

around, and what do they do? Criticize. Criticize progress of creating jobs again. Criticize trying to create an opportunity for America to have good health care again. Criticize the fact that we are able to improve bridges and roads. Criticize the fact that we are going to be able to approve the money to help the unemployed. Eight years of driving the economy into the ground.

One year, President Obama had 1 year to make sure that we begin to restore America to the prosperity that we had 8 years prior to the Bush administration. Let's continue to move in the right direction.

ORLANDO ZAPATA TAMAYO

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I rise today to inform my colleagues that a great Cuban hero, Orlando Zapata Tamayo, who is a prisoner of conscience in the gulag of the Castro brothers, is in critical condition and near death.

Forty-two years old, Orlando Zapata has been active in the Cuban pro-democracy movement for many years. Already a political prisoner in 2003, he was released by Castro for 14 days before being imprisoned once again and sentenced to 25 years in the gulag, in March 2003.

A colleague and partner in the struggle for freedom of Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, Orlando Zapata personifies the best of mankind. And the fact that he is near death at this moment in the Castros' gulag points to the profoundly criminal nature of that grotesque totalitarian criminal regime. His condition and fate are the Castro brothers' doing. If he dies, his blood will be on Castro's hands.

CURRENT HEALTH CARE SYSTEM CANNOT BE SUSTAINED

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the current system with reference to health care cannot be sustained. We are currently spending \$2.5 trillion per year. That is a large number, difficult to get your mind around it. However, \$79,000 a second is something that we all can understand. And by 2018 it will become \$4.4 trillion per year. That would be \$139,000 per second.

For those who say, this is not my fight, I have good insurance, it may be that you have not utilized your insurance and you don't really know how good it isn't. For those who say I have insurance, I am okay, remember that 14,000 people per day lose their insurance. But for the grace of God, you may be one of the 14,000 people without insurance tomorrow. So please understand this is everybody's fight, because the economy of this country is dependent upon how we impact health care.

Finally, this. In my State of Texas, 6 million are uninsured, 1.4 million children uninsured. This is inexcusable. There is a difference between something being unsustainable and being inexcusable. It is inexcusable.

TOO MUCH GOVERNMENT SPENDING

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

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the other side of the aisle has been calling for even more misguided government spending despite the fact that they have controlled this House for the last 3 years, with massive spending in the past. Hasn't the American public spoken loud and clear that the Federal Government is just spending too much and trying to do too much, and that they want us to start cutting spending here?

You know, the consequences of governments spending too much money are apparent around the world. Over in Greece, with potential default, they are only the tip of the iceberg. You have Italy and Spain also showing serious concerns as well. But here at home over the last 3 years we now see, because of the Democrat leadership of the House, \$1.6 trillion deficits without any serious commitment whatsoever about trying to cut spending.

And what is the result of that? Well, Moody's is now saying that there is a real possibility that the U.S. may lose its AAA rating. Think about that for a moment. Serious people are beginning to whisper that if things don't change here, the U.S. may actually default on its debts in the coming years and do serious damage to our economy and weaken it and cause higher interest rates.

You know, throughout the last year we have talked a lot about spotting systemic risk in our economy. Well, there is one major risk in it right now, our mammoth Federal deficit and ever-increasing debt. Washington and the Democrat majority leadership must get serious about addressing this fast.

WE NEED A JOBS BILL

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

Ms. NORTON. One has to congratulate the other side for chutzpah. After racking up most of what is now the deficit, they have gotten religion on the deficit in the middle of a recession. When conservative and progressive economists say when the only body that has any money is the government, you better spend it for jobs.

I wonder if in this House we would at least do what they did in the other body yesterday, when five Republicans crossed over to actually be for a modest jobs bill. It certainly is not the bill that I would have wanted, but what is

noteworthy is that the majority of Republicans actually voted against the jobs bill yesterday that spent only \$15 billion.

Were you afraid that that would contribute to the deficit? How much are you willing to help the American people get out of the deficit that you left us and get out of the economic morass that you have bequeathed us? One begins to wonder if we could even get unemployment insurance passed. We have sent over a bill to the other body which is far larger. Let's hope that we can get more such bills passed.

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THERE'S A BETTER WAY FORWARD

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, you know, small businesses want, need, and deserve policies that will encourage, not punish economic growth. And yet, due to the Democrats' tax-and-spend agenda, job creators in my district are either cutting their payrolls or holding back on hiring. That's why we have a record 16 million Americans unemployed.

There's a better way forward, and that way forward is with pro-growth, small business tax cuts that will help get this economy moving again. Mr. Speaker, small business owners know how to run their company better than a Washington bureaucrat. It's time for the government to get out of the business of running small business.

THE RECOVERY ACT

(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'm here to report that the Recovery Act is working in my hometown of Tampa, Florida. Yesterday, I attended a groundbreaking for a new community health center that is desperately needed in a part of town where they don't have anywhere else to go other than the emergency room, where we all end up paying for their health care.

But in attendance at the groundbreaking were some of the construction workers, contractors, the architects, the real estate agents that will be put to work constructing this new community health center.

And just a couple of weeks ago I visited another community health center up the road, run by Tampa Family Health Centers, and met doctors, nurses, medical professionals, a new receptionist that were hired because of the Recovery Act. It's these dollars that are investing in our hometowns, putting people back to work in the short term constructing these new facilities, but in the long term providing better health care at affordable rates for our families.

OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE

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

Mr. REHBERG. Many in this Chamber think jobs come from the benevolence of the Federal Government. But last week I visited businesses in four Montana towns to hear what small business owners who actually create jobs had to say. They told me the Federal Government has created a lot of paralyzing uncertainty.

Small businesses like Printing for Less in Livingston are eager to expand and hire, but Federal policies hold them back. Andrew Field, the owner, cited concerns such as uncertainty about health care, cap-and-trade, and expiring tax cuts. He said, for example, that he needs the threat of health care mandates defeated.

I've never met someone who would buy a car made by Congress. That's because we've seen how Congress works. But after touring those small businesses and seeing firsthand the ingenuity of American entrepreneurs, I can think of no better hands in which to trust our economic future.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that on Thursday we're going to have this health care summit because I do think there's an opportunity for us to work together on a bipartisan basis to achieve health care reform.

I think we need to achieve three things. First of all, we need to lower prices, or at least prevent the type of price increases we've seen in insurance premiums. We're hearing 20, 30 percent increases in many parts of the country.

Secondly, we have to try to cover as many Americans as possible. There are at least 30, 40 million Americans that have no health insurance right now.

And lastly, we have to get rid of discriminatory practices where people pay more or can't even get health insurance because of preexisting conditions or because of gender differences.

If we can accomplish the goal of all three of these items on a bipartisan basis, we can come up with a bill that can pass here and go to the President.

I believe that all of us would like to see health care reform on both sides of the aisle. We just need to sit down and work on it and get it done this year because the American people need health care reform.

WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

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

Mr. LEE of New York. For months now my constituents in western New York have been asking, Where are the jobs?

It's very simple. The only city in the entire country that actually saw significant job growth is right here in good old Washington, D.C. The Federal Government is adding jobs at a rate of nearly 10,000 a month, the fastest pace since the 1960s when Medicare and Medicaid were created. There is definitely no recession going on in this city, while everybody else in this country is fighting to keep their jobs.

Instead of providing the right kind of incentives to grow the private sector and small business, the administration continues to bury this country further into debt.

Let's start working together to implement responsible solutions to the serious challenges facing our Nation. We have to stop this Federal takeover which is truly bankrupting our country.

NEW JOBS IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, we've heard one after another of our colleagues from the other side come today and ask, where are the jobs? Well, I invite them all to visit my district because in Louisville, Kentucky, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has created hundreds and hundreds of jobs and will create hundreds more. Already, 1,800 certified jobs, doing things like building additions to two new schools, building a new facility at our TARC system, our bus system, a new maintenance facility, a new fire station in Louisville, paving miles and miles of interstate, all of these things are bringing people to work, creating jobs, not to speak of the 600 jobs in our school system that have been saved because of the stimulus funding.

No, anybody who wants to see jobs created can come to Louisville, Kentucky. And as I said, they're not finished because, due to stimulus funding, General Electric's Appliance Park is about to bring 400 new jobs to our community to build an energy efficient water heater.

And lest anybody think these are jobs that are moving from one place to another, they're right. They're coming from China to the United States.

THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, at a town hall meeting in Faribault, Minnesota, just this past Friday night, a small business owner shared his frustrations that I am certain every Member of Congress is hearing from their constituents. And certainly, we heard the gentleman from Montana (Mr. REHBERG) describe the frustrations he heard from small business owners in his great State.

Whether it's the stimulus that failed to create jobs, or the job-killing national energy tax, or this massive government takeover of health care, small business owners are worried.

My constituent said, "I've had small businesses most of my life, so I understand when you would feel like hiring more people. Businesses want to know the rules, and they want a consistent future where they can project and plan."

"What's going on in the White House, with all these different bills and health care, it's a big unknown out there. Businesses are scared, and they have no idea what the future is. They don't want to invest, they don't want to hire. The economy's not going to rebound if they badger businesses the way they are right now."

I say "Amen" to that, Mr. Speaker. Let's push these job-killing bills off the table and get together and work in a bipartisan way.

WHAT ABOUT THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS?

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

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago President Obama came and he addressed the House Republicans in our retreat in Baltimore, and I posed a question to him. And, in a nutshell, I asked, how about the free trade agreements?

This is an opportunity where we can come together, both sides of the aisle, frankly, at a no-cost job creation initiative. And we've heard a lot of consternation and a lot of hand-wringing today, and we've seen it on the House floor, where Democrats are very, very concerned about a debt that they've inherited, they claim. Republicans have pointed out the national debt has tripled under their watch.

And yet here is an opportunity to put together and to advance legislation that will open markets overseas in Panama, in Colombia, and in South Korea.

And in a moment of candor, President Obama acknowledged that the lion's share of the problem was on his side of the aisle, that in fact it was politics in the Democratic Caucus that was preventing that from coming to the floor.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, this is an opportunity for us to transcend those problems and do a no-cost job creator, and that is pass these free trade agreements.

RECENT EVENTS

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

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I want to join all my colleagues in calling for jobs legislation that will get our people back to work and asking for a health care reform bill that will be affordable and accessible to all Americans.