

only half of the benefits that men receive. It is then sad, but unsurprising, that women represent 70 percent of older adults living in poverty.

Mary Norton understood that the wage gap is not just a women's issue—it is a family issue. When women earn less for equal work, families are forced to do more with less. Affording all of life's expenses is challenging enough—it shouldn't be made harder as a result of women being shortchanged on payday.

I believe that there is more that can and should be done to level the playing field and provide fair opportunities for women in education and the workplace. I would like to commend my colleague from Connecticut, Representative ROSA DELAURO, for introducing H.R. 1338, the Paycheck Fairness Act. This bill would strengthen the Equal Pay Act and close loopholes that allow employers to avoid responsibility for discriminatory pay and prohibit employers from retaliating against employees who discuss salary information with their co-workers. It would also create a training program to strengthen women's negotiation skills and establish additional avenues for women to seek equal pay in the workplace.

This legislation is long overdue and I urge my colleagues to support it.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE US 36 CORRIDOR PROJECT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution to recognize the benefits of the United States Route 36, US 36, Corridor project plan, and to commend the cooperative effort of several communities located along the US 36 Corridor between Denver and Boulder in developing the project.

The Colorado communities along the US 36 Corridor, including Westminster, Louisville, Superior, Broomfield, Denver, and Boulder, are experiencing a tremendous period of expansion. While this growth is very positive and certainly welcome, it has also outpaced the growth of its transportation infrastructure, leading to heavy traffic delays and sometimes dangerous road conditions.

In response to these conditions, the US 36 Mayors and Commissioners Coalition, MCC, a coalition of officials representing the communities along the US 36 Corridor, in coordination with the Colorado Department of Transportation, CDOT, and a coalition of local businesses known as 36 Commuting Solutions, developed the US 36 Corridor project plan.

The US 36 Corridor project is a national model for congestion mitigation, combining bus rapid transit lanes, high-occupancy vehicle lanes and safe bicycling lanes with traditional auto traffic lanes. The project ranked among the highest congestion mitigation proposals submitted under the Department of Transportation's Urban Partnership Agreement Program, and a record of decision is expected to be issued next year that will allow for its construction to commence.

Madam Speaker, I think the cooperation and ingenuity that was demonstrated in putting the

US 36 Corridor project together, as well as the project's benefits, deserve recognition from Congress, as this resolution does.

INTRODUCTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH PERSONNEL APPEALS PROCEDURAL CONSOLIDATION ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the Legislative Branch Personnel Appeals Procedural Consolidation Act of 2008 to bring the GAO in line with other legislative branch agencies and to address an important issue of equal rights at Government Accountability Office, GAO, after extensive consultation with all concerned. Over the past year my office has worked closely with the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to resolve serious employee wage and discrimination disputes at the GAO. African Americans, and older employees who have been disproportionately affected by these disputes and have complained that discrimination cases at GAO must be heard internally, the only grievance system where Federal employee charges of discrimination are processed and determined within a Federal agency without any independent review. This bill resolves this unique conflict of interest and due process issue that allows GAO to render the final administrative decisions on discrimination, labor and other issues against the GAO with the agency head appointing all the decision-makers in the process and no review by any disinterested or third-party agency official.

The wage disputes and complaints about the grievance system began when the GAO implemented dramatic and controversial pay-for-performance revisions to classify and pay its employees. The Comptroller General assured GAO employees that the annual COLAs that Congress votes for all federal employees would not be affected. However, many employees, including a disproportionate number of African Americans, did not receive their COLAs for FY06 and FY07, though all had ratings of "meets expectations" or above.

Consequently, GAO employees filed formal race and age discrimination complaints against the Comptroller General with the Personnel Appeals Board, PAB, which hears all such complaints. The PAB members are appointed by the Comptroller General to decide not only discrimination cases based on race, sex, age and religion, but also cases involving violations of labor, and of civil service or merit system rights. All other Federal and legislative branch employees carry employee complaints to independent agencies.

It was the excellent work of Chairman DANNY K. DAVIS and the Federal Workforce subcommittee, whose hearings uncovered the discriminatory effects of the pay system and negotiated back-COLA payments for all GAO employees. An independent assessment by the Ivy Group, hired by GAO after the watchdog organization, Blacks In Government, recommended a study of discrimination at the GAO, showed that there are many race-based disparities in ratings, promotions and other employment practices between African Amer-

ican and Caucasian analysts at the GAO. For example, having a PhD has a statistically significant positive effect for Caucasian analysts, but has no effect for African American analysts, and Caucasian analysts receive a ratings benefit from being assigned to lead roles on projects, contrasted with African American analysts, who show no statistically significant effect of being assigned to such roles.

This bill provides for independent review of complaints by transferring jurisdiction to the OOC, which handles such matters for all other legislative branch employees. The OOC represents the most recent bipartisan thinking and action of Congress concerning equal treatment for employees of the legislative branch. Because of the small case loads generated by legislative branch agencies, the OOC is able to handle the broadest enforcement mandate of any executive or legislative agency and currently enforces 12 different employee protection laws and is the only employee protection agency required by statute to continuously review new laws and incorporate them into its own jurisdiction.

The bill does not assign responsibilities to an agency beyond its expertise and does not put additional responsibility on the congressional leadership to make appointments. The OOC has indicated the feasibility of its participation and offered evidence that the statute that established the OOC contemplates granting additional authority to the OOC of the kind we seek.

I hope all my colleagues join me in assuring equal rights to GAO employees.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VIRGINIA OCS BILL

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, each week, folks across Virginia and the Nation are confronted with the rising cost of energy, from the cost at the pump to soaring electric bills. Energy is vital to every sector of our economy, including homes, small businesses and industries. When energy supplies are tight, families and businesses are severely impacted by the resulting increase in energy costs.

While the majority has succeeded in strangling any efforts to tap into traditional energy resources in America, our Nation's citizens have suffered. They have suffered with skyrocketing gas and food prices, and they have suffered from the fear that we are ever dependent on foreign, and sometimes hostile, sources of oil.

While the leadership of the majority in Congress can't seem to get its act together to solve this problem for the Nation, as a representative of the people of Virginia, I cannot stand by and simply watch this spectacle. The time for action is now.

Virginians understand that a major component in lessening energy costs is to produce more energy. In fact the topic of energy production on Virginia's Outer Continental Shelf, OCS, has received serious discussion by the Virginia General Assembly. I believe that Virginia should have every tool available to access its energy supplies. Unfortunately, a congressional moratorium on exploration of the

OCS prevents the Commonwealth from having every tool available to address rising energy costs.

Therefore, I rise to introduce legislation to allow Virginia to request oil and natural gas exploration activities off its coast. Should these exploration activities prove fruitful, then the legislation would allow Virginia to petition for drilling for these precious resources. This bill does not mandate that Virginia explore or drill off its coast. It simply removes the Federal Government's longstanding barriers to these activities. The final decision of whether to explore or drill is placed squarely where it should be—in the hands of the people of Virginia, through their State legislature and Governor.

This legislation is not a cure all, and it does not fix the problem all across the country. However, Virginia's two Senators, one from each political party, have introduced similar legislation over in the Senate, and this is promising. In order to demonstrate how broad the support is for allowing States to decide this issue for themselves, I would encourage Members from all States to introduce similar legislation until a threshold of support is achieved that breaks the Democrat leadership's logjam on this issue and allows the will of the American people to be heard.

HONORING BROTHER W.L. BAKER
AS HE CELEBRATES HIS 100TH
BIRTHDAY

HON. JIM COOPER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. COOPER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor Brother W.L. Baker, a fine citizen and leader in Wilson County, Tennessee, on the occasion of his 100th birthday, August 3, 2008.

Brother Baker has served God as a Baptist minister for more than 80 years, preaching to all in earshot and ministering to all in need. In recent years, in his so-called retirement, Brother Baker has actively served several congregations across Wilson County. Even today, he is an associate pastor at Calvary Baptist Church and has been honored as the oldest living graduate of Cumberland University.

Madam Speaker, it gives me great pride to represent someone as selfless, as dedicated to God and fellow man, and as full of life as Brother W.L. Baker. In his actions, he serves as a role model for Americans everywhere and for all of us in the 110th Congress. We are a better people because of his 100 years among us. I ask you to join me in wishing him heartfelt congratulations on his birthday; may he have many more years of peace, gratitude and prosperity.

HONORING DR. HERBERT R. FISCHER
FOR 37 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS
IN EDUCATION

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. LEWIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend and

true leader in my community, Dr. Herbert R. Fischer, who is retiring after 37 years of dedication to educational development and public service throughout the Inland Empire.

After 27 years as a classroom teacher, principal, and district administrator in the San Bernardino City Unified School District and as superintendent of the Colton Joint Unified School District, Dr. Fischer was chosen to be the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, a position he held for 10 years.

The San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools office provides support to the 33 K–12 districts and roughly 425,000 students attending more than 500 schools in the county. The County Schools office also provides business and financial curriculum and instruction, personnel, credentials, and management information support to school districts countywide.

Our district is privileged to have many fine educational professionals dedicated to improve the overall well-being of their students. Dr. Fischer is no exception and has taken his love for educational development even further. Under Dr. Fischer's leadership, the County Superintendent of Schools office has improved the State Academic performance index for 7 consecutive years. He has expanded many school safety programs through the Law Enforcement Education Partnership and the Countywide Gangs and Drugs Task Force. Dr. Fischer is also a founder of three regional P–16 Councils that work to eliminate the achievement gap by creating a comprehensive system for all levels of education.

Dr. Fischer's forward thinking has made San Bernardino a model for excellence in community service. In particular, he is credited with developing and implementing Alliance for Education initiative, which has over 1,200 business, labor, community and faith-based partners working with public schools to improve the college, career and labor readiness of students.

Throughout his career in education, Dr. Fischer worked with colleagues, students and parents, to increase college going rates, reduce student drop-out rates, and provide greater Internet and technology access to students and teachers. He also established programs to provide quality curriculums for all students and offer parents more educational choices. Dr. Fischer's hard work and dedication to the future success of our young people is truly appreciated.

Madam Speaker, please join me in congratulating Dr. Fischer for his many accomplishments and thanking him for making our community a leader in educational and professional advancement. The valuable contributions he has made throughout his career will be remembered for years to come.

INTRODUCING THE HEALTH CARE
FOR WOMEN RESOLUTION

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Health Care for Women Resolution of 2008 with my colleague in the Senate, Senator DEBBIE STABENOW. As we move towards enacting comprehensive Universal

Health Care we cannot leave out the important and unique health care issues of women. Women are often responsible for safeguarding the care for their families and they must be a central part of every universal health care debate.

I believe that the Health Care for Women Resolution recognizes the numerous of women as health care decision makers, caregivers and providers and requires that lawmakers acknowledge their needs during health care reform conversations.

We know that women face exceptional challenges and have a very personal stake in fixing our broken health care system. It is unacceptable that more women are uninsured and pay more for health care than their male counterparts. This resolution calls on Congress to take notice of these obstacles and make significant gains in solving these problems.

This resolution asks Congress to pass legislation within 18 months that provides health care for women and health care for all. I am all too familiar with how tough it is to provide care for our families. As a mother, grandmother and member of Congress, I will fight to make sure that women play a central part in every health care discussion.

The need for this resolution is clear. More than 17 million non-elderly women were uninsured in 2006, an increase of 1.2 million women since 2004. Women also pay 68 percent more than men for out-of-pocket medical costs, largely because of their reproductive health needs. Thirteen percent of all pregnant women are uninsured making them less likely to seek prenatal care and more likely to experience an adverse outcome after giving birth or pregnancy-related mortality.

Older women are particularly at risk. They often receive care through their husband and can become uninsured if their husband dies or loses private insurance by becoming eligible for Medicare. Because they have less disposable income, older women also have trouble paying growing out-of-pocket costs for the care they need. Moreover many older women have periodically left the workforce to raise families or care for aging family members they tend to have lower Social Security and pension benefits required to help them with increasing chronic care conditions.

Any health care discussions must also take into account the barriers women of color face in accessing quality care. Hispanic and Native American women and children are 3 times and African Americans nearly twice as likely to be uninsured than non-Hispanic whites.

I along with 32 of my colleagues in both the House and Senate agree, it is time to start acknowledging women in all efforts that we make to solve our nation's growing health care crisis.

I urge all of my colleagues to cosponsor this important legislation.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2008

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1338) to amend