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LIABILITY REFORM IS NECESSARY

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

Mr. FLEMING. Madam Speaker, as we debate health care reform, little attention has been paid to the impact that our Nation's broken medical liability system has on rising medical costs.

There are 125,000 lawsuits against physicians at any given time; 75 percent of the suits are closed without payment to the plaintiff, and in 83 percent of the cases going to trial, physicians are cleared. This means there is very little correlation between lawsuits and actual malpractice. More than that, the current system pushes doctors to overtest and overtreat to avoid being hauled into the courtroom, costing Americans billions of dollars in taxes and higher premiums. In a few cases in which there is a judgment, much of the money goes to pay lawyers, not the aggrieved patient.

Furthermore, the current system is driving physicians out of needed specialties. Recent studies show that one in seven obstetricians no longer delivers babies, and 49 percent of American counties don't even have an OB, largely because of high malpractice costs.

If the President and Democrats are serious about controlling high health care costs, they must call on trial lawyers to share in the sacrifice and to reform the medical liability system.

AN INCENTIVE FOR HEALTHY LIVING

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

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Madam Speaker, I rise today out of concern that the health care reform legislation this body is considering lacks an important component: an incentive for healthy living. Encouraging a healthy population is one of the best ways we can reduce our Nation's health care costs over time and can improve our country's livelihood and prosperity.

A healthy lifestyle makes workers more productive; it helps people live longer; it helps people make smart choices about diet, exercise and tobacco use; it helps prevent and not just treat chronic diseases.

Madam Speaker, successful health care reform must include an incentive for Americans to live healthy lives. It is the surest way to decrease our consumption of health care over time, thus, lowering costs.

My legislation, H.R. 3472, will do just that. My bill provides for health insurance coverage premium discounts up to 20 percent for healthy behavior and for improvements toward healthy behavior. This means that Americans would have a tangible incentive to maintain healthy cholesterol levels, heart rates

and body mass indexes, which are vital indicators of a person's overall health and wellness.

Madam Speaker, it is good public policy to help Americans live well. It is good public policy to create positive incentives for wellness and to help people make healthy decisions in their everyday lives. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3472 and to create health care reform that actually encourages wellness.

CLEAR ACT

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, the Natural Resources Committee has the responsibility not only to take steps to encourage more nuclear, solar, hydropower, and wind energy but also to increase the production of domestic oil and gas. Such an all-of-the-above approach will lead to lower energy costs and to more jobs for American citizens while also serving to make our country safer.

Later today, the Natural Resources Committee will be holding a hearing on H.R. 3534, a bill which will simply erect more obstacles to job creation and energy production. This bill creates new levels of bureaucracy, which inevitably will slow new development of American sources of energy. Now is not the time to further delay the advancement of American energy.

Madam Speaker, it is simple: more roadblocks to energy development mean less energy for Americans.

RECOGNIZING THE STATE OF MAINE FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOVERY ACT FUNDING

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

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the State of Maine for its efficient implementation of the Recovery Act funding for transportation infrastructure projects.

We in Maine have worked together to accomplish what this bill was intended to do—to create jobs and to put Americans back to work. A recent report on the Recovery Act shows that Maine is ranked number six in the country, having put 100 percent of the highway and bridge recovery projects out to bid. According to the State of Maine, 1,926 Mainers are now working and will be put back to work because of this Recovery Act funding.

While we still have a long way to go, I would like to thank those in Maine who continue to contribute to our State's economy.

DEFUND ACORN

(Mr. BILIRAKIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to share my outrage about corruption at ACORN. Illegal activities at the ACORN offices in Baltimore, in Washington, D.C. and in Miami show that corruption is not isolated. Already under suspicion for disturbing activities such as voter fraud in the 2008 elections, ACORN employers encourage prostitution, tax fraud and human trafficking. This culture of corruption must stop.

Madam Speaker, I, for one, will not sit idle and allow my taxpayer constituents to be swindled by an organization that receives millions in Federal funds.

Yesterday, I signed a letter to President Obama, asking him to disclose and terminate all taxpayer funding of ACORN. In addition, I have cosponsored a bill which will stop the Federal funding of this reprehensible enterprise. I call on Speaker PELOSI to bring this legislation to the floor for a vote so that we can stop subsidizing this outrageous and illegal activity. We owe it to our constituents.

ENACT REAL HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to continue our hard work in enacting real health care reform and to not bow to the powerful insurance lobby, to the loud voices of opposition, or to the claims of the misinformed.

While we're aware of the work in the other body, that is not the work of this House. We know what our choices are; and as President Obama has said, it's time to make them. If we do nothing, health care costs for employers will rise 166 percent over the next decade.

A recent Kaiser Family Foundation survey showed that an estimated 8 percent of employers will drop their coverage altogether if the current trend continues. We need real reform with a robust public option based on the existing Medicare provider network and payment system, not illusory proposals meant to appease those who have no real intention of changing the status quo or in voting for reform. Let's hold to our goals of lower cost, competition, and accountability.

HOW OUR INVESTMENT IN NASA HAS BENEFITED AMERICA

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

Mr. OLSON. Madam Speaker, yesterday we heard from Norm Augustine, the chairman of the Review of U.S. Human Spaceflight Plans Committee on the recently released options they

have provided the Obama administration regarding the future of our Nation's human spaceflight program; but as we debate the future of human spaceflight, we must not overlook the present.

Last week was a wildly successful one in America's space agency. On Friday, the space shuttle *Discovery* and the crew of STS-128 returned home after a very successful mission to the international space station. Last week, NASA released new and, frankly, stunning images from the recently serviced Hubble telescope. Finally, NASA completed a successful test of the ARES I first-stage rocket motor. This is another milestone of the Constellation program, our next-generation vehicle, to take us back to the Moon.

All of these were amazing accomplishments, but it was just another week at NASA. The American people have invested in space exploration for over 50 years. We continue to reap the benefits of that investment.

HEALTH CARE

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

Ms. CHU. Madam Speaker, opponents of the health care reform bill are trying to confuse and to scare the American people. They are trying to prey on fear of the unknown. Opponents claim that the average American will fare worse under this bill because health care will be rationed by some faceless bureaucrat in Washington, D.C., but they clearly have not traveled to my district in California or they would know that rationing is already happening to people of every age and background. Insurance companies are already denying coverage if you are sick, have a preexisting condition, or are not independently wealthy.

In my district, a healthy middle class father's care was rationed when he was told he could not have insurance when his wife was pregnant because he had asthma as a child. A hardworking man was told that, despite working 30 years in a factory, he wasn't wealthy enough to deserve the cancer treatment that he desperately needed.

Health care reform will prohibit the kind of rationing that my constituents struggle with every day.

HONORING GRAMMY WINNER AND COUNTRY MUSIC RECORDING ARTIST GRETCHEN WILSON

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Grammy winner and country music recording artist Gretchen Wilson as she receives the 2009 National Coalition for Literacy Leadership Award. This multi-platinum, acclaimed singer/songwriter was

one of millions of Americans who had not finished her high school education.

Gretchen left high school to pursue her music career, and has since had three number one albums. She realized, as a mother, it was important for her to lead by example and to demonstrate to her daughter just how important it is to have an education. So last year, at the age of 34, Gretchen earned her GED. She is teaming up with the Dollar General Literacy Foundation to honor GED graduates and organizations dedicated to the achievement of literacy.

I congratulate Gretchen on her hard work, on her resilience and on her many notable achievements. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing her dedication and contributions to adult education and literacy awareness.

REBUILDING THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

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

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, yesterday, both Warren Buffett and Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke said the recession is very likely over. While most Americans are still months away from experiencing any sign of recovery firsthand, we can take heart in the fact that, as a Nation, we have just managed to avoid the economic precipice we faced just 1 year ago.

Just 200 days since the passage of the stimulus bill, 30,000 construction projects have begun. Jobs of 5,000 police officers and nurses and of 135,000 teachers have been saved; and all across our great country, Americans are working to rebuild the economy. From veterans who are going to college on the GI Bill, to entrepreneurs who are developing innovative technologies for clean energy, to the work we're doing here in Congress to reform our financial regulations and to ensure that all Americans have access to quality medical care, our job has just begun.

It is still too early to celebrate success, but it is time to encourage those policies that work and to have the courage to change those that are in need of reform.

DELAY GUIDELINES FOR THE POTENTIAL RELEASE OF BTIF TERRORISTS

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

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, the administration is preparing to establish guidelines for the review and potential release of Taliban and al Qaeda terrorists held at the Bagram Theater Internment Facility, BTIF, in Afghanistan. This facility holds over 500 of the most dangerous Taliban and al Qaeda terrorists captured on the Afghan battlefield.

According to The Washington Post and The New York Times, each detainee will be given a counselor to grant rights and to review their potential release procedures. The press reports that the new guidelines were approved with a brief and limited congressional review. We know over 50 detainees released from Guantanamo Bay resumed jihad against Americans. The release of terrorists from the Bagram facility will form a clear and present danger to Americans serving in Afghanistan.

I urge Members to sign our letter to Secretary Gates, asking him to delay the release of these guidelines until Congress holds hearings and especially until all of our soldiers in Afghanistan are briefed on this potential danger.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, in America today, more than 60 percent of all bankruptcies are related to medical bills. Insurance premiums have gone up three times faster than the money people take home every year. Hundreds of thousands of Americans are denied the health care they need by insurance company bureaucrats, and millions more are holding on by the skin of their teeth to keep what insurance coverage they do have.

Yet there are still those who say that there is no problem and that nothing is wrong. I don't know who they've been listening to—maybe to the insurance company CEOs who rake in millions of dollars every year in bonuses alone or maybe to the insurance company lobbyists who have flooded Washington with millions of dollars spent on ensuring that health care reform does not happen.

Americans want progress. They want a system that delivers quality, affordable health care for them and for their families. By giving them a public option to choose from, we can keep insurance companies honest through competition, and we can provide our Nation's families with the quality health care they deserve.

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PUTTING PATIENTS AND DOCTORS IN CONTROL

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

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, last week the President and the congressional Democrats began yet another drive to enact their sweeping overhaul of American health care, H.R. 3200.

Following the President's address to Congress, I urged the President to work with Republicans to lower the cost of health care for American families and small business. Commonsense