

but were rejected by the Democrats. Amendments were offered in the Judiciary Committee to extend special victims status to veterans, the elderly and pregnant women. All were rejected. No amendments were allowed on the floor.

Madam Speaker, I believe this legislation is, in fact, unconstitutional, violating the freedom of expression and equal protection under the law. I fear for this Nation as Congress continues to ignore and abuse the foundation and the principles that built this great Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. SUTTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. SUTTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### STRONGER CHRYSLER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise today to praise the very hard work of this administration and the President's auto task force and the many stakeholders in Chrysler who came together in an effort to protect jobs and build a stronger, leaner and more competitive Chrysler.

Chrysler's management is to be commended for making the hard decisions needed to form a new alliance with Fiat that will make the company stronger and more competitive in the future.

Many of Chrysler's creditors are to be commended for accepting a return on their investment that is more commensurate with the current market and will allow Chrysler to weather this economic crisis. Most importantly, Chrysler's workers are to be commended for sacrificing, so greatly, really, in accepting painful concessions that will allow the company to better compete. Because of all of this hard work, the foundation was laid for Chrysler to successfully restructure outside of bankruptcy.

But bankruptcy will now be required only because of the greed of a few Wall Street hedge funds that held a portion

of Chrysler's debt. Much of that debt had been purchased at pennies on the dollar, but these hedge funds demanded a return much higher than what was being accepted by other lenders and much higher than what the current market would bear, Madam Speaker.

These hedge funds operate in an unregulated area of the economy, and they seem to care only about maximizing their profit, no matter what the cost. They have seemingly no concern for the workers or families that would be devastated by the destruction of Chrysler.

They demonstrate no concern for the communities across this Nation that depend on a healthy Chrysler. They show no concern for the myriad of companies that would be forced out of business because of their dependence on business with Chrysler. Their only concern seems to be their desire to squeeze the last drop of blood out of this company. Those who seek to game our financial system in a fashion that helps only them and hurts countless other Americans do not have the best interests of our economy or our Nation at heart.

President Obama said today that he does not stand with these greedy hedge funds, and neither do I. But I believe that the plan developed by Chrysler and its stakeholders is strong and will fare very well in a quick bankruptcy proceeding.

At the other end of this time, I believe that we will see a stronger, leaner, more competitive and healthy Chrysler that will continue to build some of the greatest cars in the world. Some of my colleagues, who may have advocated bankruptcy last December, will feel vindicated that this bankruptcy filing happened today, but they should not.

Those who oppose bridge loans and called for a bankruptcy filing last December, in my opinion, held a position that would have led to a disorderly bankruptcy in the liquidation of this iconic American company. Such a bankruptcy would also have led to far greater burdens being placed on the American taxpayers when they would have had to absorb higher workers' pensions, health care costs and unemployment benefits. Those costs would have been much higher than what has been extended in bridge loans.

Fortunately, President Bush thought better and provided those bridge loans and bought this important company important time to reconstruct and to construct a strong viability plan.

Fortunately, President Obama and his auto task force worked in good faith with all of the stakeholders to put that viability plan together, and they are offering the continued support needed to see that the plan is going to have a successful conclusion. And what is included in that plan?

Madam Speaker, most importantly, no plant closures or new job losses. It calls for a strategic partnership with Fiat that will provide innovative tech-

nology to build outstanding fuel-efficient vehicles based on that technology right here in America. And it will also give Chrysler's outstanding products, like Jeep, enhanced access to the European market.

It also ensures that every single dime of taxpayer money will be repaid before Fiat can take majority control of Chrysler. So jobs will be saved. More fuel-efficient cars will be built here by American workers and the taxpayers will have their investment returned.

Now we will continue to look to the future, and there is more that we must do here in Congress to make certain that not only does Chrysler have short-term viability and long-term viability as well, but also that the entirety of the American auto industry does as well.

The most important thing that we can do here to help the auto industry is to help spur sales. Madam Speaker, we only need to look to Europe, South America or Asia for plans that are actually working. Eighteen countries already have implemented fleet modernization programs, and every Nation that has done so has seen auto sales rise, while every country that has not has seen auto sales plummet in this difficult economy.

That's why I was proud to introduce my partisan implementation to implement a fleet modernization plan, better known as "Cash for Clunkers," right here in America. Our plan would provide consumers with a point-of-sale voucher to turn in older, less fuel-efficient vehicles for new more modern more fuel-efficient cars and trucks.

I would urge my colleagues to research our proposals and to join us in that.

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

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

#### TRIBUTE TO DR. ROBERT ROSNER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a man whose spirit and dedication to the world of science inspired him to give four decades, with more to come, of tireless service to the Nation as a scientist, teacher, mentor, administrator and leader.

This week Dr. Robert Rosner will step down as director of Argonne National Laboratory, a leading Department of Energy science laboratory located in my congressional district in Illinois. He plans to resume his career in research and teaching at the University of Chicago, where he is a world-renowned astrophysicist and the William Wrather Distinguished Service Professor in the university's Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics.

I have had the privilege to work closely with Dr. Rosner during, over the last 7 years during his tenure at Argonne, first when he was chief scientist and later when he became laboratory director. So I speak with personal knowledge and affection when I say that Bob has left an indelible stamp on Argonne, the quality of life in my district, the Department of Energy complex and the Nation.

There is no doubt that he has created a positive and lasting legacy, both nationally and internationally, and I would like to take this moment to pay tribute to his many achievements and to wish him well on his return to full-time university life.

Dr. Rosner's first significant interaction with Argonne came in 1992 when he led the collaboration between Argonne and the University of Chicago scientists who created the Center for Astrophysical Thermonuclear Flashes, which he directed from its founding in 1997.

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In 2002, he joined Argonne's directorate as chief scientist and associate laboratory director for physical, biological and computing science.

Since his appointment as director of Argonne in 2005, he has served as a valuable national leader and spokesman on science policy and the value of translational science, science that puts basic knowledge to practical use.

During his term as Argonne director, Bob has strengthened Argonne intellectually, organizationally and physically. He strengthened and organized the laboratory's core capacities to make them more responsive to the Department of Energy's needs and helped forge stronger links between Argonne, the University of Chicago and other universities, especially in the Midwest.

He was instrumental in founding the Energy Department's National Laboratory Directors Council and served as its first chair. He also has worked to launch a number of new research programs and facilities, including the Computation Institute, the Leadership Computing Facility, the Sub-Angstrom Microscopy and Microanalysis Facility, the Center for Nanoscale Materials, and the Theory and Computational Sciences Building.

He has also created an atmosphere of open communication. Notably, he established a two-way dialogue between employees and senior management by becoming the first Argonne director to answer all questions in regular, informal meetings with employees from across the lab.

Madam Speaker, Dr. Robert Rosner has contributed greatly to the Energy Department laboratory complex, my district, the State of Illinois and the Nation. His commitment and dedicated efforts as a public servant provide an inspiration to us all. I know his presence at Argonne will be greatly missed, but I am confident that his abundant energy and zeal for science will con-

tinue to do great things in the scientific and university communities for years to come.

Today, I congratulate Dr. Rosner on his accomplishments at Argonne and wish him success in his many future endeavors.

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

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

#### PROGRESSIVE MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I am here tonight representing the Progressive Caucus with the progressive message. I am hoping I can get the assistance of some of our very able pages who are seated in the back to grab my boards and my setup materials to help me along the way tonight.

But the main idea is that the Progressive Caucus offers a progressive message, Madam Speaker, every single week, and this week, tonight, we are very, very pleased to be able to talk to the American people about the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights.

Everybody knows for the last several years that our economy has not had equal and open access to everybody. American people are struggling hard, with flat wages on average for the last number of several years, and we have seen people's pay remain flat as other costs increase, such as health care costs, higher premiums, higher copays. We have seen these kind of things the American worker has been suffering with, and it has been tough out there for everybody. And what happened with the collection of higher costs and higher expenditures and flat pay is that Americans began to rely more and more on debt to meet their basic expenses.

We are not talking about living extravagantly. We are talking about the basics. We are talking about a home that you can live in, raise your family in. We are talking about trying to move into a decent school district. We are talking about trying to have a house that is large enough for your family to live in, things like that.

So at this point we are here tonight to talk about a triumph that the American people have had tonight with the passage of the American Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights. So let me just get started.

I want to thank our pages. We can't do anything without them. They are very sharp, able young people. I would recommend to any young person that

they look into becoming a page. I want to thank them.

But I want to start off by talking about tonight, and this is our progressive message and this is what we do every week as we bring a progressive vision to the American people, the progressive message, that is what I am talking about tonight, and this is on behalf of the Progressive Caucus. For people who are interested, we urge you to check out our e-mail address. Send us some information. We want to hear from you, the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

So, again, tonight we want to talk about the importance of subprime lending, the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights, debt in the American economy. Americans are having flat wages, increasing costs of all kinds, and people needed somewhere to go. Where did they go? They went to debt. They went to credit card companies. They went into the equity in their homes, as they would take out home equity loans or refinances, things like that.

What did people do to make the ends meet as they needed to make purchases they simply couldn't afford because of the flat wages that they suffered through? They did other things, like sometimes go to payday lenders, and even sometimes had to resort to other sorts of means.

But what ended up happening is that, as Americans began to rely more on debt, they began to experience negative savings rates. Negative savings rates. What does this mean? This means that if you get paid every 2 weeks, on the second week, sometime around Wednesday or Thursday, you have more week left but you have no more paycheck left. That is what that meant. And that meant that you had to do something. Cutting back is what people did. Of course they cut back. But when you have food to pay for, mortgages to pay, things like that, you have got to do something, and people relied on debt.

In 2005 and 2006, we had a negative 1.5 percent savings rate, a negative 2 percent. I remember when I first got elected in 2006 asking one of our more conservative testifiers at a committee hearing what he thought about our negative savings rate in America. He said, "Don't worry about negative savings rates. We have got to recalculate what we mean by savings. Equity in your home, for example, is savings." Well, we now know, looking back from 2009, what that meant.

But I want you to know that even though the American people have suffered through these financial difficulties, even though we had to rely on debt, the American people made a decision that was in their best interests and decided, you know, we don't have good policy for our country. We need better financial policy that is more responsive to the needs of consumers. We need better fiscal policy that really invests in our infrastructure, puts money into people's pockets, increases jobs