

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the Internet has been a profound tool and resource of advanced knowledge to connect families and friends around the world. Internet users and providers have improved upon and utilized a free marketplace. However, there is a real concern that the new proposed "net neutrality" regulations may undermine or stifle innovation.

There is a time and a place for government to promote transparency in the pursuit of good business practices. However, the government and bureaucratic agencies should not needlessly impose regulations when the cause for concern is not justified. Before we move forward with new regulations on the Internet, we must weigh the consequences. We need to ensure we do not disrupt the necessary flexibility that has led to a vibrant marketplace, one which continues to foster new technology around the world, helping liberate people of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

THE MAYO CLINIC: PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY CARE AT A LOW COST

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

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I am proud that this Congress has started tackling the difficult issue of health care reform in a real way. Already in this Congress, we have passed legislation to provide health insurance to millions of uninsured American children and to bring our health care system into the 21st century with new health information technology.

In my district, the Mayo Clinic, in particular, is a world-renowned medical institution that has always been at the forefront of efforts to reform and improve our health care system. Mayo has been a leader in providing high-quality care at a low cost. As we move forward on health care reform, we need to acknowledge that our current system rewards the quantity of procedures but doesn't account for quality of patient care. We can look to Mayo, which has been lauded for its ability to produce the highest patient satisfaction with the lowest cost, and others like it. Unfortunately, in our current health care system, doctors are paid per procedure, giving them no incentive to coordinate care and determine the best treatment regardless of cost.

I encourage President Obama and my colleagues in this Congress to continue to listen to places like the Mayo Clinic, building on its incredible leadership to improve the way we provide care to all Americans.

TAX DOLLARS ARE GOING UP IN SMOKE—LITERALLY

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

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, our tax dollars are going up in smoke. And this time where there's smoke, there's no fire. Literally.

Bureaucrats in Washington, DC, plan to spend \$2.8 million for wildland fire management right here in the District of Columbia. The trouble is there aren't any wild lands in DC, let alone wildfires.

Out West fires are a serious problem that cost billions of dollars. Because of poor forest management practices, combined with the Rocky Mountain pine beetle, fires are burning hotter and larger than ever before.

Spending millions on fire management in the District of Columbia is a poke in the eye to the American taxpayer and a slap in the face to the people living in danger of real wildfires in the Intermountain West like Montana.

Join me in extinguishing this wasteful use of so-called "stimulus" funds once and for all.

WEST POINT RESOLUTION

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

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the United States Military Academy on its selection as the Best College in America for 2009 by Forbes Magazine. I ask that my colleagues join me in cosponsoring H. Res. 747 honoring West Point's achievement.

I am proud to represent the Academy at West Point. Since 1802 it has trained and educated tens of thousands of Army officers, including two Presidents. In exchange for 5 years' service, the 1,000 cadets who graduate each year are exposed to world-class professors, a gorgeous campus, and, most importantly, a free education. U.S. News and World Report named it the Best Public Liberal Arts College, and it possesses a top-ranked engineering program. Eighty-eight Rhodes Scholars, 33 Marshall Scholars, and 28 Truman Scholars have graduated from West Point.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to address this House and ask my colleagues to cosponsor House Resolution 747.

TRIBUTE TO LUCY BECKHAM

(Mr. BROWN of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to extend my congratulations to Ms. Lucy Beckham of Wando High School in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, on her selection as South Carolina's 2010 National Secondary Principal of the Year.

This distinction, presented by MetLife and the National Association

of Secondary School Principals, is a most deserving recognition of her leadership and dedication to the students entrusted to her.

The National Principal of the Year program began in 1993 and was established to honor those education administrators that have set the highest examples for their peers. Ms. Beckham's contribution and sense of purpose extend beyond the campus of Wando to so many areas, including her church and numerous community activities.

I am certain that all of the faculty and staff of Wando are proud to have her at the helm. And as a grandparent of a Wando student, speaking for all the families of the greater Charleston area, we congratulate her for being number one at Wando and now being number one in all America.

A CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, while we consider what we can really do to reduce unemployment, I think we ought to consider something Secretary Steven Chu, the Secretary of Energy, said yesterday. He told us that China will surpass or possibly has surpassed the United States, not in the ability to do low-wage manufacturing but to do high-technology manufacturing, unless we adopt an energy policy which will jump-start a clean energy economy for the United States and start bringing those high-tech manufacturing jobs home to the United States.

First Solar, a United States company using United States technology, will be building the largest solar plant but building it in China with manufacturing there. Applied Materials, a high-tech manufacturing company, an American company, is developing plants in China.

What Mr. Chu told us, Secretary Chu, is that we need to adopt the clean energy bill now pending in the Senate. This is the ticket out of this recession. This is how we're going to decrease unemployment. We urge the Senate to get moving on this bill.

AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN AID

(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, day in and day out our soldiers in Afghanistan are fighting a resurgent Taliban that directs its activities out of the lawless regions of Pakistan. They are fighting bravely but are consistently undermined by the poor direction of resources meant to aid Afghanistan and Pakistan.

It is deeply disturbing to hear that the Taliban are successfully diverting our own U.S. aid money to fund their insurgency. According to recent reports from GlobalPost, the Taliban has

extorted as much as \$80 million from American aid contractors in just the last year. Taliban insurgents insist on getting a cut before projects are built in areas under their control, and then they turn around and use these funds to fight coalition forces. Further reports out of Pakistan indicate that billions of dollars in military aid from the U.S. was diverted to nonmilitary purposes over the course of the last 6 years.

This region must not become a haven for worldwide terrorism. Supporting our troops means that we must do everything in our power to root out this corruption and stop our tax dollars from being diverted to our enemies or misused by our allies.

ADVANCED APPROPRIATIONS FOR VETERANS

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

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we in Congress will be able to make a real difference for the military veterans who have served our country so honorably this week.

From my first day in office, our local veterans groups in south Florida made it clear that one of their top priorities was securing advanced appropriations for the Veterans Administration. These dedicated servicemembers thought it was wrong that the VA, which provides health care and so many other critical services to our heroes, was subjected to the whims of an annual congressional budgeting process.

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't agree more. The needs of our veterans are too important to be bogged down and held up in this process. Putting advanced appropriations in place allows the VA to plan ahead, improve service delivery, and make smart, fiscally responsible budget decisions.

At long last this House will vote today on the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009. This bill puts advanced appropriations in place, responding to the top priority of our veterans' organizations.

I strongly urge my colleagues to speak out with one voice as Democrats and Republicans alike to support our veterans and pass this legislation.

COMMENDING THE HOPKINS POLICE DEPARTMENT

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Hopkins Police Department for being awarded the 2009 Civil Rights Award by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

By involving themselves in the Joint Community Policing Project, the Hop-

kins Police Department has enhanced communication and understanding between the law enforcement community and the multicultural residents of Hopkins. The department is setting a very strong example of leadership on this project through truly connecting with the community whom they protect.

I recently met with over a dozen police chiefs as part of my law enforcement advisory committee, and I continue to be very, very impressed with the level of service and dedication shown by our law enforcement community.

Congratulations again to the Hopkins Police Department for receiving this recognition and also for working hard for the community that they protect.

HEALTH CARE AND THE PUBLIC OPTION

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, last week the distinguished minority leader, Mr. BOEHNER, told the national media that he had not yet met the first average American who was for the public option in our health care reform package.

Well, I would like to introduce him to the woman who introduced herself to me yesterday morning in the Louisville airport. Her name was Margaret. She was in her late 50s. And the job that she had had with a restaurant ended when the restaurant closed a couple months ago. They had been paying her full insurance premium of \$700 a month. But now, because she has a preexisting condition, as do most people in her age category, she could not get any insurance in the private market and had to rely on the State insurance pool, where she now pays over \$1,000 a month for her coverage.

She asked me to introduce not just Mr. BOEHNER but all my colleagues that she is in favor of a public option, and she is dramatically and enthusiastically in support of our health care reform effort.

So for Mr. BOEHNER, if he wants to come to Louisville, I'd be happy to introduce him to Margaret. He can probably find somebody in southern Ohio who is in support of a public option, because there are thousands and thousands of people like Margaret who need our help.

□ 1030

BAD PROCESS LEADS TO BAD POLICY

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

Mr. LEE of New York. Millions of Americans are frustrated with the lack of transparency and the Federal Government, and rightfully so. I was dismayed earlier this year when the cap-

and-trade national energy tax and the enormous stimulus spending bill were rushed to the House floor just a few hours before Congress would vote on these massive pieces of legislation. There was simply no way for the public, the press, or Members of Congress to know exactly what was in these bills before they were required to vote on them. Bad process leads to bad policy.

Taxpayers deserve the ability to weigh in on these complicated pieces of legislation, and the leaders of Congress have denied the American public the right to full transparency in this process.

Along with more than 180 of my colleagues, Republican and Democrat, I have signed on to a discharge petition to force the Democratic House leadership to make legislation available for public viewing at least 72 hours before a scheduled vote. This commonsense rule will allow western New Yorkers and Americans everywhere the ability to know what Congress is voting on and ensure a transparent legislative process.

CREDIT RATING

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, more than one in 10 of fellow Californians is out of work. This is due in part to decisions made 3,000 miles away by analysts at America's credit rating agencies ranking funds at AIG and Lehman Brothers as AA or AAA one day, only to have these companies bankrupt the next.

Last week at the Financial Services Committee hearing, I asked the executives of the rating agencies why they kept Lehman Brothers so highly rated when there were plenty of warning signs they were in trouble. The answer I got was astounding. They kept Lehman highly rated because they assumed the government would bail it out. I then asked how many of these analysts who base these decisions on assumptions rather than evidence lost their jobs. Again, the answer was unfathomable: none, not one.

Mr. Speaker, I did not come down to the floor this morning to seek retribution, but rather some common sense. This situation underscores the urgent need to enact strong financial regulatory reform and specifically make the rating agencies accountable for their decisions.

When the decisions of a few in a Manhattan skyscraper affect the livelihoods of hardworking Americans all across our country, there must be accountability.

INDECISION IS A RECIPE FOR FAILURE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the country is at war in Afghanistan. Now