

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BART STUPAK**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 19, 2009*

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, on Monday, November 2, 2009 through the morning of Friday, November 6, 2009, I could not be present for votes due to a family funeral back in Michigan.

Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

House Rollcall Vote 832. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 833. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 834. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 835. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 836. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 837. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 838. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 839. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 840. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 841. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 842. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 843. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 844. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 845. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 846. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 847. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 848. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 849. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 850. I would have voted "no."

House Rollcall Vote 851. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 852. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 853. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 854. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 855. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 856. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 857. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 858. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 859. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 860. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 861. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 862. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 863. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 864. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 865. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 866. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 867. I would have voted "yes."

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JOHN A. YARMUTH**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 19, 2009*

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, I was unable to cast the recorded votes for rollcalls 896, 897, and 898. Had I been present I would have voted "yes" for these measures.

## HONORING LT. FLORENCE BACONG CHOE

**HON. DUNCAN HUNTER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 19, 2009*

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, today I rise in recognition of Lieutenant Florence Bacong Choe of San Diego, California. Lt. Choe was a victim of a tragic shooting that occurred at Forward Operating Base Shaheen in Afghanistan's Northern Balkh province on March 27, 2009.

According to friends and family, Lt. Choe was all Navy. She was born at San Diego Naval Hospital and grew up in San Diego, where she graduated from Monte Vista High School in 1991. After graduating from the University of California, San Diego with a degree in Biology in 1997, she continued her education and received a Masters degree in Public Health Care Administration from San Diego State University in 2001. Following the events of September 11, 2001, Lt. Choe visited the San Diego Navy recruitment office and enlisted as a Lieutenant Junior Grade in the U.S. Navy Medical Service Corps.

While serving in her capacity as Healthcare Administrator for Medical and Surgical Services at the National Navy Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, she met her future husband, Lieutenant Commander Chong "Jay" Choe. They were married on June 21, 2004 and in 2006, they welcomed the birth of their daughter, Kristin Bacong Choe.

A dedicated service member, Lt. Choe fulfilled various duties in the Navy Medical Corps in Japan and San Diego before deploying to Afghanistan in May of 2008. It was during this deployment where she made the ultimate sacrifice after a shooter, disguised as an Afghan Army soldier, opened fire and killed Lt. Choe and Lt. J.G. Francis L. Toner IV.

Madam Speaker, for Lt. Choe it was never about self, but about family, friends and country. She dedicated her extensive knowledge about the medical field to provide quality care for the men and women of the U.S. Navy. For her, and the thousands of others who have given their lives in the name of freedom and democracy, I ask that this body continue to do its best to ensure their deaths were not in vain. May God continue to watch over the

family and friends of Lt. Florence Bacong Choe as her memory, passion and dedication to our country continue to live on as we moved forward to a better tomorrow.

## AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN**

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Saturday, November 7, 2009*

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act. Congress has made unprecedented strides this year in the fight to reform our nation's health insurance system and provide coverage to all Americans, and today's vote represents a historic culmination of these vast, collaborative efforts. This transformative bill offers real solutions for Rhode Islanders by providing better access to affordable, quality health care coverage and finally puts America back on the path to an efficient and sustainable health care system.

This summer, I traveled across the district to meet with Rhode Islanders and discuss health reform. I met with constituents who had health insurance all their lives, but then lost it when they were diagnosed with cancer. I met with small business owners who provided coverage for their employees for decades, but were forced to discontinue it when they could no longer keep up with skyrocketing costs. And I met with parents who were desperate to protect their children's health, but feared they would soon run up against lifetime insurance caps.

All of these stories conveyed the same message—health care costs in the United States are rising at an unsustainable rate, and they are placing a huge burden on Rhode Island families, employers and health care providers. This year alone, over 13,000 Rhode Islanders lost their insurance coverage due to rising unemployment. And those who still have coverage are struggling with rising premiums, copays and crushing medical debt. Meanwhile, yearly double-digit premium increases are forcing businesses to choose between keeping their employees' health coverage and keeping their employees.

As a longtime advocate of universal health care, I made a promise to my constituents to change the status quo of health care in America. The time for inaction is over—we must join together to pass this bill.

H.R. 3962 will institute the changes we need to provide more security and stability to Americans who have health insurance, guarantee insurance to the millions who don't, and lower health care costs for our families, businesses and the government.

This legislation builds on the strengths of our current employer-based system by encouraging businesses who offer their own coverage to continue doing so. Americans who don't have coverage through their employer will be able to shop for their choice of a health plan through a new "health insurance exchange," modeled after the tried and true Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, which successfully provides coverage for over 9 million federal employees, retirees and their dependents.

Unlike the limited options that are available to most consumers today, the exchange will

provide a more convenient, transparent and affordable way to choose among a variety of health plans that meets individual needs. Americans who cannot afford to purchase coverage within the exchange will receive financial assistance to ensure that they can obtain comprehensive coverage. Additionally, small businesses will receive tax credits that will make it more affordable to offer insurance to their employees.

I am also pleased that this bill encourages competition by ensuring that Americans will have the ability to choose a public plan alternative. Unlike private insurance carriers, the public option will not be obligated by big profits for shareholders or large salaries for CEOs. And while it represents just one option for the consumer and one component of health care reform, it will serve as an important tool to increase choice and competition and lower overall insurance costs.

Included in this proposal are a number of important health consumer protections. It will finally end insurance discrimination against people with pre-existing conditions and prevent insurance companies from imposing lifetime limits or dropping coverage when people are sick and need it most. It will cap out-of-pocket expenses so people don't go broke when they get sick; eliminate extra charges for preventive care like mammograms and diabetes tests; and protect Medicare for seniors while working to eliminate the "donut-hole" gap in coverage for prescription drugs. It will also require that insurers reinvest at least 85 percent of their premiums back into health coverage. This will limit the amount of money spent on advertising, underwriting, overhead and profits that do nothing but reduce health benefits for patients.

Improving access to coverage will also require investments in our health care workforce. Our system is strained by a lack of nurses and primary care physicians, particularly in underserved areas. That is why our bill contains important workforce development initiatives like new scholarships and loan repayment programs, grant programs for primary care training and immediate financial support for community health centers. This will strengthen the number of nurses, doctors and other health care professionals necessary to meet the increased demand for services.

This bill also makes historic changes to our antitrust laws by removing exemption enjoyed by insurance companies so that they are no longer shielded from liability for price fixing or dominating their market—all of which reduce competition and increase prices for consumers. It establishes new grant programs designed to encourage states to implement alternatives to traditional medical malpractice litigation with the goal of reducing frivolous lawsuits while allowing legitimate cases to be heard. This bill also has my strong support because every portion will be completely paid for, and it will reduce the deficit by \$109 billion over the next ten years.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is incumbent on us as policymakers to offer a new vision for health care in America—one that contains costs, improves quality, increases efficiency, promotes wellness, puts health care decisions back in the hands of patients and doctors, and guarantees coverage as a right to our citizens.

Every American deserves the promise of quality, affordable health care. I urge my colleagues to join me in fulfilling that promise

today, and support the Affordable Health Care for America Act.

RECOGNITION OF THE 211TH  
REGIONAL SUPPORT GROUP

**HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 19, 2009*

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 211th Regional Support Group from Corpus Christi, Texas, for their tireless efforts to ensure the security and well being of not only the country of Iraq but the United States as well.

Deployed on December 1, 2008, this unit worked in the face of grave danger and performed in an exemplary fashion in the management of installation and camp activities.

Sixty members of this unit will be returning to my district on Saturday, November 21, and it is my honor and privilege to welcome them home.

Our Reservists put their lives on hold, to fulfill the duties asked of them. I have the greatest respect for our service men and women who selflessly disregard their own safety in order to voluntarily serve our country.

Today, I ask that my colleagues join me in commemorating the 211th Regional Support Group of Corpus Christi, Texas, for their service to this nation.

HONORING ST. HUGO OF THE  
HILLS IN BLOOMFIELD HILLS,  
MICHIGAN

**HON. GARY C. PETERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 19, 2009*

Mr. PETERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the selection of St. Hugo of the Hills in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, as a 2009 Blue Ribbon School. This prestigious award is the highest honor bestowed by the United States Department of Education. That St. Hugo earned this designation is a testament to the dedication of its administration, teachers, staff, students, parents and community members, whose hard work of self-evaluation, review and goal-setting for the future has proved exemplary.

The Blue Ribbon Schools designation is reserved for schools that provide only the most rigorous academic programs or which have made only the most dramatic strides in improving their students' academic achievement. In fact, St. Hugo School was the only private school in Michigan to receive the award this year. St. Hugo of the Hills has a long-celebrated and exemplary tradition of striving for academic excellence, with standardized test scores that reflect a deep commitment to high achievement. St. Hugo of the Hills provides its students an outstanding program of nationally recognized excellence in an environment in which the teachings of the Catholic faith are instilled, nurtured and demonstrated. Since 1940, it is this combination that has enabled St. Hugo to count among its alumni scores of community leaders and dedicated, productive citizens.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my recognition of St. Hugo of the Hills on the honor of its outstanding achievement for being designated a 2009 National Blue Ribbon School.

CONGRESSMAN BOBBY L. RUSH  
DAY

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 19, 2009*

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus I rise today in honor of my colleague and fellow CBC member, the Honorable BOBBY L. RUSH. Throughout his distinguished career, Congressman RUSH has served as a determined leader for civil rights and a passionate advocate for our nation's least fortunate citizens and their communities. On Saturday, November 28th, Rev. Jesse Jackson and the RainbowPUSH Coalition will honor Congressman RUSH during "Bobby Rush Day," a celebration of his life and service.

Congressman RUSH was born in Albany, Georgia, in 1946 and spent his childhood growing up on the north and west sides of Chicago. As a child, his Boy Scout Master encouraged BOBBY to pursue public service. Congressman RUSH enlisted in the United States Army at the age of 17, which marked the beginning of what was to become a life-long career in public service. After serving honorably for 5 years, he left the Army to attend Roosevelt University, where he graduated with honors in 1973.

It was during this time that Congressman RUSH began his passionate advocacy for the basic civil and human rights of minorities, as a member of the Civil Rights Movement. In addition to serving as a member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Congressman RUSH co-founded the Illinois Black Panther Party in 1968. With the Panther Party, Congressman RUSH organized the Free Breakfast for Children program and established a Free Medical Clinic, which gained renown as the nation's first to develop a mass sickle cell anemia testing program.

This commitment to the health and dignity of communities of color has been a remarkable trademark of Congressman RUSH's career in public service. After serving as an Alderman in the Chicago City Council for 8 years, Congressman RUSH was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1993 to serve Illinois' First Congressional District. Congressman RUSH has been a strong leader and vocal proponent for issues such as health care reform, job creation, environmental protection, gun control and ending the embargo against Cuba. Most recently, as Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection, Congressman RUSH used his deft leadership to shepherd the bipartisan passage of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (H.R. 4040), which modernized the Consumer Product Safety Commission and established essential safety requirements for children's products.

An ordained Baptist minister, Congressman RUSH has remained true to the principles of truth and justice throughout his distinguished