

or closing their doors. I met with local health care leaders in my district. Among other problems, we are seeing sharp increases in emergency room use. If we don't have the health coverage, then we, the taxpayers, will end up picking up the cost.

Rising unemployment rates lead to higher numbers of uninsured and sharp declines of normal doctor visits. No one should be denied; they should be able to have access to health care.

Health care reform will not be an easy task. We must act on behalf of the American families that we represent. I urge my colleagues to give American families peace of mind again by working towards a true health care reform.

KENNY CALLAHAN ACT

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

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss H.R. 2881, the Kenny Callahan Act, a bill I recently introduced.

Kenny Callahan was a friend and a cameraman in a local TV station in east Alabama. Recently, he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in December of 2008 and died less than 2 months later.

Kenny worked two jobs to support his family, but when he got sick, he couldn't work any longer. Given only a short time to live, he could not outlive the waiting period required to receive Social Security and Medicare benefits. This bill, named for Kenny, would eliminate the waiting period for Social Security and Medicare benefits for folks diagnosed with terminal illness.

This legislation is about starting a compassionate conversation to help these people and their families. It's about a moral obligation to help those most vulnerable in our communities.

If ending the disability waiting periods for everyone is not included in the health care reform package, at a minimum, it should be eliminated for the terminally ill.

I ask my colleagues to support this bill.

ENERGY WRAP-UP

(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, last week, the House took an extraordinary first step by creating jobs in the form of unleashing a new generation of energy technology built right here in America.

Whether we agree on any other issue, each of us is committed to keeping this country safe, and the American Clean Energy and Security Act is essential to our national security.

The bill that passed the House marks a critical first step to creating clean energy incentives that will spur the de-

velopment of new technologies, create jobs, and fuel our economic national recovery.

While I was home last week in south Florida, I had the chance to meet with Yann Brandt and his colleagues at Advanced Green Technologies. As a solar panel designer and distributor, AGT is on the cutting edge of alternative energy technologies and is creating jobs as we speak. That's exactly the kind of innovative local business this legislation will support.

I am confident that Florida can be a national leader, as well as the rest of the country, on clean energy technology. This bill gives our business leaders the tools they need to create jobs and compete in the next great American industry.

LET THE AMERICAN PEOPLE CHOOSE THEIR HEALTH CARE

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, as the American people struggle to make ends meet, too many also live with the challenge of affording basic health care for themselves and their families.

Republicans want to make high-quality health care coverage affordable and accessible for every American and let those who like their current health care coverage keep it. Republicans support health care reform that puts patients and their health first and protects the important doctor-patient relationship.

Democrats are pushing for a government takeover of health care that would have devastating consequences for families and small businesses. A government takeover of health care will raise taxes, ration care, and let government bureaucrats make decisions that should be made by families and their doctors.

Republicans want to empower doctors and patients by making health care more affordable, more accessible, and more accountable. The American people deserve the peace of mind that comes with knowing they have the health care their families need when they need it.

We cannot allow politicians and special interests to stand between patients and the care they need. The American people deserve the freedom to choose the health care that is best for them and their families.

GEOGRAPHIC DISPARITIES

(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, the American people know very clearly that health care reform must happen, and it must happen now. They also know that it must transcend politics. This isn't a Republican or a Democratic issue. They know that crippling costs are

hurting our families, hurting our businesses, and hurting our Nation. By the end of today, and the close of business in this House, 14,000 of our fellow citizens will lose their health care coverage.

Reforming health care must have at its base reforming how we do Medicare formulas. My home district is home to the Mayo Clinic. As you heard my colleague speak earlier, providing high-quality care at a low price is the hallmark of the Mayo Clinic. But because of the way Medicare payments are now figured today, the Mayo Clinic and others who provide high-quality care at low cost are penalized. We can change the mix in the index by making sure Medicare physician fee formulas measure quality.

I urge my colleagues, Republican and Democrats, to make this the hallmark. Make the Mayo model the model for this country, and we will get high-quality, low-cost care that will strengthen our Nation.

HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, just days after the 4th of July events that celebrate our freedom, it's ironic that Congress will begin consideration of a health care proposal that threatens the freedom to choose and keep the health care we want and we need.

Health care is not about bureaucrat systems. It's about people. It's about patients. It's about life and death. Quality health care is the foundation for our children to grow and prosper and for our seniors to enjoy comfortable retirements.

We can all agree that our health care system must be transformed, but a \$1.6 trillion proposal that puts government bureaucrats between doctors and patients, raises health care costs for families, taxes our health care plans, and reduces choices is not the answer to ensure that our health care system remains focused on people.

HONORING TOM WILLS

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to mark the retirement of a man who has been a true institution of my hometown over the last 40 years.

In an era where loyalty is fleeting and in an industry that is constantly changing, the people of Louisville are grateful that Tom Wills dedicated his career to serving our community.

It was 1969 when Tom came to Louisville to work as WAVE 3 TV's meteorologist. In the decades since, Tom has been there for Louisvillians through it all. Whether it was the 1974 tornado, the snowstorm of 1994, or the ice storm this past winter, Tom's reassuring voice has been a fixture on televisions throughout Louisville.

We in Louisville are grateful to have had Tom walk us through every sunny day and every rainy night. After four decades, I am proud to join all of Louisville in thanking him for his service and wishing him the best as he moves on to a well-deserved retirement.

AN ECONOMIC LIFE-SAVER

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

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, the U.S. economy shed 467,000 jobs in June, yet the economic climate would have been worse without the economic recovery legislation we passed in February. One leading independent economist reported last week that our stimulus measures prevented the loss of some 500,000 jobs in the last 3 months alone.

Many State and local governments, retailers, and service-providing employers have been able to save thousands of jobs that otherwise would have vanished without money provided in the stimulus package to communities and consumers. As a result of our action, the legislation's broad approach will leave the unemployment rate 2 percentage points lower by the end of next year. The stimulus impact has and continues to be an economic lifesaver for families all across this country.

CZARS

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

Mr. KINGSTON. You know, we have all heard about czarist Russia. Over a 300-year period of time, Russia had 18 czars. Now, America has had czars, too—Ronald Reagan had one, George Bush had one, Bill Clinton had three, George W. Bush had four. This Presidency has 27—and maybe even as high as 33, nobody even knows—czars for all kinds of things like compensation, regulatory reform, terrorism, Guantánamo Bay, automobiles.

And who are these people? Well, we don't know, because even though the Constitution calls for the U.S. Senate to approve powerful people in powerful positions—and, indeed, they vote on hundreds of appointees—the czars go around this process. Now, they get paid \$172,000 each and they all have staffs. We are spending millions of dollars on people who have not been vetted by the U.S. Senate. We do not know who they are or what they are doing.

Why won't the President use transparency and have these people come before the Senate and talk to them? Why are they so smart, and why do you have to have duplication of already existing Cabinet jobs?

□ 1030

VIETNAM'S CONTINUING DISREGARD FOR CIVIL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today extremely frustrated and concerned over the continued arrest of pro-democracy dissidents inside Vietnam.

The Government of Vietnam continues to persecute journalists, bloggers, and other individuals who simply speak out against human rights abuses in the country of Vietnam. Yesterday I learned that Mr. Nguyen Tien Trung, another young and prominent dissident, was arrested by the Government of Vietnam. Mr. Trung is the leader of the Movement Democratic Youth, a group that mobilizes young people to demand change in the political regime in Vietnam. The recent arrests of lawyer Le Cong Dinh and Nguyen Tien further demonstrate Vietnam's continuing disregard for basic civil, political, and religious liberties.

I urge my colleagues to speak out on behalf of these brave men and women who are now imprisoned in Vietnam. Please join me in urging the Department of State to place Vietnam back on the Countries of Particular Concern list.

APPROPRIATION BILLS UNDER CLOSED RULES: BAD PROCESS LEADS TO BAD POLICY

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in protest of the way we're handling appropriation bills this year.

Traditionally, appropriation bills have come to the floor under an open rule, allowing Members to offer as many amendments as they would like as long as they give notice of such amendments. Now we have this year a process of closed rules, where appropriation bills are brought to the floor under structured rules. Members are limited in the number of amendments they can bring forward. And we're told that we need to do this because Members will offer so many amendments that it will slow the process down.

But when you have bills come to the floor with literally in some cases more than a thousand earmarks that have not been vetted by anybody, and obviously the Appropriations Committee is not vetting these earmarks, then we should have a process where people on the floor can at least see what's in these bills. We're not allowed to do that. We are bringing a bill to the floor today with just a few amendments that will be allowed to be offered.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to do this. We are told that people don't care about process. Perhaps they don't. But bad process leads to bad policy.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

(Ms. CASTOR of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform the House that the economic recovery plan is working in my district.

Yesterday, I was at the Johnny Ruth Clark Community Health Center in South St. Petersburg, Florida, where we made the announcement that \$1 million will go to expand that community health center. That community health center is the lifeline for that community, for the neighbors and businesses in that community. It's going to allow them to build new patient exam rooms. This \$1 million grant comes on the heels of a half million dollar grant that will allow them to hire new doctors, nurses, and medical professionals, very important because our community health centers are the places where folks receive quality, affordable health care.

Fortunately, in our health care reform bill, we are going to make an additional investment in our community health centers. They are the lifelines to our communities. This is one of the only ways we're going to make quality health care affordable and convenient for families and small businesses throughout our neighborhoods.

HONORING PRIVATE FIRST CLASS STEVEN DREES

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

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, it is with a deep sense of sadness that I express my sincere condolences to the family, friends, and community of Peshtigo, Wisconsin's native son Steven Drees, who was killed in action in Afghanistan on June 28 while serving his country in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Private First Class Drees' enlistment began on July 25, 2008. He was assigned to D Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, Colorado. Frequently decorated, he counted among his awards three Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart.

When any soldier falls, we mourn collectively and we pray as one people. And when we lose one of our very youngest soldiers so close to home, we are especially aggrieved.

Nothing can replace what Steve's family has lost, but if it's any consolation, let it be remembered that Private First Class Steven Drees remained dutiful and brave at all times and that he was a loyal United States soldier. That such a young man could serve so selflessly is a tribute to the nobility and fortitude of the people of Peshtigo, the people of Wisconsin, and the citizens of these United States.

Steven will never be forgotten.