

Pressure to scale back efforts to support the economy from those fearful of a sliding dollar should be ignored.

We are going to have to take risks. It is not a perfect system, but we are contemplating what will create more jobs. I believe it happens to be infrastructure and transportation, and we are looking at those issues. So know the facts. And we will have the facts because we are collecting data from all the States to be able to make the point that jobs have been created by this stimulus, and we know that we can do more.

Let me finally move to another topic and offer my thoughts, even though I believe in the First Amendment and the right to freedom of association, but I stand with the NFL Players Association, not to make Rush Limbaugh any kind of national standard or a national hero or the national issue. I will let my friends on the other side of the aisle determine what he is and what he is not, but I know that he is not the kind of owner that the NFL needs.

He does not represent the fullness of appreciation of athletes of all diverse backgrounds no matter what he wants to pretend to say on his radio station. But he is one who is divisive. Just as they are about to select him as a judge for a Miss America contest; I can't understand that, but that is their choice. Maybe they think he will bring in millions of listeners. But can you imagine a poor girl, scared already, to be able to ask a question about the person she admires most and she says somebody that happens to be a different political affiliation, she is, of course, not a winner. But that's their decision.

NFL has become one of America's pastimes. All of us from all walks of life and economic backgrounds look at the NFL. I know that there are far better owners that could be selected than one package that has this gentleman in it. I would ask the NFL owners to put standards in place, criteria; base it on integrity, not just the bottom buck. Anybody that wants to call a quarterback in Pennsylvania and call him out—he happens to be African American—as not being competent, just somebody that the media has promoted, not being talented—interestingly enough, that football player happens to still be playing and doing a great job. I don't know why in the heck, other than the big dollar, that Rush Limbaugh would be interested in the NFL. And so we're not interested in him either. And I would hope—though this is not my choice. This is not a government issue as well as it is an issue of integrity for those of us who believe that this is a great sport that brings all of us together.

I would hesitate to say that he is not someone who brings people together. And I just simply ask those owners to do the right thing; have a criteria of standards, a bottom line of integrity. It is not all about the dollar. It is about the value of sports and teamwork and working together and bring-

ing young people together and looking at values that are not political, that are simply about us getting along as a Nation, being admired by the world for having a great sporting community, if you will, whether it's baseball, basketball, football, soccer, tennis, golf. That's what it's about.

NFL owners, have some integrity. I think you need a different owner team.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOHMERT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA, COMES TO WASHINGTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, this week, a delegation of Monroe County elected officials, led by Mayor George Neugent, will be traveling here to Washington, D.C. In addition to meeting with Members of Congress, the Monroe County delegation will also meet with senior officials at FEMA on the issue of downstairs enclosures.

I have met with middle class homeowners in the Keys who are unable to secure flood insurance because of their downstairs enclosures. These homeowners utilize this additional living space to house an elderly resident, a family member, or to provide affordable housing to others. No one can afford to be without flood insurance in the Florida Keys. And since an inspection is required before any current flood insurance policy can be renewed, many residents are being left to fend for themselves.

While the issue of downstairs enclosures is certainly an important one, the state of our economy is the single most important issue for Keys residents. In recent months, I have had the opportunity to travel throughout the Keys to hear firsthand from teachers, from students, from entrepreneurs, retirees who are struggling because of uncertain economic conditions and a dwindling tourist economy. I have met with commercial fishermen in Key Largo who are abandoning their boats and leaving their lifetime passion in pursuit of part-time jobs that will at least pay the bills. Many of these fishermen are unable to make a living because of onerous fishing regulations and unfair moratoriums. I have met with small business owners in Key West who are closing down shop because of their inability to secure a bank loan which would at least carry them forward until next year.

The economic success of our community rests on the success of our fishermen and our hotel owners as well as on the environmental preservation of our

beaches, our coral reefs, and other precious ecosystems. As a Member of Congress who proudly represents the Florida Keys, I have consistently fought for increased Federal action to protect our environment. For example, our Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary is a world-renowned institution, and we have beautiful coral reefs that are a major economic engine for our local economy.

Last month, the House of Representatives passed the Coral Reef Conservation Act, a bill that I cosponsored. This bill increases Federal oversight of coral reef monitoring and rehabilitation efforts as well as promoting community-based conservation initiatives.

In addition to conservation efforts, I am working with my colleagues here in Congress to support the Aquarius Underwater Sea Lab, which is based in Key Largo. Aquarius is the only permanent underwater lab in the world, and its facilities are used in partnership with NASA and the Navy to train astronauts, divers, and to develop cutting-edge technology. I have been in contact with officials at NOAA to voice my strong support for the continuation of this important program, Aquarius, which is of great benefit to the scientific community and to our local economy.

During this time of economic uncertainty and volatile gas prices, it is more important now than ever that we reduce our dependency on foreign oil. The foundation of a comprehensive energy policy depends upon our ability to develop alternative sources of energy.

In Congress, I have been a consistent advocate of green energy initiatives. I voted to raise national fuel economy standards for our automobiles and establish a Federal renewable electricity standard. I have also voted to increase tax incentives for small businesses that utilize energy-efficient technologies in the workplace, such as solar panels or hybrid cars.

The Florida Keys has the potential of becoming a major market for green tourism, both nationally and internationally. And of course in order to achieve this goal we need to improve both our transportation infrastructure as well as our wastewater infrastructure.

I am proud to say that I have been a leader in securing millions in Federal dollars for our roadways, our bus facilities, as well as for the Florida Keys Wastewater Project. Securing Federal funds for the Florida Keys Wastewater Project is a top priority of mine in Congress because we have to protect our National Marine Sanctuary from further environmental damage. In the past year, I have secured more than \$25 million toward this project.

Later this week, the House of Representatives will vote on a Homeland Security Appropriations bill, which includes funding for a new emergency operation center which will serve all of Monroe County. I know that the need for Federal dollars is great, and I will

continue to do my part for the Federal funds for the Keys.

Welcome, Keys representatives, to Washington.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WALL STREET JOURNAL AWARDS HCSS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to applaud HCSS, a small business in my district in Sugar Land, Texas. HCSS was recently honored by the Wall Street Journal as one of the top 15 small business workplaces in America. In this tough economy, the company that puts employees first is the one that stands out.

I recently met with Mike Rydin, the founder and CEO of HCSS, about the success of his company, and he said, "We try to provide an environment that attracts and retains top talent and helps keep employees happy. Hiring top talent that loves coming to work allows us to provide topnotch software and service to our customers."

HCSS was one of nearly 630 private, nonprofit, or publicly held organizations across the country that were nominated for this prestigious award. According to the Wall Street Journal, they select employers that foster teamwork, flexibility, high productivity, and innovation, while also helping their employees grow personally and professionally and providing benefits that improve lives and communities.

HCSS has taken a hands-on approach to wellness for their employees that should serve as a model for private-sector solutions to our Nation's health care problems.

□ 2015

HCSS recently opened a new Sugar Land headquarters, which includes a one-third-mile, crushed-granite jogging trail, an exercise room, a game room, a gym with a basketball court, and a putting green. The company also pays fitness and wellness trainers to counsel employees on nutrition and exercise, and it offers on-site yoga and Pilates classes.

Each year, all employees are eligible to receive \$100 for each good result in an annual health screening, such as good cholesterol levels, not smoking and moderate body mass index. HCSS recently contracted with a company that will provide employees doctor consultations over the Internet right there in the HCSS offices.

A focus on employee wellness should be part of the solution to our Nation's

health care debate. Small companies need a level playing field in cost and affordability for their employees. That is why Congress should provide the same tax incentives for small companies that large corporations enjoy. Targeted tax relief would allow more companies to follow the HCSS model for health care for their employees.

As a result of the wellness programs at work at HCSS, their company-paid annual health insurance premiums fell over \$600 per employee in 2008 from 2004—\$600 per employee over a 4-year period. The company credits this to its vast wellness program and to its introduction of a high-deductible health plan, coupled with health reimbursement accounts to which the company contributes \$1,000 to \$3,000 annually for employee and dependent out-of-pocket health care expenses.

These are important examples of how health care costs can be reduced without looking to massive government programs to achieve greater coverage and lower costs. This is only one component of the debate, to be sure, but it can address many of the problems small businesses face to provide affordable health care to their employees.

Mike Rydin has future plans to build a school to train low-income people new skills so they can become more integrated parts of the communities in which they work and live.

HCSS has the kind of innovative and entrepreneurial vision to provide wellness and a comprehensive work environment that America has always relied on to find solutions to our bigger problems. I am proud of HCSS for their recognition as a top small workplace in America. This is the first Houston area company and only the second in the great State of Texas that has been recognized with this award.

Washington would do well to look at how small businesses like HCSS are achieving the results that we seek. Oftentimes, the great ideas come from the small innovators.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. ING-LIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. INGLIS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SOUDER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Maine (Ms. PINGREE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to be here on the floor tonight with a gathering of my freshman colleagues. We thought we would spend our hour talking about the very important issue of health care.

As everyone knows and as everyone sees in the newspapers pretty much every day, that is the topic on the mind of Congress and, certainly, on the mind of America. I know, for me, it's the issue I hear most about back in my district when I'm having a town hall meeting or am meeting with constituency groups—doctors, nurses, practitioners of any kind—to talk about their concerns about health care. It's the number one thing people bring up to me.

Certainly today, being from the State of Maine, the Finance Committee in the Senate—which isn't the House, but it's also going to eventually coordinate it with us—was voting out their bill. My colleague from Maine, Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE, voted in favor of the health care bill, making herself the first Republican to vote affirmatively on some of the proposals that we have before us. While she and I may differ on some of the policy issues, we all represent the State of Maine, and she spoke today about the great urgency of passing a piece of health care legislation. That is certainly of great concern to us, so I am glad we have an hour to talk a little bit about it.

There is such a range of issues to talk about. I know I want to mention a little bit about some of the concerns about insurance companies and the importance, at least for me, of voting for a plan that has a very robust public option. Before I turn it over to one of my colleagues, I just want to tell a couple of quick stories about the issues that we have been facing in the State of Maine.

Like a lot of States, we have a very small number of insurance companies. Many States find that 70, 80, sometimes more than 90 percent of their market is all taken up by one insurance company. I'm sure Representative TONKO from New York has some stories to talk about this as well and just about the issues that we have about why we need more competition in the market.

Interestingly, in Maine, our Attorney General has just entered into a very fascinating case with Anthem Insurance Company. Anthem is one of the few companies that does business in the State of Maine, and they recently asked for a rate increase. I think they asked for 18 percent. The State granted them 11 percent. They turned right around and sued the State of Maine, and said, You know, if you're not going to give us what we need, we're going to have to sue you on this. I'm just looking here through my papers.

I have some interesting information about just how much profit this particular company is making, and I will come across it in a minute here.