

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, there are many heroes from Colorado who have fought and continue to fight in the global war on terror. Today I rise to pay tribute to one hero in particular, Army Sergeant Sean Durkin of Aurora, Colorado.

On March 27, 2010, Sergeant Sean Durkin and his fellow soldiers were on a mission near Forward Operating Base Wilson in Afghanistan when their convoy was struck by an explosive device. Sergeant Sean Durkin and two other brave soldiers exited the vehicle to respond to the blast but were all injured when a second improvised explosive device went off. Sergeant Sean Durkin was gravely wounded and ultimately succumbed to his injuries while at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

In 2004, Sergeant Sean Durkin graduated from Eaglecrest High School in Colorado. Sergeant Sean Durkin is a shining example of Army service and sacrifice. As a former member of the Army and as a retired Marine officer, my deepest sympathies go out to his family and to all who knew him.

GOLDMAN SACHS AND BAD BETS

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

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, last week we saw two stories about Goldman Sachs. It made record profits of \$1 billion a month for the past 3 months and it was sued for civil fraud by the Securities and Exchange Commission for the manner in which it made that money misleading its own clients.

Goldman has transformed itself from one of the most respected institutions on Wall Street to one of the most reviled for putting itself ahead of its clients and the American people. The \$1 billion designed-to-fail Abacus deal for the benefit of a hedge fund billionaire who needed to get richer did not create a single new job in America. It did not provide a single American family with a new mortgage. It didn't help a single new business get started. It did more to damage the economy than it could possibly have done to have helped it.

But the only difference with this Texas Hold'em new poker game that Goldman fuels is that when Goldman makes a bad bet the American taxpayer is the loser.

JUDGE REJECTS FIRST AMENDMENT

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Federal Judge Barbara Crabb sided with some atheists last week and wrongly ruled the National Day of Prayer is unconstitutional.

The first amendment to the Constitution states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise

thereof." The judge obviously forgot the "free exercise" part.

Our Founding Fathers jealously guarded the right to free exercise of religious conscience. Thanksgiving was started in 1789 by President George Washington so the Nation could, "Thank and pray to the Almighty for blessing America." We start each day of Congress with a prayer. Heaven knows we need it. We have a long history of honoring the religious foundation of America's liberty.

The National Day of Prayer does not seek to establish a government religion. Quite to the contrary, we specifically recognize one day each year the right of Americans to freely exercise their religion, free from anyone's interference, including atheists and Federal judges.

What's next, Judge Crabb? You going to ban Thanksgiving and Christmas as national holidays?

And that's just the way it is.

EARTH DAY

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the last 40 years of Earth Day represent some of my personal highest hopes, fondest dreams, and greatest frustrations about the environment. At times we have watched retreat, denial, and in some cases destruction. But we have also seen people mobilized and government respond with groundbreaking legislation.

Today, Earth Day is not so much an issue of hope or despair as one of determination. The current path we are on is not sustainable. It's, indeed, destructive. More and more people know the devastating facts. But what is exciting is that we know what to do about it. From Girl Scout troops to community colleges to the United States military, people are moving in the right direction with solutions that are cost-effective and that most agree we should implement even if we aren't concerned about destabilizing the Earth's climate.

The Big question is, Where will we be on the 50th anniversary of Earth Day? Will we have risen to the challenge of global pollution, leading by example, making real progress to a low carbon future while we revitalize American industry to compete for business at home and abroad? We can, and I hope that we will.

ENERGY AND THE FARM BILL

(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. The Third District of Nebraska is one of the largest agricultural districts in the country and is home to more than 30,000 farmers and ranchers. Yesterday, the House Ag Committee took the first

step on the road leading to a new Farm Bill.

Taking a comprehensive look at the agriculture sector requires us to be direct about the impact of policies coming from Washington to those 30,000 Nebraskans and agriculture producers throughout the country. Measures like the House-passed cap-and-trade bill will have dire consequences for agriculture. As higher energy prices hit other areas of our economy, farmers and ranchers will pay more for seed, fertilizer, equipment, energy, and other supplies.

My goal is to create policies which will strengthen U.S. agriculture and provide long-term stability for our Nation's producers who feed America and the world. We must not continue to saddle producers with onerous regulations which stand in the way of growth and only lead to more uncertainty.

LETTER TO THE SEC RE: GOLDMAN SACHS AND AIG

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask the Securities and Exchange Commission to do their job. The letter Mr. DEFAZIO and I wrote to the SEC asks for nothing more and nothing less. The SEC has sued Goldman Sachs for potential fraud. Rather than jumping to the conclusion that there was no fraud or simply convicting Goldman Sachs in the court of public opinion, Mr. DEFAZIO and our 36 cosigners and I call for an expanded investigation by the SEC. Should fraud be found, we ask that any taxpayer money paid by AIG and obtained through fraudulent transactions be recovered.

Finally, we are asking that evidence of criminal wrongdoing be turned over to the Justice Department. The SEC must be serious about reining in companies who ignore our laws. I am committed to this cause, Mr. DEFAZIO is committed to this cause, and our 36 cosponsors are committed to this cause.

I invite all of my colleagues to sign onto the letter and join us.

ELIMINATE SWEETHEART DEALS

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

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I introduced a bill that would eliminate sweetheart deals. Recently, the current health care bill that got passed, I know in my area, in my town hall meetings, talking to a lot of Americans, people are concerned about the health care bill that just passed, but they are outraged about the sweetheart deals.

What do I mean? The \$300 million that went to the Louisiana purchase, \$100 million that went to a hospital in Connecticut. People are outraged because they feel it is their money, it is their taxpayer money, and they are very concerned about it. They feel it is buying votes.

And that's the reason I think we have such a low approval rating in this country, because they view it as back-room deals, secret deals. This bill will eliminate all the sweetheart deals that are in this bill.

I ask my colleagues to join me in eliminating sweetheart deals in the current health care legislation.

THE AMT ADJUSTMENT ACT

(Mr. HALL of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, a critical component of our economic recovery is tax relief for our middle class. I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the AMT Adjustment Act, which eliminates the AMT from the lives of most middle class families and greatly reduces it for the rest.

In places with a high cost of living like New York's Hudson Valley, more and more middle class taxpayers find themselves paying the excessive AMT. We must restore balance to the Tax Code and prevent this millionaire's tax from hitting the middle class for once and for all.

H.R. 5077 increases the amount of income exempt from the AMT and permanently fixes the tax by indexing it to the cost of living. Tax day is bad enough already, and it shouldn't have big surprises to the tune of thousands of dollars our families have to pay.

Congress must stand up for the middle class. I urge support for this bill.

THE ADMINISTRATION AND ISRAEL

(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 express my serious concern about the way the administration is dealing with Israel and how destructive I think their behavior is to our relationship.

I would like to remind the administration that the overwhelming majority of the Members of Congress, Democrat and Republican, but more importantly the overwhelming majority of Americans, fiercely support our friend Israel and expect the administration to reflect that in their behavior.

We have had this President go to Saudi Arabia and to Egypt to reemphasize how important it is to improve relations with the Muslim nations. He didn't visit Israel while he was over there to emphasize how important it was to keep and maintain support for our relationship with that Jewish State.

We have had Vice President BIDEN go there and condemn the construction of apartments in Jerusalem. Secretary Clinton did the same thing. Vice President BIDEN was an hour and a half late for a dinner with the Prime Minister.

How disrespectful. When President Obama met with Netanyahu in the White House and had dinner with him, he walked out on that dinner. How disrespectful.

We expect more from our President when it comes to dealing with Israel than just disrespect. We expect a re-emphasis of our support for Israel.

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EQUAL PAY DAY

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

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, this week we marked Equal Pay Day, a day when we recognize the unequal pay of women in this country. Today, women still only make 77 cents to every dollar earned by men. But this disparity is not a women's issue. It's a family issue.

There are just as many women as there are men in the workforce now, and women are the breadwinner or co-breadwinner in about two-thirds of all American families. That is why all of us, men and women alike, have such a big stake in eliminating this gap.

I was proud that my first speech as a freshman in this body was in support of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and when that legislation became the first bill that President Obama signed after taking office. I was proud when Maine had Lilly Ledbetter herself to visit our State last month. And I am proud of the fact that Maine has passed a comparable worth law and made great strides towards ending pay discrimination in our own State.

But for all we have to be proud of, we have so much more to do because when women are paid less, everybody suffers.

END BAILOUTS ONCE AND FOR ALL

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

Ms. FOXX. What's the difference between an "orderly liquidation fund" and a taxpayer-funded bailout? There is no difference.

Senate Democrats say they need \$50 billion to create a new fund so the government can "wind down" failing financial firms. House Democrats want \$100 billion more. Both bills increase taxes on consumers at a time when they can least afford it.

Once the bailout fund is in place, government bureaucrats will decide which Wall Street firms are too big to fail, and then they'll use your hard-earned dollars to pay off the firm's creditors. Sound familiar? It's what they did for companies like AIG with the \$700 billion TARP bailout.

Now Democrats are pushing "TARP Two." They want to give the government the power of a permanent bailout fund to get back in the game of decid-

ing which of their Wall Street friends to rescue. And their bill does nothing about Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac—the two enterprises at the heart of the economic meltdown.

Republicans have better solutions. Our measure deals with Fannie and Freddie and places failed firms into bankruptcy. It also provides better and smarter regulatory reform, stops the policy of "too big to fail," and protects taxpayers by ending bailouts once and for all.

EARTH DAY

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the 40th anniversary of Earth Day to support the millions of people around the world who are dedicating their time and service to protecting our environment. I commend all of our citizens for their efforts to clean up our environment, but most of all, I look forward to seeing what we in Congress will do to support them.

I hope this will include passage of legislation I've recently introduced that will restore and protect the largest estuary on the west coast—the San Francisco Bay and its watersheds, which are a national treasure and a resource of worldwide significance.

I also encourage all of us to stand with our constituents this week who are lending their time and service to activities to clean up our environment. One town in my district expects over 5,000 people to dedicate their day to clean up the local shoreline. Earth Day is truly about service, and it's a great opportunity for friends and neighbors to come together on behalf of our planet.

BAILOUT CULTURE

(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. With all of this talk about another big bank bailout and protecting companies that are too big to fail, I think we need to bring things back into perspective. The government should not be in the business of picking winners and losers—especially not at the expense of the American taxpayer.

America was built on freedom and free enterprise. Our Founding Fathers never envisioned a Big Brother government so entrenched in the private sector that it would prop up companies like Fannie and Freddie, rescue Wall Street, bail out AIG, and own car companies. What incentive does a corporation have to be responsible to its employees, customers, communities, and shareholders if it knows Uncle Sam is going to be there to pick up the pieces when it falls apart?

With unemployment at 10 percent and companies hesitant to hire new