military wing.

As an independent sovereign nation, Israel has every right to respond to acts of aggression against its homeland and the soldiers who defend it. In the name of peace, the Palestinian Authority must meet the calls from Israel and nations such as France and Egypt to produce the abducted soldier.

Our Nation must stand behind our allies in the global war on terror, support their right to protect their citizens, and call for Hamas to abandon aggression and violence and work for a peaceful solution recognizing Israel as part of a two-nation plan.

HELP SALMON FISHERMEN ON NORTHWEST COAST

(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, I am here today to support the fishers and the fishers' families on the west coast whose livelihood teeters on the brink of disaster as we stand here today.

It is outrageous that it has come to this. It is outrageous that the Bush administration's botched Klamath River policies will shut down 90 percent of

the commercial salmon season and take huge bites out of the recreational and tribal catches.

It is outrageous that fisheries' managers were given the task of deciding between the survival of fishers and the survival of Klamath salmon, without the means to achieve either.

It is outrageous that the Bush administration continues to punish the fishing industry by challenging the court decision that would have returned needed flows to the Klamath River area.

It is outrageous that despite a 60 percent cutback in last year's fishing season, emergency economic assistance has been denied.

And, finally, it is outrageous that without economic assistance this year, many fishermen and their boats will be down and useless for the rest of eternity.

□ 1030

BAN DUMPING IN THE GREAT LAKES

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, this week I am introducing bipartisan legislation to ban dumping in the Great Lakes. Along with my Democratic colleague DAN LIPINSKI, we are moving the Great Lakes Water Protection Act because the number of beach closings in Illinois rose from 213 in 2003 to over 600 in 2004.

There were over 140 beach closings in my district alone last year. Our bill, supported by the Alliance for the Great Lakes, the Sierra Club and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Chicago, sets a Federal date certain to ban dumping in the source of our drinking water. Fines under this bill would support building new sewage control projects to protect the lake.

I want to give a special thank you to a member of my staff, Ms. Kristy Cole, who drafted this legislation. As she leaves the Congress for a Northwestern JD/MBA program, we will now gather bipartisan support for this common-sense environmental reform.

DEMOCRATS OFFER A PRESCRIPTION FOR CHANGE TO FINALLY HELP SENIORS WITH RX DRUG COSTS

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, recent reports have shown why the Republican prescription drug plan is not working for seniors. Prices are still going up, and millions of seniors are about to fall into the doughnut hole, a period where they receive no coverage but continue to pay their premiums.

Democrats have long believed there is a better way, so we introduced a Democratic prescription for change.

Our plan would give Medicare the bargaining power to negotiate lower prices with drug companies. The VA is doing that right now, and veterans are paying 43 percent less for their drugs than American seniors.

With all the money we save from negotiating lower prices, we have closed the doughnut hole to ensure that seniors are not losing coverage for a substantial portion of the year. Mr. Speaker, if Republicans are really interested in helping our seniors with their prescription drug bills, they would join us in supporting this prescription for change. It just doesn't make sense to continue with a plan that isn't lowering costs and creates a giant gap in coverage.

STOP INTELLIGENCE LEAKS

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. The New York Times, you know, the actions of that storied paper certainly are the subject of much discussion. Mr. Speaker, it is a sad discussion, because it is a discussion about those who chose to leak information and those who chose to print that leaked information that is harmful to this great Nation's security.

It is unfortunate, and it does add to the level of distrust of bureaucracy and of government. It is sad. It is disappointing.

The perpetrators of those actions, Mr. Speaker, can rationalize all they want. But the point is this: Those actions, leaking that information, printing that information, make our intelligence community's job a little harder.

They make defunding terrorists and their activities more difficult, and they make our American communities less safe and less secure. It is a sad action, and it is an action with unfortunate consequences.

WASHINGTON REPUBLICANS CAN'T IGNORE FACT THAT THEY CREATED RECORD-SETTING DEFICITS

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I am a Democrat, and I am glad about it. The reason for this joy is over the fact that the party to which I belong is pushing back against this Republican-led Congress and their out-of-control spending. Let us take a look at the facts. President Bush and congressional Republicans have turned a \$5.6 trillion surplus into a \$4 trillion deficit, a change of \$9 trillion.

This is the most fiscally irresponsible American administration. We owe China almost \$150 billion. My hope is that we never have to go to war with them because I don't believe they are going to finance it.