

Mount Airy has thrived. He has worked tirelessly to increase the outreach and effectiveness of Temple Baptist in the local community. He has shown a remarkable commitment to educating leaders in the local church so that many within the church can use their God-given gifts.

I am very pleased that Reverend Fishel joined us today to open the House of Representatives with such an inspiring prayer. He is a model of service to God, country and community; and he plays a vital spiritual role in Surry County, North Carolina. I am proud to welcome him to the people's house.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 1-minute speeches on each side.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of every working woman who faces pay discrimination in the workforce and call on the House to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. Last week, the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 to limit the ability of women and other employees to sue their employers for pay discrimination under title VII. The court decided that a victim of pay disparity should be able to document a discriminatory difference in pay within a mere 6 months, despite the typical office secrecy over income.

The Supreme Court is essentially rolling back efforts to ensure equal pay. When women still earn only 77 percent of what men earn, this ruling leaves these individuals with no recourse or remedy.

The Paycheck Fairness Act will help women confront discrimination in the workplace and give teeth to the Equal Pay Act by prohibiting employers from retaliating against employees who share salary information with their coworkers; allowing women to sue for punitive damages and recovery of back pay; and create a new program to help strengthen the negotiation skills of girls and women.

Mr. Speaker, next Sunday, we commemorate 44 years since John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act and still equal pay is not a fact of life for American women. It is time to value the work that women do in our society. Let's pass the Paycheck Fairness Act.

HOUSTON'S PASSPORT CRISIS

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

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, my message today is to our State Department in Houston. We have a prob-

lem, a serious passport problem that reached a crisis stage. We have families who applied in February for their passports that have not received them yet. We have wives that can't meet their soldier husbands on leave from Iraq. We have families who aren't able to go to experimental surgery out of this country, families leaving for the last time before college together who are simply denied the opportunity to travel.

Our passport offices are overwhelmed. Our people wait in line for hours, if not days, getting there at 4 o'clock in the morning. We appreciate the 20 additional staff the State Department sent. They are overwhelmed. We appreciate the 1-800 number. It is a middle man and causing more problems.

We need more staff. We need more information call lines manned 24/7. We need more resources. It is wrong. As our constituents tell us, they feel like they are in a third-world country. We think they deserve better treatment than that; and this deserves immediate attention, immediate, absolute action by the State Department.

PAY DISCRIMINATION

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Supreme Court dealt a serious blow to women pursuing pay discrimination claims.

For the majority of her 20-year career, Lilly Ledbetter was paid less than her male counterparts, including those with less seniority for doing the exact same work. By her own calculations, she was now being shortchanged by about \$15,000 annually.

Her experience is, unfortunately, a common one. In the Supreme Court decision, Ledbetter versus Goodyear Tire, the Court ruled that she had missed her window of opportunity to file a claim covering the many years of discrimination she faced.

We need to close this loophole by making every pay period a new infraction. This way, employees can challenge unfair practices that persist over time but don't come to light for years later.

Inequality still exists. It is our job to fix it.

□ 1010

FIX THE LEAK OR BUY MORE BUCKETS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, when Hurricane Rita hit southeast Texas, a pine tree fell on our house and caused a leak in the roof. The water came into the house, and I couldn't put enough buckets under the leak to catch all that

water. I didn't really know what to do. Eventually it dawned on me, I had to go up on the roof and fix the leak or water would have continued to fill all those buckets and more. The "grand bargain" immigration plan is really a plan to buy more buckets for the big leak on our border.

The government is missing the obvious. Until we fix the leak, we can never deal with all of the water from the leak. Until Uncle Sam enforces border security, we cannot solve the problem with the illegals already here.

The so-called immigration reform bill deals with the wrong issue first. It legalizes the illegals while inadequately securing the border. Secure the border and then come up with a plan that is not amnesty in dealing with the people here illegally. Otherwise, we will keep buying more buckets and the real problem will never be solved.

And that's just the way it is.

FOOD AND FARM BILL OF RIGHTS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, Congress is in the process of updating the Nation's agricultural policy for the first time since 2002 to see if it can serve the interests of all America's farmers and ranchers. This is more than a farm bill, it is a food bill as well. Everyone who eats is affected by our food and farm policy.

Michael Pollan explained how the farm bill is the reason that a package of Twinkies, which contains 39 complex ingredients, costs less than a bunch of carrots straight from the farm. The farm bill should serve all Americans, not just a few special interests.

Today, 70 percent of the payments go to the richest 10 percent of the farmers, while 60 percent of America's farmers and ranchers get no support whatsoever.

It is time for a food and farm bill of rights that provides a comprehensive guide to reform the farm bill. We must move beyond the policies that were written for the Depression or the 1950s to one designed for the world we live in today; and, more important, the world we want to live in tomorrow.

RIISING ENERGY COSTS

(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, I rise to speak about the need for this Congress to address the rising energy costs across America. Gas prices are continuing to rise, and our energy needs across our country continue to increase. The American people expect us to do something about this, to solve the problem.

Yet the liberal leadership of this Congress is missing in action. Instead of

coming forward with a real plan to solve our energy problems, they are preparing to recreate the energy crisis of the late 1970s. Are the American people really ready for long lines, rationing, and higher prices?

The policies of the 1970s should have been a wake-up call for us. But instead of instituting a plan for American energy independence back then, we just kicked that can a little further down the road.

So today, my GOP colleagues and I will unveil a multi-tiered plan that focuses on innovative ways to create new American sources of power through conservation exploration and cutting-edge technologies. We will act to fill the need.

PASS EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, there are many issues that face America that are of great importance, from the Iraq War to global warming. These global issues must be dealt with, but we have lacked the leadership in this administration to make the world proud of America and see us as a leader on such issues.

On Wednesday, this House will vote on an embryonic stem cell research bill sent from the Senate which the President has threatened to veto. I don't think there is a more important bill that this House could pass and send to the President and for the President to sign than embryonic stem cell research.

Mr. Speaker, if you or anybody in your family has Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, spinal cord injury, cancer, stroke, burns, heart disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis, you could have relief and possibly a cure for that illness because of embryonic stem cell research. America could reestablish itself as a country that has the best scientific research and provides the world with hope for cures for these catastrophic illnesses.

Last night in the Republican debate, one of the candidates said we need to find a cure for cancer. He's right, and the way to do it is through embryonic stem cell research. I urge this House to pass the bill, and I urge the President to have the courage to do the right thing and be pro-life and extend life for people on this planet.

BODY ARMOR FOR TROOPS

(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, today the House Armed Services Committee will examine the issue of body armor for our troops in combat. Fortunately, before going into recess for Memorial Day, Congress passed

a critical war funding bill that will allow the military to purchase body armor and other equipment for our men and women in uniform.

I was grateful to visit with our troops during the break in Iraq and Afghanistan. Everywhere we went, the troops thanked us for passing the legislation to provide for their being fully equipped.

Our soldiers are fighting the terrorists overseas so we do not have to face them again in the streets of America. We are protecting American families in stopping al Qaeda's threat to our Nation.

On the 63rd anniversary of D-day, we appreciate the new greatest generation. I am pleased Congress passed and President Bush signed a bill that will provide our military with the tools it needs without handcuffing our commanders on the battlefield.

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

PAY DISCRIMINATION MUST BE CORRECTED

(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, I voice my deep disappointment with the recent Supreme Court decision in *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tires*.

Women, on average, are paid less than their male counterparts. For women of color, the pay is much less. Unless you can look me in the eye and say that women are less intelligent, less capable than their male counterparts in the same fields, the most glaring explanation for this discrepancy is discrimination.

We have made great strides in working to equalize wages for all Americans regardless of gender, race or age. But the decision last week to limit a worker's available recourse in the face of discrimination is a setback to all of our civil rights, and reminds us of how far we still have to go.

Now we must mobilize. To fix this disparity, we must move forward and correct the law so this misinterpretation will never occur again. I urge my colleagues to support a legislative remedy to preserve a worker's right to be compensated for discrimination.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

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

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, during my career as a heart surgeon, I saw too many patients who were trapped in a paper-based system that leads to duplicative tests and avoidable medical errors.

Despite the advancement of innovative health information technology, America's health care system remains trapped in the 20th century. The need

for health IT became even more apparent during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, when I saw displaced patients present themselves in makeshift clinics with little or no medical history to guide their health providers.

To date, only 24 percent of Louisiana physicians have converted their offices to electronic health records because many are unwilling or unable to handle the cost.

I will soon introduce a bill to create a demonstration project through the Department of Health and Human Services to provide financial incentives to providers and health information exchange networks to encourage the adoption and use of interactive personal health records.

Health IT will greatly improve the quality of information and care that patients receive, but Congress should do more to encourage physicians to transfer to a paperless system.

PAY EQUALITY

(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, today I rise to voice my strong disapproval of the Supreme Court's decision last week that effectively endorsed pay discrimination against women.

Pay equity is a problem for women around the country, but especially for women of color, women who look like me. On average, African American women earn only 64 cents for every dollar and Latinas earn only 52 cents on the dollar compared to their white male counterparts.

We need to protect the rights of workers, to remedy wage discrimination, and do more to close the pay gap between men and women. That is why I cosponsored the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would give teeth to the Equal Pay Act. The Paycheck Fairness Act would entitle the plaintiffs to backpay, compensatory, and punitive damages for "intentional" wage discrimination.

Without serious penalties for wage discrimination, violations will continue and working men and women and their families will suffer.

We can and must fix the Equal Pay Act so workers all around can be fairly compensated for wage discrimination, and we must pass the Paycheck Fairness Act to close the wage gap.

□ 1020

SAMEH KHOUZAM

(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, I rise today on behalf of Mr. Sameh Khouzam. In 1998, Mr. Khouzam fled Egypt to the United States to escape persecution and torture at the hands of the Egyptian officials. Mr. Khouzam currently