

Does the President realize that on his watch, poverty has increased every single year, and that overall household income has decreased?

Does the President realize that at a time when Americans have less money in their wallets, they are trying to squeeze every dollar to pay higher food, gas, education and health care bills?

Madam Speaker, how bad does the economy have to get for the average working man and woman before the President realizes that there is a problem?

This Democratic Congress is not satisfied with the status quo. Over the last year, we have made progress to ease the economic crunch for middle-class, working-class families. We have passed legislation to make college education more affordable, increased the minimum wage, addressed the subprime mortgage crisis, and cut taxes for middle-class families.

We are proud of these accomplishments. We also realize that with most Americans struggling, this economy is just not working.

DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS ONCE AGAIN SUPPORTS ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Madam Speaker, yesterday the Democratic Congress once again supported energy independence and security. This legislation, which the President is now expected to sign, includes an historic increase in fuel economy standards for vehicles and significant new support for alternative fuels.

This comprehensive Democratic energy bill provides a dramatic shift in our Nation's energy policy, including new standards for buildings, homes, lighting and appliances, and makes great strides in our fight against global warming. It is also something that we can feel good about, because it reduces the price at the pump through increased efficiency standards that reach 35 miles per gallon by 2020. This is the first increase in CAFE standards in 32 years and will save the average driver between \$700 and \$1,000 a year.

Madam Speaker, the protection of our environment is both a spiritual and moral issue, and Congress has failed for too many years to address this issue. I am proud that the Democratic Congress has worked to bring this historic legislation to the floor.

DEMOCRATS CONTINUE TO MOVE OUR NATION FORWARD, BUT PRESIDENT BUSH IS BLOCKING THE WAY

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

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, all year this Democratic Congress has

worked to live up to our promise to move the Nation in a new direction. In many ways, we have been successful, raising the minimum wage, fully implementing the 9/11 Commission recommendations, and making college more affordable. We are proud of these accomplishments, but there are many other important bills that have been passed with strong bipartisan support here in Congress, only to be vetoed by President Bush.

We sent the President a bipartisan bill that restored harmful cuts to No Child Left Behind, job training programs, and research grants for cures for life-threatening diseases. President Bush said no with his veto pen.

We sent him a bipartisan bill that would ensure 10 million children have access to quality health care. President Bush said no with his veto pen.

We sent him a bill that would bring our troops home from Iraq by the end of next year. Again, President Bush said no with his veto pen.

Madam Speaker, President Bush has stood in the way of real progress, but know that we in Congress will continue to fight to move our Nation in a new direction.

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF THE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY ACT

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the energy bill that will finally take our energy policy in a new direction, and I urge the President to sign it into law. This bill makes a big step toward greater energy independence and energy security.

The bill includes an historic increase in fuel economy standards, the first since 1975. This increase will save American families an estimated \$700 to \$1,000 a year at the pump and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. We must pursue an energy policy that moves the U.S. towards energy independence, reduces the cost of gasoline to consumers, enhances the development of alternative energy, and substantially reduces threats of global warming.

This bill also sends a clear signal to the rest of the world that the U.S. is finally serious about getting our energy and environmental policy in order. However, we still have more work to do on this issue, and this new Congress is committed to get the job done.

A COMMITMENT TO PASSING A GOOD SCHIP PROGRAM

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

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Madam Speaker, I first want to thank Speaker PELOSI, Majority Leader HOYER and all the Members who are so committed to the SCHIP program. This Congress sent

the President very good legislation that would have ensured that millions of low-income children of hardworking Americans could keep health coverage, and it would allow States to enroll millions more who qualified for the CHIP program but aren't covered because the States have not received enough funding. We also had a way to pay for this.

But each time, the President has vetoed that legislation, and here in Congress a number of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle continue to stand with the President blocking the way for this vital program to reach more children. We wanted to insure 10 million children. The President and the Republican leaders only want to insure 6 million children. And that is the crux of the problem here.

Today, we will extend the SCHIP program through March of 2009, but an important aspect of these earlier bills is not included. This past August, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued a directive to State SCHIP directors effectively informing them that they would no longer be able to insure children in families where incomes exceed 250 percent of the poverty level, \$43,000 for a family of three. This is a tragedy, and we will fix it.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE TRENT LOTT

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

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I hadn't intended to give a 1-minute today, but I just got off the telephone with one of my dear friends, the Senator from the great State of Mississippi, the Honorable TRENT LOTT.

Today is his last day in the United States Senate. After a distinguished career in both the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, he is resigning effective, I assume, today or tomorrow, whenever the other body goes out.

I have known TRENT LOTT for the 23 years that I have been in the House of Representatives. When I first got elected, he was the minority whip here in the House. He is one of the wisest, in terms of political knowledge, men that I have ever been around in my political career. He is a great guy personally. He has a great family. He has served not only his State, but his country, with exemplary distinction for the many-odd years that he has been in the House and the Senate.

We are going to miss the Honorable TRENT LOTT of the Magnolia State of Mississippi, and I want to wish him and his family the very best this holiday season and in the years ahead.

God bless TRENT LOTT and his family.

COMMENDING HEATHER LASHER TODD FOR HER SERVICE TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, today is the last day of this year of the session of Congress, and I just wanted to take the opportunity to thank my press secretary, Heather Lasher Todd, who is actually leaving today and going back to St. Louis, where she is from, with her husband. Both of them used to work for Congressman CARNAHAN, who was here before on the floor.

Many of my colleagues on the Democratic side of the aisle see Heather on a daily basis when she is down here with me trying to get Members to do 1-minutes and other message opportunities, and also worked very hard to have our weekly message meetings and come up with timely topics and people who would speak.

I am going to sorely miss her. I know that many of my colleagues will as well. I just want to wish her and her husband a great future back in St. Louis where they are from.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Recorded votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

MEDICARE, MEDICAID, AND SCHIP EXTENSION ACT OF 2007

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 2499) to amend titles XVIII, XIX, and XXI of the Social Security Act to extend provisions under the Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP programs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 2499

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—This Act may be cited as the “Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Extension Act of 2007”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—MEDICARE

Sec. 101. Increase in physician payment update; extension of the physician quality reporting system.

Sec. 102. Extension of Medicare incentive payment program for physician scarcity areas.

Sec. 103. Extension of floor on work geographic adjustment under the Medicare physician fee schedule.

Sec. 104. Extension of treatment of certain physician pathology services under Medicare.

Sec. 105. Extension of exceptions process for Medicare therapy caps.

Sec. 106. Extension of payment rule for brachytherapy; extension to therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals.

Sec. 107. Extension of Medicare reasonable costs payments for certain clinical diagnostic laboratory tests furnished to hospital patients in certain rural areas.

Sec. 108. Extension of authority of specialized Medicare Advantage plans for special needs individuals to restrict enrollment.

Sec. 109. Extension of deadline for application of limitation on extension or renewal of Medicare reasonable cost contract plans.

Sec. 110. Adjustment to the Medicare Advantage stabilization fund.

Sec. 111. Medicare secondary payor.

Sec. 112. Payment for part B drugs.

Sec. 113. Payment rate for certain diagnostic laboratory tests.

Sec. 114. Long-term care hospitals.

Sec. 115. Payment for inpatient rehabilitation facility (IRF) services.

Sec. 116. Extension of accommodation of physicians ordered to active duty in the Armed Services.

Sec. 117. Treatment of certain hospitals.

Sec. 118. Additional Funding for State Health Insurance Assistance Programs, Area Agencies on Aging, and Aging and Disability Resource Centers.

TITLE II—MEDICAID AND SCHIP

Sec. 201. Extending SCHIP funding through March 31, 2009.

Sec. 202. Extension of transitional medical assistance (TMA) and abstinence education program.

Sec. 203. Extension of qualifying individual (QI) program.

Sec. 204. Medicaid DSH extension.

Sec. 205. Improving data collection.

Sec. 206. Moratorium on certain payment restrictions.

TITLE III—MISCELLANEOUS

Sec. 301. Medicare Payment Advisory Commission status.

Sec. 302. Special Diabetes Programs for Type I Diabetes and Indians.

TITLE I—MEDICARE

SEC. 101. INCREASE IN PHYSICIAN PAYMENT UPDATE; EXTENSION OF THE PHYSICIAN QUALITY REPORTING SYSTEM.

(a) INCREASE IN PHYSICIAN PAYMENT UPDATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1848(d) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-4(d)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (4)(B), by striking “and paragraphs (5) and (6)” and inserting “and the succeeding paragraphs of this subsection”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(8) UPDATE FOR A PORTION OF 2008.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (7)(B), in lieu of the update to the single conversion factor established in paragraph (1)(C) that would otherwise apply for 2008, for the period beginning on January 1, 2008, and ending on June 30, 2008, the update to the single conversion factor shall be 0.5 percent.

“(B) NO EFFECT ON COMPUTATION OF CONVERSION FACTOR FOR THE REMAINING PORTION OF 2008 AND 2009.—The conversion factor under this subsection shall be computed under paragraph (1)(A) for the period beginning on July 1, 2008, and ending on December 31, 2008, and for 2009 and subsequent years as if subparagraph (A) had never applied.”.

(2) REVISION OF THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANCE AND QUALITY INITIATIVE FUND.—

(A) REVISION.—Section 1848(l)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-4(l)(2)) is amended—

(i) by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following:

“(A) AMOUNT AVAILABLE.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), there shall be available to the Fund the following amounts:

“(I) For expenditures during 2008, an amount equal to \$150,500,000.

“(II) For expenditures during 2009, an amount equal to \$24,500,000.

“(III) For expenditures during 2013, an amount equal to \$4,960,000,000.

“(ii) LIMITATIONS ON EXPENDITURES.—

“(I) 2008.—The amount available for expenditures during 2008 shall be reduced as provided by subparagraph (A) of section 225(c)(1) and section 524 of the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008 (division G of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008).

“(II) 2009.—The amount available for expenditures during 2009 shall be reduced as provided by subparagraph (B) of such section 225(c)(1).

“(III) 2013.—The amount available for expenditures during 2013 shall only be available for an adjustment to the update of the conversion factor under subsection (d) for that year.”; and

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking “entire amount specified in the first sentence of subparagraph (A)” and all that follows and inserting the following: “entire amount available for expenditures, after application of subparagraph (A)(ii), during—

“(i) 2008 for payment with respect to physicians’ services furnished during 2008;

“(ii) 2009 for payment with respect to physicians’ services furnished during 2009; and

“(iii) 2013 for payment with respect to physicians’ services furnished during 2013.”.

(B) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), the amendments made by subparagraph (A) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(ii) SPECIAL RULE FOR COORDINATION WITH CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008.—If the date of the enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008, occurs on or after the date described in clause (i), the amendments made by subparagraph (A) shall be deemed to be made on the day after the effective date of sections 225(c)(1) and 524 of the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008 (division G of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008).

(C) TRANSFER OF FUNDS TO PART B TRUST FUND.—Amounts that would have been available to the Physician Assistance and Quality Initiative Fund under section 1848(l)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-4(l)(2)) for payment with respect to physicians’ services furnished prior to January 1, 2013, but for the amendments made by subparagraph (A), shall be deposited into, and made available for expenditures from, the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund under section 1841 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395t).

(b) EXTENSION OF THE PHYSICIAN QUALITY REPORTING SYSTEM.—

(1) SYSTEM.—Section 1848(k)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-4(k)(2)(B)) is amended—

(A) in the heading, by inserting “AND 2009” after “2008”;

(B) in clause (i), by inserting “and 2009” after “2008”; and

(C) in each of clauses (ii) and (iii)—

(i) by striking “, 2007” and inserting “of each of 2007 and 2008”; and

(ii) by inserting “or 2009, as applicable” after “2008”.