

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

there seems to be reevaluation and hesitation by the administration: Do we move forward with more energy and commitment to achieve total success? Do we pack up and abandon Afghanistan heeding the cries of the weak that demand peace, peace, any price for peace? Or do we hold the line preventing success or failure?

Our commander on the ground, General McChrystal, wants more troops to ensure American victory. Meanwhile, delays, deliberation, and indecision leave our troops prey to the Taliban.

Our troops are waiting for an answer; the Afghan people are waiting. Our enemy, the Taliban, is not waiting. They are encouraged by our inaction. They believe we will falter. They're on a determined mission to spread hate and terror throughout the region.

Indecision is a recipe for failure. We would do well to remember the words of President Kennedy when he said: "Let every nation know that we will pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

America must stop the enemy of humanity.

And that's just the way it is.

HEALTH REFORM DAILY MYTH-BUSTER: IMPACT ON SENIORS

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, there have been many myths about our health reform, and I want to give just a few facts.

Decisions about your health will be made by you, your doctor, and your family and not by anyone else.

They're saying that health care reform will lead to rationed care. Mr. Speaker, the fact is nothing will stand between you and your doctor or prevent you from making the best health care decisions yourself.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's a myth saying we can't afford to fix health care during an economic crisis. Well, rising health care costs are hurting our families and businesses now and driving up the budget deficit. If we do nothing, the cost of health care premiums will eat us up more and more. It will eat up your monthly paycheck, and the prescription drug doughnut hole won't get fixed.

CREATING JOBS SHOULD BE TOP PRIORITY

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

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, creating jobs and getting America back to work should be Congress' top priority. Unemployment nears 10 percent nationally and even higher in my district. We need to keep our efforts focused on the economy.

Today, there's a report the White House is looking for tax credits for

companies that create new jobs. I fully support the incentive and think the American people would as well. According to The New York Times, the Federal Government tried this approach in 1977, 1978. During that period, employment climbed at a record pace. An economic review study suggested in 1970 that the policy was responsible for creating 700,000 jobs of the 2.1 million jobs created during that period.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this important issue.

WORLD HABITAT DAY

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

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, in 1985 the United Nations General Assembly designated the first Monday in October as World Habitat Day. This year, the theme is Planning Our Urban Future.

Approximately half of the world's population now lives in urban areas, and that number will rise to two-thirds in a generation. Cities can be engines for economic growth; but they can also become home to extreme poverty, disease, environmental degradation, and conflict. In many parts of the world, government policies do not adequately respond to the challenges of growing urban populations.

Nearly one-third of the world's population of people living in cities around the world now already live in slums, and that number will also rise to double what it is now in 30 years.

I rise today to honor World Habitat Day and the goal of improved urban planning. We can have a sustainable prosperous future, but only if we help the rural cities address the needs that come from explosive growth.

"WHITE COATS" AT THE WHITE HOUSE

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

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today with my white physician's coat because apparently if you're a doctor, this white coat is a prerequisite for a meeting at the White House. You can see by this photo that the White House felt so strongly about this that they actually handed out white coats to the doctors that they invited to their photo-op on Monday.

Mr. Speaker, on September 11 I requested a meeting with the President, responding to his statement before Congress that his door is always open to talk about health care reform. Many of my colleagues in the GOP Doctors Caucus have also asked for meetings.

Mr. Speaker, I am here on the floor today to say to the President, I am a doctor, and I, too, have a white coat. I would like a meeting with you to talk about health care reform because I,

like so many doctors across this country, we support meaningful reform, just not a government takeover.

And, Mr. Speaker, I am here to say I can even bring my own white coat.

SWIPE FEE LEGISLATION

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

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Financial Services Committee will hear testimony from Kathy Miller from the northern Vermont town of Elmore. Kathy and her husband run the Elmore Store; that is the general store, the post office, and the social hub of the small town of Elmore.

Kathy will be testifying in favor of interchange, or swipe fee, legislation which would finally prevent credit card companies from overcharging small businesses like the Millers and others around the country. With every purchase paid for by credit card, they are charged, the Millers, over 2 percent. And as they have with individuals, the credit card companies have come up with ever more reasons and gimmicks to squeeze money out of the bottom line of these small businesses.

Though the store itself in Elmore is a powerful force in the lives of the citizens, the Millers are absolutely powerless against the credit card companies and big banks. That's why Kathy Miller is coming to Washington to support legislation to end these abuses and to add fairness and transparency to swipe fees.

ACCOUNTING GIMMICKS IN PROPOSED HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. Speaker, instead of passing health care reform that lowers costs, Democrats are positioned to pass a bill that hides costs by passing them on to State taxpayers. A frightening footnote in the Congressional Budget Office report on the Senate Financial Committee bill reveals a \$37 billion Medicaid mandate on State governments. Unlike the Federal Government, States can't just print money.

This \$37 billion mandate will force States across the Nation to choose between deep cuts to programs or steep tax hikes. In Louisiana alone, it's \$612 million over 5 years. That's \$612 million less for roads, for higher education, for secondary education, for economic development.

In addition to driving States into bankruptcy, this unfunded mandate deliberately hides the bill's true cost. Whether from Federal taxes or State taxes, the American people will have to absorb this.

If the bill actually lowered costs, its author would not have to hide behind accounting gimmicks to sell the bill.