

away to people who aren't working as hard?"

A dentist in Colorado said she is going to work fewer days, see fewer patients and eliminate employees so she can be underneath the tax increase. She says, "If I am going to be working just to give it back to the government, it is demoralizing."

Mr. Speaker, this cannot be. What are we to do if all these small business owners start following this downsizing plan, lay off employees and don't send more money to Washington? Don't they know they can't do that? Don't they know that they need to pay more taxes to take care of the rest of us?

Mr. Speaker, all citizens pay enough income tax already. It is absurd to raise taxes on anybody during this recession.

And that's just the way it is.

WORKING TOWARDS COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, President Obama has said "our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness." Yet there are those that are full of hate and anti-immigration rhetoric that cannot see the rich contributions immigrants have made to this country.

Racial profiling in my district alone is alarming and the controversy of enforcement practices must be investigated. We will not stand for enforcement-only approaches that create a mistrust of law enforcement amongst the public. We need comprehensive immigration reform that addresses the real issues, respects families and includes enforcement and security of our Nation.

Congress needs to be proactive on this issue, instead of reactive to the negative few who preach enforcement-only failed approaches.

I urge my colleagues with the help of the CHC to have President Obama and Speaker PELOSI work towards comprehensive immigration reform.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF FRED PIERNO, JR.

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

Mr. ROONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Martin County Fire Medic Fred Pierno, Jr. Freddy is the only member of the Martin County Fire Rescue to ever die in the line of duty. He lived a life of service to his community and country. He was a Navy veteran during the Vietnam War and served for 20 years with Martin County Fire Rescue. His fellow firefighters enjoyed working by his side and he always put others first.

It was in 2006 while trying to save the life of a patient that he contracted hepatitis C. Firefighters and medics like Freddy put their lives on the line day

in and day out and face dangers that can't always be seen. Freddy is only the 13th firefighter in the United States to die in the line of duty from this virus.

We honor Fred Pierno's sacrifice to the people of Martin County. He will truly be missed.

FIXING THE BROKEN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Today, the President will convene a health summit as he continues to engage experts, Members of Congress, health providers and consumer advocates in what is one of many discussions on how to best fix our broken health care system and ensure access to quality health care for every American more efficiently and effectively.

We have already made a great down payment with the expanded SCHIP, the Medicaid and other provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. We in this body continue to work with our President through our omnibus bill; and as we prepare to develop a 2010 budget, we do so in a holistic way, also addressing the social determinants of our health, which is critical in order for us to meet our obligation to close the gaps in health that cause premature preventive illness and death in the poor and people of color and those in our rural areas.

We must remember that health care is a right.

PUTTING COMPETITIVENESS AND GROWTH FIRST

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, you know, it is so interesting to go home on the weekends and visit with all of my constituents. This past weekend, some of them said, I feel like everything that I am hearing from the leadership in D.C. is focused on fear and envy to push their agenda.

The President's budget is just big government reinvented. Here it is, the era of enormous big government. It expands government spending past the traditional no more than 20 percent of GDP that we have always expected, and it is going into the stratosphere. Programs are piled on top of each other to give us what is now a \$3.55 trillion budget that has come from this Democrat administration. And the deficits? \$1 trillion as far as the eye can see. And this is on top of the stimulus, the omnibus, the "Housing-us" bills, that are just ripping through this Chamber at speeds that would make my NASCAR drivers dizzy.

You know, some of my constituents suspect that the leadership in this House actually is choosing to confuse

the issues. They know you cannot spend your way to recovery.

GARDEN STREET LOFTS IN HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY, HONORED BY SUSTAINABLE BUILDING INDUSTRY COUNCIL

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

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Sustainable Building Industry Council honored the Garden Street Lofts in Hoboken, New Jersey, at their Beyond Green High Performance Buildings Awards. I am proud of the accomplishments of MAST Construction and all those involved in the project. I am pleased that their important work has been recognized.

The Garden Street Lofts project, completed last November, successfully converted an 80-year-old warehouse into a "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design" silver-certified building with 30 loft-style residences and over 7,000 square feet of retail space. The building also is located within reach of multiple forms of public transportation, further increasing its appeal and environmental benefits.

I commend this sustainable project, and I thank the Sustainable Building Industry Council for including it in its Beyond Green Awards program. MAST Construction continues to provide the 13th Congressional District of New Jersey with exceptional facilities. It is my hope that the Garden Street Lofts will serve as a successful example for other developers.

ENDING NO-BID CONTRACTS IN THE FEDERAL PROCUREMENT PROCESS

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, President Obama announced an initiative yesterday to fix the Federal procurement process. He wants to make sure that there are no more no-bid contracts.

Now, this is a welcome move. But if the President really wants to get serious about ending no-bid contracts, he should veto the omnibus spending bill we are just about to send him. It contains thousands of no-bid contracts for private companies. If the President can't see fit to veto the omnibus, he should at a minimum commit to veto future legislation that contains no-bid contracts.

Again, a congressional earmark for a private company is nothing more than a no-bid contract. What is worse, many of these congressionally directed no-bid contracts go to companies whose executives and their lobbyists turn around and make campaign contributions to those who secured the earmark or no-bid contract.

This morning we will be voting on a privileged resolution to investigate earmarks and campaign contributions

related to the PMA Group, an organization being investigated right now by the Department of Justice. I urge my colleagues to support this nonpartisan resolution.

HONORING SUSAN AXELROD AND CURE

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor today to rise to recognize two extraordinary people, Susan Axelrod and her daughter Lauren, for their work on issues concerning epilepsy. One of the very first meetings I had in the Congress was with Susan Axelrod, who came to visit me because she knew that I have a daughter with epilepsy. As parents of kids with chronic illnesses, and many people have family members who have chronic illnesses, it is a life-consuming endeavor to try to find a cure.

Susan founded the nonprofit organization called CURE, Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy, to educate the public, encourage research and raise funds for epilepsy. Susan's research through CURE revealed a new drug treatment which has stopped Lauren's seizures for the last 9 years.

In the decade since its inception, CURE has raised millions of dollars and has made great strides in the scientific community to develop research projects which one day may find a cure for other people with epilepsy like my daughter Alexis. Susan also assisted me with a bill to help returning service men and women who have suffered brain injuries and now are having seizures. I applaud her commitment to increasing funding for epilepsy research, and I honor her today.

I will submit for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an article about Susan and Lauren's commitment to curing epilepsy published in Parade Magazine dated February 15, 2009, entitled "I Must Save My Child."

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PROTECT THE SECRET BALLOT

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to be an original cosponsor of the Secret Ballot Protection Act, a piece of commonsense legislation introduced last week. This bill preserves the right of every worker to a secret ballot election when deciding whether or not to join a union.

We can all agree that intimidation and coercion have no place in our working environment, and should not be a part of a worker's decision to join or not join a union. After all, Americans have the right to elect their representatives here in Washington by secret ballot. Why should the decision to

elect representation in the workplace be any different?

The Secret Ballot Protection Act would guarantee the fundamental right of privacy, a vital part of our Nation's founding principles. It would protect American workers and American industry from the powerful special interests here in Washington. It would promote jobs in America.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

HAVE FAITH IN AMERICA'S FUTURE

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in this Chamber, Prime Minister Gordon Brown talked to us about having faith in the future, and that, in fact, is what America's always been about, having faith that the future will be better for all of us. But it's impossible for the American people to have faith in the future, faith in their future when the next illness or accident could drive them into bankruptcy or, in fact, could end their lives because they have insufficient access to quality, affordable health care.

This Congress and this administration is committed to changing that. We are committed to making sure that health care is a right that every American can exercise. And we have already taken the first steps in this Congress, by expanding SCHIP, by providing assistance to the States to provide more Medicaid, and finally, by developing the infrastructure, by investing in that health care infrastructure that will help make a system that can provide quality, accessible health care to everyone. That's what restoring faith in the future means to this Congress.

And this afternoon, when President Obama convenes his first health care summit, we will begin to take the steps, as a Nation, to develop the kind of health care system we all can be proud of and that will bring faith in the future to every American.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today the White House convenes a forum on health care, and we do need health care reform. We have the best health care available in the world, but it's just too expensive for too many. Why?

A brand new report from the New England Health Care Institute stated that in our \$2.3 trillion health care system, a full 30 percent of total spending could be eliminated without reducing health care quality. This is a savings of \$800 billion; savings that comes from improving the quality of care, savings from eliminating misuse of drugs and

less effective treatments. And we can find even more savings from stopping Medicare and Medicaid fraud.

We can make quality health care affordable and accessible. Let us work together for true reform. Let's fix it and make it better, not finance a broken system. Reform is the best medicine.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to see my colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. MURPHY, who serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee with me, to talk about the need for health care reform and the health summit that President Obama's calling today. It is a bipartisan summit. It is an effort to reach out to both parties to come up with solutions for health care reform.

And as Mr. MURPHY said, one of the biggest concerns is cost containment. We know that there's a lot of money in the system that we think can be saved and used to make health care available to more people. Basically, if you listen to President Obama, he said we need to expand coverage. We want to have universal coverage. Everyone should have health insurance.

But one way of achieving that and paying for it is to deal with the costs, because we know that they're out of hand. And increasingly, employers can't afford health insurance because of the costs. Individuals that go out and try to buy health insurance in the individual market find it hard to afford the cost. And also, we have existing government programs like Medicare, Medicaid and SCHIP that it's hard for them to continue to function because of the costs of those programs.

We need reform now on a bipartisan basis.

THE RIGHT TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS IS PART OF AMERICA'S HERITAGE

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

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, from hunting to protecting our families and property, the right to keep and bear arms is a part of America's heritage.

This weekend, as I traveled around Montana, I heard concern in my constituents' voices as we cussed and discussed House Resolution 45. This bill criminalizes gun ownership as we know it. It requires gun owners to register with the Federal Government after completing a list of government certifications. Gun owners and the firearms they own would be tracked in a government database, a database that would make eventual collection of guns by government agents an easy task. This is the first step, but it's one we must not take.

Gun owners are not criminals. They are patriots.