

Our constituents need help now. My constituents have told me that health care costs are beyond their reach. Some can't afford insurance at all and others have been denied coverage or dropped the minute they got sick. These problems plague our entire population, but disproportionately affect Hispanics.

Hispanics have an unbelievable uninsured rate of 31 percent. Our health system must provide essential services to all Americans, including those of Hispanic descent.

Hispanic Americans are the fastest-growing demographic group in this country. They are our future workforce.

Without health care coverage for all Americans, our country's economic future is at risk. Health care reform means having the peace of mind that if something unexpected should happen, an accident or an unexpected illness, people won't fall into economic ruin. Health care coverage for all Americans means a healthier, more productive America.

The time for health care reform is now.

UNITED NATIONS

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, following the defeat of tyranny throughout Europe in 1945, and in the ashes of the Holocaust, the United Nations was born. It was formed to create a forum to confront dictators before they rose to global power.

President John F. Kennedy in his inaugural address warned some four decades ago that the United Nations must not become a forum for invective against the West. But as we saw yesterday, with the leader of Libya decrying Israel in terms of "the Israeli demon," as we saw the leader of the discredited regime in Tehran denounce the "barbaric" attacks of the Zionist regime and continue to deny the Holocaust in public forums, we have seen the United Nations become not only a forum for invective against the West but especially a forum for invective against our most cherished ally, Israel.

Today the American people provide 20 percent of the financial support for the United Nations. Today the American people are asking why.

HEALTH CARE REFORM AND PRIMARY CARE

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

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the importance of primary care in comprehensive health care reform. As we find a uniquely American solution for all Americans to have access to affordable, meaningful health

coverage, we must remember that insurance coverage alone means little if patients do not have access to health care providers or health care services.

Primary care providers are on the front line of the health care system, treating acute and chronic conditions and keeping costly conditions from worsening. Despite this essential role, it is primary care where we face the most acute shortages. Since 1998 the percentage of internal medicine residents choosing primary care has dropped from 50 percent to 20 percent. By 2025, America will have a shortage of 46,000 primary care providers.

I have championed efforts to bolster our primary care workforce, including new loan-repayment programs and increasing payments for primary care providers, as well as elimination of co-payments for preventive services for seniors and strengthening their ongoing relationship with their doctor.

I am proud that the health care reform bill includes this essential reform. I look forward to action on health care reform that addresses primary care.

PLIGHT OF FARMERS AND FARM WORKERS IN CENTRAL CALI- FORNIA

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, over the last few days, thanks to Sean Hannity, millions of people have seen or heard about the plight of farmers and farm workers in central California. In some areas, over 40 percent are unemployed and many thousands are having to stand in food lines so their families can have something to eat.

Farms have dried up because the Federal Government has cut off their water to save a 2-inch minnow elsewhere. This will drive up food costs elsewhere.

What many do not know is that the House voted on this issue twice, on June 18 and again on July 23. On the first vote, 171 Republicans voted for the farmers, 215 Democrats voted for the minnow. On the second vote, 176 Republicans, all but one, voted for the farmers. All but three Democrats voted for the fish.

Unfortunately, neither vote was close. Wealthy environmentalists won. The farmers and farm workers lost.

EXTEND UNEMPLOYMENT TO ALL REGIONS

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

Mr. PERRIELLO. Mr. Speaker, the House acted in a bipartisan way this week to address the issue of extending unemployment benefits. It was an important act in this very difficult economic time to reach out to those who through no fault of their own have lost

the lifeline to be able to support their own families.

However, with the way that this was done, it was looking at unemployment levels State by State. That meant that even areas of tremendous economic distress in certain States did not benefit from this program.

There are parts in my district in southern Virginia with over 20 percent unemployment, but this act as written will not apply to them. Rural counties with 12 to 18 percent unemployment are not covered.

While this was an important act of bipartisanship to help those who are struggling in this economy, we must do better. We must find a way to make sure that unemployment benefit extensions and other relief efforts are targeted at the areas of greatest economic distress, even if those exist in States that are doing relatively well.

I hope that the areas around the country that are like southern Virginia, small manufacturing towns and farming communities, are not left out of these future efforts. I will continue to fight to make sure all those that are struggling get relief.

OFFSHORE ENERGY

(Mr. BROWN of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last year Congress and President Bush announced an end to the decade-long ban on offshore drilling. But the Obama administration stopped progress on meeting our Nation's energy needs by instituting an extended 6-month public comment period.

That period ended Monday, but according to the Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, expanded offshore drilling may not happen until 2012, turning a 6-month delay into a 3-year ban. With the unemployment rate well over 9 percent nationwide and close to 12 percent in South Carolina, it is irresponsible for the administration to ignore the economic benefits that will come with America's energy production.

According to recent reports, drilling in the Outer Continental Shelf could generate \$8 trillion in gross domestic products over the next 30 years, 1.2 million American jobs and \$70 billion in wages annually. In South Carolina alone, offshore exploration could generate up to \$250 million in revenue annually, and would create over 2,000 jobs in the Palmetto State.

Mr. Speaker, we need to be sure that we are able to continue to develop our resources.

NATIONAL HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WEEK

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the

fourth annual National Health Information Technology Week. Health information technology is a critical piece of health care reform.

The cost of our health care system is the main burden. As we look for ways to expand coverage to the millions of Americans who don't have it, getting costs under control is absolutely critical.

Health care information technology is one way to do that. If we can improve the quality of our IT systems and our health care system, we can improve the quality of health care for millions of Americans by getting better information to both doctors and patients more quickly.

Right now the system is woefully behind most other businesses in developing and improving IT. This House took an important step in the stimulus package passed last January by putting \$19 billion towards improving health care information technology.

It's critical that that money is well spent. It is critical that we improve our health IT systems if we are going to improve the quality of our health care system for all Americans.

NEW YORK TIMES GIVES MILES OF COVERAGE TO OBAMA

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, President Obama and his agenda are in the news so much that media research groups are finding new ways to measure the coverage.

According to the Center For Media and Public Affairs, The New York Times has featured 405 stories about the Obama administration on its front page in the last 8 months. These stories total 120,000 column entries. That equals almost 2 miles of coverage devoted to President Obama and his agenda.

Not surprisingly, the New York Times featured more positive coverage of the President than any other news outlet, according to the Center For Media and Public Affairs. The national media should devote more time and a few more inches to covering the other side of the story.

AUTOMOBILE DEALERS WHO WERE FORCED TO CLOSE THEIR DOORS

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice concern over the thousands of automobile dealers who have been forced to close their doors as the industry is now reshaping. While the national conversation has shifted from the auto industry to health care, we must remember that car dealerships continue to be shuttered and thousands of hardworking Americans continue to lose their jobs.

In my State of North Carolina, 49 Chrysler and General Motors dealerships have closed, along with all of the Pontiac dealers. Thirty Cadillac dealers are slated to close and, unfortunately, the closures are continuing.

One of the dealerships is J.C. Harris Pontiac and Cadillac. This dealership is in my hometown of Wilson, North Carolina. They have been serving the community for more than 40 years. Despite the fact that they lead Cadillac dealerships statewide in sales, service and customer satisfaction, J.C. Harris is being forced to close its doors. Customers from the region will be forced to drive 120 miles round trip for sales and service.

With American taxpayers becoming investors in GM, they should expect better.

□ 1030

OFFSHORE DRILLING

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, last week, Interior Secretary Salazar stated that the Obama administration would "move expeditiously" on finalizing a new offshore drilling plan. While I hope this to be true, unfortunately, this administration has proposed one delay after another to block new energy production and new jobs.

In February, the administration stalled new offshore drilling with an extended 6-month comment period. Now we've learned they may wait until 2012 before implementing a new offshore drilling plan. This means the offshore drilling ban that was lifted last year by the President and by the Congress would effectively remain in place for 3 more years. With 10 percent unemployment, Mr. Speaker, Americans can't wait 3 more years to begin producing more energy and millions more jobs.

It's time to lift the de facto ban on new offshore drilling. It's time to act on the Republicans' all-of-the-above energy plan that will create green jobs, drilling jobs, wind and solar jobs, and nuclear jobs.

Let's get America to work producing more energy.

THE PROGRESS OF THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to highlight the progress that our economy has made. When President Obama took office, he faced the greatest economic crisis in a generation: home foreclosures were at a record level, banks were in crisis, and we had just lost 700,000 jobs in January 2009 alone.

Congress took action, and it is starting to work. In just 200 days since the

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was signed into law, 30,000 projects have been approved, including community health center upgrades and transportation improvements; the rate of job loss has declined; the jobs of thousands of police officers, nurses, and teachers have been saved; and 95 percent of working Americans received a tax cut in their paychecks.

Moreover, employers are hiring again, consumer confidence is rising, consumer spending is increasing, and the housing market is turning around.

While we're beginning to see the end of the recession, there's still more work to be done. We must continue to build on the progress we have made in the Recovery Act to further jump-start our economy and build a new foundation for a lasting recovery.

NAS ATLANTA

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

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Naval Air Station Atlanta. Since April of 1959, NAS Atlanta, located close to my home in Marietta, Georgia, has played a critical role in providing for our Nation's defense.

Over the past 50 years, NAS Atlanta has seen its mission change from training, to fleet logistics, to housing Navy Attack Squadrons and Carrier Early Airborne Warning Squadrons. In the 1990s, the Marines joined NAS Atlanta with MAG-42 and Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 142.

Units from NAS Atlanta have been instrumental to our causes in the war on drugs and global war on terror, as well as to the relief efforts following Hurricane Katrina. NAS Atlanta and those who have served there have proven an invaluable asset to the United States.

This Saturday, NAS Atlanta's distinguished history will come to a close as the base will officially become the home of the Georgia National Guard, as mandated by the BRAC round.

To all the personnel who are and have been stationed at NAS Atlanta: thank you for a job well done and for your service to our community. You will be missed.

THE STUDENT LOAN BILL AND THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that I take time to promote a bill that I think has been lost in the constant and necessary debate regarding health care reform over the past several months.

While reforming our Nation's health care system is absolutely critical, last week in Congress we passed a bipartisan piece of legislation that will