

HONORING STAFF SERGEANT DANIEL MERRIWEATHER

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a Memphis, Shelby County citizen who gave his life in service to our country in Afghanistan, Staff Sergeant Daniel Merriweather. He was the second soldier from Shelby County to die in Afghanistan since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom and our 12th in the Middle East since 2002. Staff Sergeant Merriweather, who was with the 118th Military Police Company, died when his convoy ran over an improvised explosive device.

He graduated from Overton High School in Memphis, Tennessee. He studied broadcast journalism, played football, loved sports, cowboy hats, boots, and country music. And you can see from his picture and from the reflections of his friends how much he loved life and how popular he was.

He wanted to serve his country, and he did so. He did two tours of duty, one in Afghanistan and one in Iraq. At 25 years of age, he is survived by his wife, Rachelle; his two children, 3-year-old Kale and Daniel Merriweather, Jr., just 3 months old; his parents, Pamela and Darryl Finnie; his sister, Adrienne; and his brother, Darryl Finnie, Jr.

These are the 12 soldiers who died from Shelby County, and unfortunately Staff Sergeant Merriweather joins that company.

Mr. Speaker, let us take a moment to honor the service and memory of Staff Sergeant Merriweather.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Sergeant Merriweather.

PRESIDENT'S INAUGURATION ONE YEAR AGO

(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, 1 year ago today, the President was sworn into office, giving Democrats full control of Congress and the White House. After promising the American people a misnamed stimulus plan to keep unemployment under 8 percent, we see 10 percent unemployment continuing to cripple families.

Three hundred and sixty-five days later, the American people still haven't seen this Congress focus on job creation policies to promote small businesses. Instead, the American people have been saddled with more borrowing, more taxes, more spending, and increased deficits. As shown in Massachusetts, the American people support limited government, not failed big government.

Seven million Americans have lost jobs since Democrats took Congress, and now Americans want real change. It's time the Democrats get this mes-

sage and get their priorities straight: Drop this backroom government health care takeover and take up job creation policies.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

MAIN STREET NEEDS HELP

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

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, last fall, at the end of the last administration, we all know that America's largest financial institutions and companies were on the brink of collapse, and the Federal Government, and more importantly, the American taxpayers came to their rescue. But let's be clear: We did not do that because we were fans of their behavior. We did not appreciate even then the excessive greed that was driving Wall Street without any sense of responsibility. We helped them because ordinary citizens were being crushed, and we hoped to get the credit flowing.

So what has happened? Wall Street has experienced recovery, but Main Street still needs help. Wall Street needs to help pay for the revitalization of Main Street, and that is why I support the Wall Street Bonus Tax, which is going to levy a tax on those excessive bonuses that the Wall Street banks have the audacity to continue to give out even as the plight of our middle class is suffering.

Mr. Speaker, we have to do everything we can to stand up for the American taxpayers and the people who live in our communities.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM SPECIAL ELECTION IN MASSACHUSETTS

(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, the United States Senate special election in Massachusetts offers many lessons for both Democrats and Republicans. Surely among them are these:

All true reform starts with the voice of the people.

Moderation beats extremism.

Common sense triumphs partisanship.

Voters can exercise real independence.

One-party control leads to arrogance.

There are few guaranteed election results.

Listen to the people, don't defy them.

Of course some will say there are no lessons to be learned or that the result of this special election should be ignored or can be explained away. But those who don't listen to the people, Democrats or Republicans, will pay a steep political price.

AMERICANS WANT REAL CHANGE

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. It's clear from the results last evening that the voters are angry. They haven't seen the change in direction that they thought they voted for 1 year ago in November.

Now, some Republicans will see it as an endorsement to turn back to the failed policies of the Bush years that put us in this mess. That wasn't the message. But the message is they want real change. They want the reform of Wall Street. They're tired of business as usual where the fat cats make out and the taxpayers get the bill. They want to see real reform in health care, take on the insurance industry, take on the pharmaceutical industry.

The Obama administration kicked off health care reform with a deal with the pharmaceutical industry. Now, that is not the kind of reform the American people want to see.

We need to step back and put forward a package of real reform. Take away the antitrust exemption of the health insurance industry; lower the cost of health care for all Americans; make the policies better; take on the pharmaceutical industry; allow people to reimport drugs from Canada that are exactly the same as the drugs sold here at a fraction of the cost. Those are the kinds of concrete steps people want to see.

HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION CONTAINS A MARRIAGE PENALTY

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

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, while there is controversy about the pending health care legislation, one point where there should be bipartisan agreement is that the Federal Government should not penalize people simply for being married.

After review, it appears that both the House and the Senate bills contain significant marriage penalties. In the House bill, an unmarried couple with an income of \$25,000 each would have their combined premiums capped at \$3,076 per year. If the couple gets married, their annual premium cap drops to \$5,160 for the same insurance. In short, there is a \$2,084 penalty for simply being married.

While under the Senate bill it would be less, the marriage penalty would still exceed \$1,500 a year. Simply put, a marriage penalty on the middle class is just one more reason to dump this government takeover of our health care system.

A NEW ECONOMIC VISION

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, we know that job creation is Congress's job one, and we passed some time ago a great job creation engine for a clean energy economy in the United States. We passed that months ago in the U.S. House, and we know we have a tremendous opportunity for job creation. Building electric cars: I drove a Ford Focus all-electric car a couple of months ago. Building solar thermal plants: We now have contracts developing out in the Southwest. Building new energy-efficient windows: We heard from an entrepreneur the other day about the tremendous advances in energy efficiency.

Yet, to realize this economic vision, the U.S. Senate needs to get off the dime and pass a clean energy bill, and those who think that we should do nothing because Copenhagen didn't reach an agreement, I'll tell you what: the Chinese are not waiting. They're building solar plants. They're building electrical lithium-ion batteries. They're building new energy-efficient windows.

The U.S. Senate needs to join us and create a job-creating engine with clean energy and pass the energy bill.

“NO” TO THE PELOSI TAKEOVER OF HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, many of my colleagues in the House are ignoring the American people. Our constituents are holding rallies, posting blogs, talking with their neighbors, writing to their Congressmen, and are doing everything in their power to get them to listen.

The American people are telling us loud and clear: they don't want a government takeover of health care.

Listen to them. Massachusetts did. Americans want, need, and deserve better than a budget-busting, trillion-dollar health care bill when 10 percent of Americans are still unemployed. They are tired of sweetheart deals, secret meetings and dirty politics. There is still time to do what's right, to do what the people are asking us to do. Vote against the Pelosi takeover of health care.

A SOBERING PICTURE

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

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, this is a map from a new report by the Government Accountability Office that I requested in my role as Chair of the Joint Economic Committee. The report provides a detailed understanding of the state of the housing market at the end of June 2009, and it provides a sobering picture of the housing crisis this administration, President Obama, inherited.

By the end of last June, 1.7 million of the nonprime mortgages that originated from 2000–2007 had completed the foreclosure process. This map shows the estimated percentage of seriously delinquent nonprime loans by congressional district. It also serves as a map of the economic damage and social pain caused by lending practices of the past decade that were unsound by any measure.

Last year, this House passed financial regulatory reform to protect both consumers and our economy from the damaging effects of predatory lending. This sobering map is a reminder of why this legislation needs to pass into law.

A BACKROOM DEAL TO INCREASE THE NATION'S DEBT LIMIT

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I saw the article in this month's Washington Post about the Obama administration's cutting a backroom deal with the Democrat leadership to create, by Executive order, a commission to deal with our Nation's excessive spending.

I am opposed to creating this panel by Executive order, and the American people will be opposed. Congress should be voting to create this commission, and it should be requiring that it act on the panel's recommendations.

What the President and the Democrat leadership have agreed to, which has only now come around to addressing the issue because they need political cover to increase the debt limit, is a fig leaf. This is the same group that has pushed our deficit to record levels and that has continued to write check after check from an account which already has a negative balance.

The American people will be cut out of the process. It is a backroom deal; and under this deal, the recommendations will be voted on by a lame-duck Congress, filled with retiring and defeated Members. This is wrong. Any action should be taken by a newly elected Congress, not one on the way out the door. Creating this commission by Executive order is the wrong way to go. We have to get this right. Too much is at stake.

JOB CREATION

(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. Mr. Speaker, during the Bush administration, the unemployment rate nearly doubled. We hemorrhaged millions of jobs, including 743,000 jobs that we lost in January 2009 when President Obama was sworn in. They made the mess, but we have to fix it.

Thankfully, this President and the Democrats in Congress have put measures in place to stabilize our economy

and to begin to create jobs for the more than 15.3 million people who are unemployed. To those who are actively seeking a job but who can't find one, the economy has begun to move again.

We have extended unemployment. We have extended COBRA benefits for those who are unemployed to help them make ends meet, but that's not enough. We have to continue that until we stabilize the economy significantly and until unemployment falls. During this Congress, we've really helped our job creators: small businesses. We have to do more for them to make sure we steer equity and investment to start-ups in high-growth fields like clean energy and information technology, and we have to strengthen microlending from the Small Business Administration.

Look, we are not finished until millions of Americans who want to go to work go back to work. Our job isn't done until Americans achieve the American Dream.

HONORING IRA LEESFIELD

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute Miami attorney Ira Leesfield on receiving the 2010 American Jewish Committee's Judge Learned Hand Award for Preferred Excellence.

The American Jewish Committee must have had Ira in mind when this prestigious award was created to honor the memory of Judge Learned Hand and the principles that he so well represented: individual rights and the importance of democratic values in an orderly society.

With his very strong professional background, outgoing personality and true compassion for our community, Ira Leesfield has been a strong voice for civil rights in south Florida for many years, and I am honored to count him as a friend.

As the senior and managing partner of Leesfield & Partners, P.A., Ira has received many other honors, including the Anti-Defamation League's Jurisprudence Award, and he was the first Florida recipient of the American ORT Jurisprudence Award.

I am pleased to join the American Jewish Committee, his family, friends, and neighbors in their celebration of Ira's countless contributions to our community and, indeed, to our Nation.

THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, how soon we forget.

It's instructive to recall where we were 9 years ago. We had created 23